

**T.C.
SAKARYA UNIVERSITY
MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE**

**TERRORISM AND LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN THE
MIDDLE EAST: THE CASE STUDIES OF FLN, HEZBOLLAH
AND HAMAS**

**PHD DISSERTATION
Yousef M. Y. ALJAMAL**

Department: Middle Eastern Studies

Supervisor: Doç. Dr. Philipp O. AMOUR

January-2023

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THESIS APPROVAL

This work headed “Terrorism and Liberation Movements in the Middle East: The Study Cases of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas” which has been prepared by Yousef M. Y. ALJAMAL, is approved as a Ph.D. thesis by our jury in majority vote.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that in this thesis, scientific ethics are entirely followed. The utilization of the others' work in form of references has been undertaken only in compliance with scientific norms, as any quoted data is free from falsification. This thesis is my original work and no part of the thesis has been presented as another thesis at this university or another university.

Yousef M. Y. ALJAMAL

19 January 2023



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Title of the Thesis: "Terrorism and Liberation Movements in the Middle East: FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas."

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Terrorism and liberation have always been controversial concepts. Different state and non-state actors have different interpretations of the two concepts. This study takes the liberation/terrorism designation of the National Liberation Front (French: FLN) in Algeria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Palestine as case studies by focusing on how and why specific state-actors view them as liberation groups or terrorist organizations. The researcher applies the Theory of Just War, the National Liberation Theory and Revolutionary Terrorism (urban and psychological) throughout the research. Both state and non-state actors at the international and regional levels of analysis have been used to investigate how and why specific state actors view the three groups as terrorist or legitimate liberation actors, and the impact that the Cold War and the Arab Spring had on their designation. The research aims to answer how and why states view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist or liberation groups and the impact of this designation on them. Hezbollah and Hamas were impacted the most by the Arab Spring while the FLN made use of the politics of the Cold War to its benefit. Hamas suffered the most because of its terrorist designation compared to the FLN and Hezbollah, due to the politics of the Arab Spring. The researcher applies a qualitative theory-oriented method throughout the study by using a comparative and case-studies approach, which includes consulting primary and secondary resources and literature on the issue and applying the theories of liberation/war and terrorism. The researcher concludes that the designation of the three groups by relevant state actors as liberatory or terrorist impacted their behavior on the ground and is unlikely to change in the short-term. The researcher suggests Finlay's proposed theory of non-terrorist resistance as a third way out of the terrorism/liberation controversy.

Keywords: Liberation, Terrorism, Middle East, FLN, Hezbollah, Hamas.

Tezin Başlığı: “Ortadoğu'da Terörizm ve Kurtuluş Hareketleri: FLN, Hizbullah ve Hamas.”
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Terörizm ve Kurtuluş her zaman tartışmalı kavramlar olmuştur. Çeşitli devlet ve devlet dışı aktörler bu iki kavramı farklı yorumlamıştır. Bu çalışma, Cezayir'de Ulusal Kurtuluş Cephesi'nin (Fransızca: FLN), Lübnan'da Hizbullah'ın ve Filistin'de Hamas'ın kurtuluş/terörizm tanımını, belirli devlet aktörlerinin onları nasıl ve neden kurtuluş grupları veya terör örgütleri olarak gördüklerine odaklanarak örnek olay olarak incelemiştir. Araştırmacı, araştırma boyunca Adil Savaş Teorisi, Ulusal Kurtuluş Teorisi ve Devrimci Terörizmi (kentsel ve psikolojik) uygulamıştır. Birimler ve Uluslararası analiz düzeylerinde hem devlet hem de devlet dışı aktörler, belirli devlet aktörlerinin bu üç grubu nasıl ve neden terörist veya meşru kurtuluş aktörleri olarak gördüklerini ve Soğuk Savaş ile Arap Baharı'nın üzerindeki etkisini araştırmak için kullanılmıştır. Çalışma, devletlerin FLN'i, Hizbullah'ı ve Hamas'ı nasıl ve neden terörist veya kurtuluş grupları olarak gördüklerini ve bu tanımlamanın onların üzerindeki etkisini yanıtlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Hizbullah ve Hamas en çok Arap Baharı'ndan etkilenirken, FLN Soğuk Savaş'ın siyasetini kendi çıkarına kullanmıştır. Bu bağlantıda Arap Baharı nedeniyle FLN ve Hizbullah'a kıyasen en çok Hamas sıkıntı çekmiştir. Araştırmacı, konuyla ilgili birincil ve ikincil kaynaklara ve literatüre başvurmayı ve kurtuluş/savaş ve terörizm teorilerini uygulamayı içeren karşılaştırmalı ve vaka çalışmaları yaklaşımı kullanarak çalışma boyunca nitel teori odaklı bir yöntem uygulamıştır. Araştırmacı, ilgili devlet aktörleri tarafından üç grubun özgürlükçü veya terörist olarak tanımlanmasının, onların sahadaki davranışlarını etkilediği ve kısa vadede değişme ihtimalinin düşük olduğu sonucuna varıyor. Araştırmacı, terörizm/kurtuluş tartışmasından üçüncü bir çıkış yolu olarak Finlay'ın önerdiği terörsüz direniş teorisini önermektedir.
Anahtar kelimeler: Kurtuluş, Terörizm, Ortadoğu, FLN, Hizbullah, Hamas.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALN	: (French) The National Liberation Army
EU	: The European Union
FIS	: (French) The National Salvation Front
FLN	: (French) The National Liberation Front
FTOs	: Foreign Terrorist Organizations
GCC	: The Gulf Cooperation Council
Hamas	:(Arabic) The Islamic Resistance Movement
Hezbollah	: (Arabic) The Party of God
OAS	: (French) The Secret Army Organization
SLA	: The Southern Lebanon Army
TAL	: The Arab League
TPOI	: The Proclamation of Independence
US	: The United State

INTRODUCTION

Drawing a line between terrorism and liberation movements has been a daunting task when it comes to intra-state relations due to the drastic difference and the gap between the self-view of non-state actors on one hand, and the view of state-actors of the two concepts on the other hand. Terrorism is one of the thorniest issues that left an impact on individuals and non-state and state actors engaged in political violence to attain national liberation. The slogan, “one’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter,”¹ speaks of this debate in the sense that state-actors change their perceptions of non-state actors based on their own history, interests, ideology, political, and economic interests among others. Although there is a United Nations (UN) definition of terrorism,² state and non-state actors alike, still deeply differ over its interpretation.

In realpolitik, the terrorism-liberation debate goes beyond state or UN definitions, and it is largely governed by regional and international power politics (such as that of the Arab Spring and the Cold War), and the narrative and self-perception of non-state actors. In the context of settler-colonialism, the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Palestine, the debate takes even a more complicated nature; states namely the United States (US), Israel, France, Türkiye and Iran, intragovernmental bodies the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Arab League, the European Union (EU), and non-state actors, drastically differ over their view of terrorism and liberation in the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.

Some non-state actors engaged in liberation struggles from foreign dominance have admittedly used terrorist tactics such as the FLN to achieve their goals. This research aims to explain why the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, are viewed as terrorist organizations or liberation groups by specific state-actors and intergovernmental bodies mentioned above, and how state, regional and international politics and self-view play into this controversiality by

¹ Boaz Ganor, “Defining terrorism: Is one man's terrorist another man's freedom fighter?”, **Police Practice and Research** 3, No. 4, (2002), pp. 299-301.

² Alex P. Schmid (Ed.), **The definition of terrorism**, The Routledge handbook of terrorism research, England: Routledge, 2002, pp. 88-95.

looking at the three case studies during and after the Cold War as well as the Arab Spring. This study looks at the impact of the Arab Spring on them, which also brought about ‘a new cold war’ in the Middle East following 2011 and the formation of a new regional order. What makes this terrorism/liberation debate particularly more controversial, and interesting at the same time, is that the UN has stressed peoples’ right to resistance and self-determination under occupation and settler-colonialism, thus furthering contributing to the existing divide over perception of non-state actors.³ To better understand this debate, the researcher outlines the theoretical deliberations on terrorism and liberation.

Theoretical Basis

The research uses a theory-oriented approach and case-study method to connect the empirical part of the study with the theoretical one. The research applies the Theory of Just War, the National Liberation Theory and Revolutionary Terrorism (it includes two sub-theories: Urban and Psychological Terrorism) to look at how and why specific state actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as liberatory or terrorist. The research investigates how the theories of terrorism and liberation explain how state-actors view the three case studies in light of the units and international levels of analysis (state, non-state actors, regional and international politics). The Arab Spring and the Cold War are particularly examined as two factors that shaped the designation of the three non-state actors of this study. In this context, the Just War Theory, major contributions made to it by theorists such as Michael Walzer,⁴ and earlier theoretical contributions such as by Francisco Suárez and Thomas Aquinas, provide a normative, and still state-centric view of liberation.⁵ It is a view that puts state-actors’ interests first and discusses the issue of liberation from the lenses of the state.

³ **United Nations**, “Right of peoples to self-determination/Struggle by all available means – GA resolution,” The Question of Palestine, 14 December 1990, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-184801/> (21 August 2022).

⁴ Igor Primoratz, “Michael Walzer's just war theory: some issues of responsibility,” **Ethical Theory and Moral Practice**, 5(2), (2002), p. 225.

⁵ Gregory Reichberg, “Thomas Aquinas between just war and pacifism,” **Journal of Religious Ethics**, 38(2), (2010), pp. 219-222.

While just war aims to dominate, terrorism aims to communicate a message and to target civilians to spread fear among the population.⁶ The Just War Theory shares the same ground with the Theology of Liberation which at the time played an important role in introducing its concepts to justify the Crusaders' war against the East. These wars, waged by the Church that for long was known as pacifist, opposing violence and wars, needed a religious justification.⁷ The Church advocated "common morality,"⁸ to justify its waged wars, thus creating a moral ground for them. In addition to the Just War Theory, the National Liberation Theory presents the view of non-state actors vis-à-vis taking arms against foreign domination.

The Just War Theory shares a solid ground with the National Liberation Theory, which advocates, along with taking arms, avoiding civilian targets and innocent people and increasingly highlight the agency of non-state actors, who lack the privilege of designating themselves per their own view in the international system.⁹ On the other hand, the National Liberation Theory highlights the importance of national education and ideology, two factors to be considered during waging political violence in the case of foreign occupation. In the context of this study, political violence, "involves a heterogeneous repertoire of actions oriented at inflicting physical, psychological, and symbolic damage to individuals and/or property with the intention of influencing various audiences for affecting or resisting political, social, and/or cultural change."¹⁰ Connecting the theoretical framework of this study through the theories of Just War, National Liberation, Revolutionary Terrorism (including Urban and Psychological Terrorism) adds to its depth and help provide the

⁶ Vilde Skorpen Wikan "Is one man's terrorist another man's freedom fighter," **E-International Relations Students**, 2018, <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/11/29/is-one-mans-terrorist-another-mans-freedom-fighter/> (24 May 2022).

⁷ Robert Kennedy, "Is one person's terrorist another's freedom fighter? Western and Islamic approaches to 'just war' compared," **Terrorism and Political Violence**, 11(1), (1999), pp.1-7.

⁸ Myriam Renaud and William Schweiker, "Multi-religious Perspectives on a Global Ethic," in **Search of a Common Morality** (Eds), Routledge, England, 2020, pp.45-46.

⁹ Sylvester Cohen, "Amilcar Cabral: an extraction from the literature," **Monthly Review**, 1998, 50(7), pp.39-40.

¹⁰ Lorenzo Bosi, Stefan Malthaner, **Political violence**, The Oxford handbook of social movements, Oxford, 2014, p. 1-5.

foundation for the differences state and non-state actors have on terrorism and liberation in the cases of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.

Theories of terrorism especially Revolutionary Terrorism (which includes Urban and Psychological Terrorism) provide the theoretical base for this study and they are connected to the empirical part of the study and are explained in detail in the Theoretical Framework. Revolutionary Terrorism contains the needed theoretical explanation as to how relevant state and non-state actors view the designation of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist or liberatory. Revolutionary terrorism implies the use of terrorist tactics by non-state actors such as bombing public spaces and restaurants, which aims at pressuring state-actors to provide political concessions. Revolutionary Terrorism makes no distinctions between civilians and combatants, in violation of the principle of discrimination of the Just War Theory, which urges that only combatants should be targeted during war.¹¹ France viewed the actions of the FLN as terrorism because of it involved the use of violence, on a large scale.¹² The FLN concluded that urban terrorism is the way to bring the French to the dialogue table after their calls went unanswered. An FLN official noted “Urban terrorism like guerrilla warfare is the only method of expression of a crushed people.”¹³ The same tactics, which also included psychological terrorism, were used by Hezbollah and Hamas.

Psychological terrorism, on the other hand, has been used by the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. The theory adds that for violence to be carried out, a cost-benefit analysis is done by non-state actors to best evaluate the outcomes of their actions and to what extent it is beneficial to their cause. Psychological Terrorism notes to “planting fear” as an ultimate goal by non-state actors against state-actors, which was done by FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas to force France and Israel to meet their demands by creating popular pressure on them.¹⁴

¹¹ Seth Lazar, “Just war theory: Revisionists versus traditionalists,” **Annual Review of Political Science**, 20, (2017), pp.37-40.

¹² Martha, Hutchinson, “The concept of revolutionary terrorism,” **Journal of Conflict Resolution** 16, No. 3, (1972), pp. 384-385.

¹³ Thomas P. Thornton, “Terror as a weapon of political agitation,” in Harry Eckstein (Ed.), **Internal War**, New York: Free Press, (1964), p. 73.

¹⁴ Ishrat Abbasi, Mukesh Kumar Khatwani, and Hidayat Ali Soomro, “A Review of Psycho-Social Theories of Terrorism,” **Grassroots**, 51, No. 2, (2018), pp. 320-322.

Psychological Terrorism suggests that violence is used for “the sake of using violence.”¹⁵ Communicating messages through propaganda has helped the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and pressured state-actors to provide concessions, although it came at a cost as more countries became increasingly aware of their actions, thus indirectly contributing to their terrorist designation.

What remains not thoroughly discussed in this terrorism-liberation debate, however, is state-terrorism or counterterrorism, such as the case of France in Algeria and Israel in both Lebanon and Palestine. When it comes to state-terrorism/counterterrorism, power politics, ideology, and intra-state interests become more present and even complicated. State-actors in general feel restricted in the read literature when it comes to viewing a group as terrorist or otherwise, as their view of non-state actors might likely have implications on them by stronger states, both rivals and allies alike. When it comes to naming an action by a state as state terrorism, and this is true to France and Israel in this study, the process of labeling becomes even more complicated. International and regional politics such as the Cold War and the Arab Spring make presenting the actions of nation-states as terrorist even more challenging as historical, political, economic and security interests govern this process at a more complicated level: State-level. This is so because it requires regional and international agreement, and this might force other state-actors to change their behavior because of such designation. Whereas designating non-state actors is easier since states are seen as legitimate while non-state actors in the power imbalance are often seen as anti-state.

Therefore, this research aims to explore extremely opposing views of non-state actors, on one hand, and specific state-actors and intergovernmental bodies mentioned-above on the other hand vis-à-vis terrorism and liberation in the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. It is critical to investigate how regional and international politics as well as other factors shape this ongoing debate in the cases of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, by applying a theory-oriented approach to link theory with the empirical part, that is the view of specific actors mentioned-below. In the case of the FLN, it involves the view of France, the Arab

¹⁵ Abbasi, Kumar, and Soomro, pp. 320-322.

League, and the USSR of the group. In the case of Hezbollah, it involves the view of the Arab League, the US, Israel, the EU, and Iran. In the case of Hamas, it involves Israel, the US, the EU, the Arab League, the GCC, Türkiye and Iran. The research aims to answer how and why states view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist or liberation groups and the impact of this designation on them.

The question that remains significant in this debate, however, is how and why state-actors decide if a group is terrorist or not, and how power relations, regional and international politics play into this equation in the context of the Arab Spring and the Cold War and. Some governments tend to politicize the issue of terrorism to achieve national support, for ideological and historical purposes, which contributes to depicting a non-state actor that works against their national and strategic interests as illegitimate and terrorist, while viewing another as a legitimate liberation group. In this context, terrorism and liberation would have “a neighborly relationship,” although theoretically they stand for two drastic concepts.¹⁶ In the same context, former American president Ronald Reagan told Americans in 1986 that, “freedom fighters do not need to terrorize a population into submission.”¹⁷ Reagan’s statement was meant to reveal that non-state actors waging a liberation war in the context of foreign occupation use terrorist tactics too.

In this debate on terrorism and liberation, the self-view of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, and state-actors and intergovernmental bodies’ view of them as terrorist groups, holds a significant weight in the debate on terrorism and liberation. The functionality of the process of the designation of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations based on political and historical reasons, national interests, ideology and individual backgrounds, state power relations, and regional and international politics, explain further how these non-state actors react to state-designation and how and why state-actors do so as explained in the selected case studies. Finally, the impact of designating the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have had on them is central to terrorism/liberation. Exploring these contrasting views and the

¹⁶ Christopher J. Finlay, **Terrorism and the right to resist: a theory of just revolutionary war**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 3.

¹⁷ Heather S. Gregg, “Reagan and Terrorism,” in Andrew L. Johns (Ed.), **A Companion to Ronald Reagan**, Wiley-Blackwell, (2015), p. 360.

factors that shape them in the context of France in Algeria and Israel in Lebanon and Palestine, but more specifically in the cases of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, would be an important contribution to the studies of terrorism/liberation.

Admissibly, examining terrorism and national liberation acts in the Middle East by taking the case studies of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas into consideration at units, international (including regional) levels gives depth to the research, especially after the end of the Cold War and the outbreak of the Arab Spring. The regional competition over power-sharing and expansion in the region resulted in the spread of bipolar and sectarian politics impacting both regional and global politics. To highlight the controversial nature of the issue, the researcher attempts to address the following issues: states' positions vis-à-vis labeling the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist or liberation groups, how and why states and intergovernmental bodies do so. It also aims to look at how non-state actors, namely the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas view themselves based on their internal documents and statements. At the same time, the research aims to explore the impact of labeling the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations or liberation movements, and the relevance of state-terrorism or counterterrorism to this debate. The research highlights three groups that have different ideological and national backgrounds, which have emerged in settler-colonial contexts and have used violence to end foreign domination. These three non-state actors, in most cases, self-describe themselves as liberation movements, a normative continuation of the divide over perception.

Why the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas

By comparing the three non-state actors, which emerged during and after the Cold War with different ideological backgrounds, be it Islamist, nationalist or socialist, the researcher aims to highlight how and why state-actors label a group as terrorist or liberatory, on the units and international levels, and the political impact of labeling the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. This includes exploring the conditions in which they emerged, as well as their behavior during and after war, and the impact of regional and international politics on labeling them as terrorist groups or liberation movements, such as the Cold War and the Arab Spring. To do so, the researcher applies a theory-oriented approach by presenting a theoretical framework

around the two thorny issues of liberation and terrorism and discussing regional and international politics surrounding the three groups. More specifically, the research investigates and applies theories of liberation/just war and terrorism such as the Theory of National Liberation, the Just War Theory, Revolutionary Terrorism, to attempt to explain how and why relevant actors will likely continue to be divided over labeling.

Choosing the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as case studies has to do with the fact that state-actors view them differently based on their interests, history, and perception. The emergence of these groups in countries that suffer/suffered from settler-colonialism, makes their liberation discourse acceptable at least for some regional and global powers. The use of comparison and historical contexts help draw conclusions on terrorism and liberation in the context of the three case studies from an international politics and regional post-Arab Spring perspectives. It also paves the way for a third debate of non-terrorist and legitimate resistance that builds on the concepts of both theories of liberation and terrorism. Additionally, the three groups have emerged throughout different historical periods in the Middle East and North Africa, which again highlights why and how state-actors view a group as terrorist or not. In the context of this study, the Middle East includes all countries of the Arab League, Iran, Israel, and Türkiye.¹⁸ Placing the argument of terrorism and liberation in the context of the three case studies guided by international politics and the Arab Spring and basing this debate on theoretical foundations will help understand the complexity of this contentious debate on terrorism and liberation.¹⁹

Since the researcher takes into consideration the view of international politics (the Cold War) as a foundation for examining the designation of the three groups as terrorist organizations or liberation movements, this necessarily requires outlining the concerned states/bodies in the three cases studies of FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. As for the FLN, the researcher highlights the view of the Front by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Arab League, the

¹⁸ Philipp O. Amour, "Introduction: The Regional Order in the Gulf Region and the Middle East," In Philipp O. Amour (Ed.), **The Regional Order in the Gulf Region and the Middle East**, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020, p. 4.

¹⁹ Aaron Edwards, "Abandoning armed resistance? The Ulster Volunteer Force as a case study of strategic terrorism in Northern Ireland," **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, Vol. 32, No. 2, (2009), p. 148.

Western Bloc, and the USSR. As for Hezbollah, the researcher calls attention to the designation of the Lebanese group by Israel, the Arab League, the GCC, the EU, and the US, Türkiye and Iran. As for Hamas, the researcher focuses on the view of this movement by Israel, the United States, the European Union, the Arab League, Türkiye, and Iran. In addition, the research investigates the self-perception of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas of themselves in light of changing regional (the Arab Spring) and global politics (the Cold War) and light of their internal documents such as letters and founding charters and proclamations.

The FLN

The FLN, unlike Hamas and Hezbollah, has adopted a secular and socialist approach to end France's colonial rule in Algeria, although this approach was inspired by Islam as an identity of the Algerian people vs. the Christian identity of European settlers, thus it was partially inspired by the Islamic theology of liberation. The FLN had lost its appeal among Algerians too as time wore on, as it fell victim to power competition, lack of democracy and eventually served as the state's party. The FLN reflects the process of social change which resulted from its struggle against France from 1954 to 1962. The FLN was deeply rooted in the Algerian society, and it enjoyed a strong popular base that allowed it to carry out war against France by using popular mobilization, guerrilla warfare, and urban terrorism tactics. Following the coup of 1965 by Houari Boumedienne, the heroic image of the FLN as being unique was blurred.²⁰

Hence, France was not able to isolate the FLN from the rest of the Algerian society, eventually losing its control over Algeria to the group.²¹ Looking at the Algerian Proclamation of Independence and statements of the FLN, it had adopted a liberation discourse which called for ending French colonization of Algeria and sending European settlers back to France. By 1956, most Algerian groups and parties had joined the FLN.²² Emerging in 1954 in extremely polarized world that was divided between the US (the western bloc) and the USSR due to the politics of the Cold War, the FLN was engaged and impacted

²⁰ William H. Lewis, "The decline of Algeria's FLN," **The Middle East Journal**, (1966), p. 161.

²¹ David Fromkin, "The strategy of terrorism," **Foreign Affairs**, Vol. 53, No. 4, (1975), p. 690.

²² David Galula, "Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958," Vol. 478. **Rand Corporation**, (2002), p. 14.

the most by these politics by officially subscribing to the Non-Aligned Movement, thus being able to exploit differences among global powers to its best interests and benefits, unlike Hezbollah and Hamas.²³

The politics of the Cold War played into the benefit of the FLN during its war of independence against France from 1954-1962. Internally, the FLN adopted a nationalist discourse highlighting its liberation nature and the centrality of the Algerian people to it (nationalism), which enabled it to win the support of large sectors of the Algerian society. Stressing nationalism as done by the FLN is also advocated by the National Liberation Theory, namely Cabral and Fanon, which calls for spreading national education among the masses through the educated elite to win the “cultural war”.²⁴ The FLN Proclamation of Independence of 1954 stressed the need to launch a “true revolutionary struggle,” with the help of Morocco and Tunisia, which were part of the Non-Aligned Movement. The FLN called on all Algerians, regardless of their social background, to join the national struggle, noting that its goal was to restore Algeria and establish a state based on the principles of Islam and promoting freedoms without discrimination. Internally, the FLN aimed to fight corruption and adopt reforms.²⁵

Internationally, the FLN sought to internalize the Algerian question, achieve North African unity, and express solidarity with all peoples who support its struggle, a strategy that was largely successful. The FLN had proposed initiating a dialogue with the French authorities to reduce bloodshed, freeing detainees, and making null and void all laws that made Algeria “French soil.”²⁶ In return, the FLN offered to respect French interests, both cultural and economic, allow French nationals to remain in Algeria if they wished to, and establish ties with France on the basis of equality. The FLN’s proposal to have a dialogue with the French colonial authorities is in line with the Just War Theory, which requires exploring all options for dialogue, making violence a last resort, in line with the principles of *jus in bello*, before

²³ Matthew Connelly, **A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era**, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 2.

²⁴ Sunday Dada, “Fanon and Cabral on Culture and National Liberation,” **Lumina**, 21(1), (2010), p.10.

²⁵ **National Liberation Front**, “Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation,” 1 November 1954, <https://marxists.architexturez.net/history/algeria/1954/proclamation.htm> (24 May 2022).

²⁶ **National Liberation Front**, “Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation,” 1954.

waging the War of Independence from 1954-1962. The French response to the demands of the Algerian people and the FLN was the use of force, making the FLN more popular. The French response using force and torture contradicts the just war tradition that calls for the proportional use of force, which France failed to apply, thus inviting more FLN violence which also violated the principle of discrimination of the Just War Theory. France viewed Algeria as part and parcel of France.

For France, Algeria was French (Algérie française) and there was no place for the Algerian national aspiration in this exclusionary view. France viewed the FLN as an illegitimate organization that violated law and order. Paris refused to recognize its colonial history in Algeria and the Algerian War of Independence between 1954-1962 as an actual war except in 1998. Rather, it looked at the FLN revolution as an issue of law and order, even when it sought help to suppress it from the US, to prevent the Army of National Liberation (ALN), the military wing of the FLN, from mobilizing and affecting public opinion in Algeria, France and beyond.²⁷ The actions of the FLN aimed at undermining France's strategic political and economic interests in Algeria, thus challenging its dependency on Algeria, especially after the independence of Morocco and Tunisia, which made the independence of Algeria more inevitable.

Over the years, France realized that the FLN had moved to a full insurrection and the war no longer was about its own perception of the FLN as a law and disorder issue.²⁸ As part of its state of denial, France viewed the masses of Algerians as “vulnerable” to the propaganda of the FLN and victims to its “contagion”.²⁹ As France used force, that was not proportional, necessary nor discriminatory in nature as the Just War Theory stipulates,³⁰ the FLN leaders became more convinced that only taking arms will bring France to the negotiation table, in

²⁷ Martin Alexander and J. F. V. Keiger, “France and the Algerian War: strategy, operations and diplomacy,” **Journal of Strategic Studies**, 25(2), (2002), pp.3-4.

²⁸ Commander H. Canuel, “Waging Counterinsurgency in Algeria: A French point of view,” **Military Review**, 88(5), (2008), p. 59.

²⁹ Canuel, p. 6.

³⁰ Camillo C. Bica, “Interpreting Just War Theory's Jus in Bello Criterion of Discrimination,” **Public Affairs Quarterly**, 12(2), (1998), p.161.

line with the principle of taking arms by the Theory of National Liberation.³¹ The notion is deeply rooted in the National Liberation Theory and the Just War Theory. It is no coincidence as Ahmed Bin Bella, a prominent FLN leader who later became Algeria's first president met Amilcar Cabral, a chief advocate of taking arms and a leading figure of the theory. France felt threatened by the FLN whose demands would practically mean the end of French dominance in Algeria. The same as the FLN, Hezbollah has called for ending Israel and western presence in Lebanon, but its Iran ties and serving the interests of the USSR has given the group a negative image that would translate into its terrorist designation and political isolation by many countries especially in the Middle East.

Hezbollah

Since its foundation in 1985, Hezbollah employed political violence as a means to liberate Israeli-occupied Lebanese territories in addition to targeting foreign forces on Lebanese soil, serving the interests of both Syria and Iran and by extension the USSR.³² The impact of regional politics on Hezbollah's leaders and popular base, represented by the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, can't be underestimated. The organization won popular support after implementing a large-scale socio-political strategy building on Islamic mobilization to win the minds and hearts of the Lebanese, Arabs and Muslims in general up until the outbreak of civil war in Syria.³³ Hezbollah had taken part in the Lebanese Civil War in the 1970s and played an active role in the Syrian Civil War of 2011, which changed the way many governments and peoples view it.

Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian Civil War can't be viewed in isolation from the group's ties to Syria and Iran and its commitment to Iran's theology of liberation. Additionally, its earlier involvement in the Lebanese Civil War saw much Syrian influence in the country through Damascus' military intervention in Lebanon in 1975 as authorized by

³¹ Maryinez Hubbard, "Culture and history in a revolutionary context: approaches to Amilcar Cabral," **Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies**, 3(3), (1973), p. 71.

³² Naim Qassem, **Hezbollah: The Story from Within**, (translated) by Dalia Khalil, Saqi, London, 2005. pp. 79-80.

³³ Boukje Kistemaker, "Rebel Governance in Lebanon: Hezbollah, 'the Hand that Fights, the Hand that Builds'," **Düsseldorf: Monograph for the Gerda Henkel Stiftung**, (2015), p. 19.

the Arab League. Today, more peoples and governments in the Middle East view Hezbollah as an Iranian proxy and a terrorist group due to its involvement in the Syrian Civil War, while a few years back a majority of peoples and governments in the region would consider it a liberation/resistance group. In other words, the way the Syrian intervention in Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War had an impact on Lebanon for years to come, Hezbollah's military involvement in the Syrian Civil War had an equal impact as to how it is viewed in the region, contributing to its negative and terrorist designation by the GCC and later the Arab League in 2016. This comes as no surprise considering Syria and Hezbollah's ties to Iran.

Hezbollah's Open Letter of 1986 reveals that it had adopted a strategy involving both swearing allegiance to Khomeini's theology of liberation and interpretation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and at the same time, committing to the Lebanese state and social and political fabric. The group has based its strategy on using violence against Israel, by taking arms as suggested by the Theory of National Liberation, which made it win large popularity in Lebanon and beyond, up until the Arab Spring and its intervention in Syria in 2013. At the same time, the group has worked to accommodate the Lebanese state, which it has been successful at. Over the years, Hezbollah has grown into a quasi-state in Lebanon, largely taking over the institutions of the Lebanese state. By targeting the Israeli presence of Lebanese territories until 2000, which gave it legitimacy in Lebanon and beyond, Hezbollah has been an active non-state actor in the Iranian axis and its strategy of promoting a larger state of defiance against the US and Israel in line with the teachings of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.³⁴ This partially explains why the US put Hezbollah on its Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) list in 1997. Globally, in its 1985 Letter, Hezbollah got itself involved in the politics of the Cold War, by refusing the hegemony of both the US and the USSR and by targeting western forces in Lebanon.

³⁴ Mats Wörn, "A Lebanese vanguard for the Islamic revolution: Hezbollah's combined strategy of resistance and accommodation," (**PhD Dissertation**): Stockholm, Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, 2012, p. 22.

Regionally, Hezbollah has adopted the Islamic Revolution in Iran as its model, which made it the heart of regional politics especially after the outbreak of the Arab Spring. The group got involved in the Cold War between the US and the USSR by targeting US Marines in Lebanon in 1983 and kidnapping four Soviet diplomats in 1985 which pushed Syria and Iran to intervene to free them, given their USSR ties.³⁵ It also has been involved in the hostage crisis in Lebanon in which it stood behind kidnapping, killing and torturing hundreds of western nationals in the country, many of whom were American, in line with the goals of both Syria and Iran. Targeting western nationals, along with targeting western forces in Lebanon, have early on created a negative perception of Hezbollah in the West, although it took time for both the US and the EU to list Hezbollah as a terrorist group in 1997 and 2013 respectively. Hezbollah's involvement in the Iraq-Iran War between 1980-1988 through proxy attacks on behalf of the Islamic Republic that targeted some GCC countries have also made the Gulf states act with caution towards the group, which explains why the GCC took a decision to designate it as terrorist in 2016. State actors and intergovernmental bodies have viewed the military and political wings of Hezbollah differently, with some making a distinction between the political and military wings of the Lebanese group.

Israel, the Arab League, the GCC, the US, and the EU list Hezbollah as a terrorist organization with variations on how they view its military and political wings. Israel views Hezbollah entirely as a hyper terrorist organization which has complex structures and is able to show flexibility, owns conventional and non-conventional weapons, applies irregular tactics and models, adopts violence, and causes disorder. Within this understanding, Hezbollah operates as a traditional military organization that wins through warfare but also has a political structure and political representation.³⁶ Israel's view of Hezbollah is similar to the US view, since Hezbollah targeted US forces in Lebanon in 1980s, targeted US allies in the Gulf, has strong ties to Iran and Syria, provides Palestinian groups such as Hamas with know-how and weapons, and is committed to the destruction of Israel, which is a domestic

³⁵ Gary C Gambill, and Ziad K. Abdelnour, "Hezbollah: Between Tehran and Damascus," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* 4, February 2002, p. 2.

³⁶ Eitan Azani, "The hybrid terrorist organization: Hezbollah as a case study," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 36(11), (2013), pp.899-900.

issue in US politics. The strategic alliance between Israel and the US impacted the latter's view of Hezbollah as a terrorist group, especially because Israel has become a domestic issue in the US politics. For this reason, the US lists both the political and military wings of Hezbollah as terrorist and makes no distinction between them, unlike the EU which makes such a distinction.³⁷

The EU was late, compared to Israel and the US, to list the military wing of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in 2013 to allow for political engagement in Lebanon. EU delegations have met repeatedly with Hezbollah officials and representatives as part of the European Neighborhood policy to discuss issues related to the presidential elections in Lebanon in 2007 and 2008.³⁸ This EU view of Hezbollah as a political party was also more prevalent in the Middle East up until 2011 following the group's siding with Iran and Syria and its military involvement in the country. Hezbollah was not listed as a terrorist organization by almost any Arab country up until 2016, when its Syria intervention and open allegiance to Iran, pushed the GCC and the Arab League to list it as a terrorist organization at the request of Saudi Arabia.³⁹ Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain have felt increasingly threatened by Hezbollah's growing influence and decided to list the group as terrorist in 2016, citing intervention in the internal affairs of the GCC and its attempts to recruit GCC nationals to Hezbollah to carry out terrorist attacks.

Hamas

As for Hamas, it shares a common ground with Hezbollah, where both claim to fight Israel's occupation of Arab territories using arms and adopt an Islamic (Sunni and Shiite) ideology and theology. In 1987, following the outbreak of the First Palestinian Intifada, in which the movement actively participated, Hamas was officially founded.⁴⁰ Hamas' 1988 Charter

³⁷ Jacques Neria and Shimon Shapira, "Hezbollah: Profile of a Terrorist Organization," **Friends of Israel Initiative Working Papers**, (2012), p. 10.

³⁸ Peter Seeberg, "The EU as a realist actor in normative clothes: EU democracy promotion in Lebanon and the European Neighborhood Policy," **Democratization**, 16(1), (2009), pp.81-83.

³⁹ Martin Beck, "The Arab League's declaration of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization," **News Analysis of SDU's Resource Center on Middle East Studies** (No date), (2016), p. 2.

⁴⁰ Sara Roy, "Hamas and the Transformation(s) of Political Islam in Palestine," **Current History**, New York then Philadelphia, 102, (2003), pp. 13-20.

stresses its liberation nature and Palestinian nationalism, and highlights the centrality of Islam and armed resistance as means to liberate Palestine.⁴¹ The discourse of Hamas resonated with significant sectors in the Palestinian society who grew impatient and intolerant of Israeli practices over the years. The killing of four Palestinian laborers from the Gaza Strip by an Israeli driver in Israel was the spark that ignited the First Palestinian Intifada, which coincided with the establishment of Hamas in 1987.⁴²

Just like the Palestinian Intifada in 1987 broke out non-violently, Hamas too did not use violent tactics at the beginning of its foundation and employed a number of non-violent tactics. This short-lived commitment to non-violence by Hamas in the early stages is also explained by Michael Walzer, where he wrote an afterword to his book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, in 2005 advocating the need to highlight the shift to non-violence even by groups that call for using armed resistance, under the title *Afterword: Nonviolence and the Theory of War*.⁴³ Yet, Hamas' commitment to non-violence did not last long, as Hamas carried out dozens of attacks including suicide bombings against Israeli targets as Israel too started using excessive force against the Palestinians during the Intifada, including breaking the bones of Palestinian protesters. However, viewing Hamas from the lenses of its military involvement or religious discourse overlooks its other social and economic activities. Since 1987 Hamas adopted a discourse based on advocating using arms, and in its 2017 document, the group added non-violent resistance too, in line with Michael Walzer's afterword on non-violence.

To establish itself socially, Hamas has run a network of social services, a tactic also used by Hezbollah in Lebanon, which gave the two groups much popularity while used for political purposes.⁴⁴ Hamas took a couple of years before resorting to political violence as Walzer advocates in the Just War Theory, although it made clear in its 1988 Charter that the "liberation of Palestine" should only happen through taking arms, in line with the National

⁴¹ Yousef M. Aljamal, "Hamas: A Terrorist Organization or A Liberation Movement?", **Politics and Religion Journal**, Vol. 8, No. 1, (2014), pp. 39-58.

⁴² Are Knudsen, "Crescent and sword: the Hamas enigma," **Third World Quarterly**, 26(8), (2005), p.1379.

⁴³ Michael Walzer, **Just and unjust wars: A moral argument with historical illustrations**, Hachette UK, 2005, p. 131.

⁴⁴ Wendy Pearlman, **Violence, nonviolence, and the Palestinian national movement**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 134.

Liberation Theory. The movement gradually used more violent tactics, which grew more sophisticated over the years, against Israeli targets, as Israel expended its use of force against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Alongside its gradual move towards violence, Hamas adopted a liberation discourse that urges ending Israel's occupation of Palestine by taking arms, which explains why the US and Israel has listed the group as terrorist, as the use of violence posed a threat to Israeli and American interests.⁴⁵ The emergence of the US as the only superpower after the collapse of the USSR impacted Hamas' designation. Being the superpower, the US had strong military, economic, political, and historical ties to Israel where Tel Aviv used Cold War tactics such as containment against Hamas.

Since Hamas emerged towards the end of the Cold War, the group was less impacted by its politics compared to the FLN and Hezbollah. Yet, Hamas' commitment to armed struggle and violence, and killing American nationals in its attacks against Israel, its refusal to recognize Israel and the strong ties it has with Iran and Hezbollah, and the strong ties Israel has with the US including in the political, military, and economic fields, all contributed to the US' designation of the group as terrorist. Following the Arab Spring, more Arab countries started viewing Hamas negatively, due to its ideological ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, its relations with Iran and Hezbollah and its continuing attacks against Israel, with which some Arab countries have normalized their ties.⁴⁶ With the exception of Iran, Russia, Qatar, Algeria and Türkiye, the majority of state-actors view Hamas as terrorist, or prefer to avoid contact with it, as their view is largely shaped by regional politics or by how the US and its allies view the group.

Israel listed Hamas as a terrorist organization in 1996 following the movement's carrying out of suicide bombings at a time the escalation of violence between Israel and the Palestinians took a new turn with the assassinations of some Hamas commanders. The US followed suit and listed Hamas as a terrorist organization in 1997, adding it to its Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) list. The US made no distinction between Hamas' military and

⁴⁵ Muhammad Maqdsi, "Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) of Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 4, (1993), pp. 127.

⁴⁶ Benedetta Berti, "Hizbullah, Hamas, and the "Arab Spring"—Weathering the Regional Storm?", *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (2012), pp. 21-23.

political wings, where US Secretary of Treasury listed six Hamas political leaders and some charities as terrorist in 2003, noting that Hamas leaders overlook its military activities and that no separation could be made between both.⁴⁷ The strong ties Israel has with the US is one of the factors why the US was one of the first countries to list Hamas as terrorist, though there are other factors as well. Besides killing American nationals, Hamas' ties to Iran and Hezbollah contributed to the same end too.

Hamas has strong ties with Iran, which the US and its allies in the region view with antagonism, further distancing Hamas from the US. In the case of Hezbollah, it directly targeted US marines and killed hundreds of them. Hezbollah has too admitted providing Hamas with weapons and training, which poses a threat to the US and Israeli interests. Not only this, but the US maintains good ties with Israel and Israel has a strong influence over the US foreign policy in the region. However, in the case of the FLN, the group did not target the US and it only targeted France, which explains why the US did not list it as a terror group. Additionally, Washington feared that taking a side in favor of France will further push the FLN towards the USSR.

The EU took a slightly different approach to Hamas than that of Israel and the US. First, the EU was considerably late to designate Hamas as a terrorist organization as it did so only in 2003. While the EU did not differentiate between the political and military wings of Hamas, it has always maintained indirect communication channels with the group, speculating that a diplomatic option could work out. The Arab League and the GCC have not listed Hamas as a terrorist organization, but some courts and officials in the Arab world have dubbed Hamas as terrorist after the Arab Spring due to its connections with political Islam and being part of the Iran-led bloc. Some Arab countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Egypt have listed the Muslim Brotherhood, the umbrella organization of Hamas, as a terrorist group, which has further contributed to Hamas' isolation. Some countries such as the UAE and Bahrain have viewed Hamas, along with Hezbollah, as terrorist organizations after the Arab

⁴⁷ Matthew Levitt, "Hamas from cradle to grave," 1 January 2004, **Middle East Quarterly**, 2004, pp. 3-8.

Spring, which exposes the Iran-factor and its impact in viewing Hamas as terrorist after 2011.⁴⁸

Despite the terrorist designations of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas by certain state-actors and intergovernmental bodies, based on state interests, ideologies, principles, histories, and commitments, as well as regional and international politics, and the three non-state actors' charters, letters, and internal documents, the three groups continue to view themselves as liberation movements, which again reveal the drastic differences some state and non-state actors have on the issue. Because there is such a differing gap between being designated as a terrorist or a liberation group by state actors, international bodies, and non-state actors, and how these non-state actors understand themselves as working to end foreign domination, a third approach is necessary to consider, namely a theory of non-terrorist resistance.

Research Questions

This research aims at exploring why and how specific state actors and intergovernmental bodies view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as liberation or terrorist organizations both on units and international levels. On a unit level (intra-state relations), in the case of the FLN, the research looks at how the Western bloc, the USSR, China, the Arab League, and the Non-Aligned Movement, view the Front and why do they do so. In the case of Hezbollah, the research looks at how Israel, the EU, the US, the Arab League, the GCC, Türkiye and Iran view the group and why. In the case of Hamas, the research highlights how Israel, the US, the EU, Iran, Türkiye, the GCC and the Arab League view the movement and why. This is done through looking at national, political, economic, and historical factors that shape a state-actor's designation of the three groups. On a unit level (non-state actor), the research investigates how the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas view themselves in light of their discourse, founding documents and statements. The research investigates the role of international and regional politics, the Cold War and the Arab Spring, have influenced the designation of the

⁴⁸ Hassanein Ali, "Post-Arab spring: The Arab world between the dilemma of the nation-state and the rise of violent non-state actors (VNSAs)," **Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies**, 14(1), (2020), pp.68-70.

three case studies as terrorist organizations or liberation movements and the impact this designation had on them by engaging theory with the empirical part of the study.

Main research question

How and why do specific state actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as liberation or terrorist groups and what impact does the Cold War and the Arab Spring have on this designation? This includes looking at intra-state relations (units-level) and the Cold War and the Arab Spring (international-level) and how and why Israel, the US, the EU, France, Britain, the League of the Arab Nations, the GCC, the USSR, Non-Aligned movement, Iran, and Türkiye (unit-level) view the three groups and the impact the Cold War and the Arab Spring have (international-level) on their designation. This is done through applying a theory- and comparative case-studies oriented approach throughout the study.

Based on the problems raised above, these questions are addressed in the research:

Main research question

Q1. How and why are the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas are viewed as liberation movements or terrorist groups by relevant governments and how do the three non-state actors view themselves?

Sub-research questions

- Q1.** What is the role regional politics (the Arab Spring) and global politics (the Cold War) have on state and intergovernmental bodies' view of the non-state actors?
- Q2.** What impact does the terrorist/liberation designation of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have on them?

Research Objectives

A. Main research objective

The issue of liberation and terrorism has always been at the heart of the debates surrounding non-state actors' use of violence in the context of foreign occupation/settler-colonialism and self-determination. Since regional and international politics, such as the Cold War and the Arab Spring, and interests govern this debate, in addition to non-state actors' perception of themselves as liberation movements, the gap between how states view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and how these non-state actors view themselves is still wide and the research attempts to highlight these factors and their role in designation. The study not only aims to reveal how state and non-state actors view the issue of liberation/terrorism, but also how motivations, interests, historical backgrounds, and ideologies direct them to do so and the resulting implications by applying relevant theories of terrorism and liberation/war. The objective of this study is to highlight factors that push state actors to view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist or liberation groups.

This study seeks to examine the designation of relevant states of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations or liberation movements and how the three non-state actors view themselves in light of their own literature by utilizing a theory-oriented approach to examine the validity of this perception/designation and the influence this designation has on the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as seen by regional and international politics including the Cold War and the Arab Spring. The research aims:

1. To study the motivations, interests, historical backgrounds, ideologies and regional and global politics that govern states' perception of the issue of terrorism and liberation in the cases of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and how the three non-state actors self-perceive themselves, theoretically and empirically.
2. To examine the role of the Cold War and the Arab Spring on the designation of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.
3. To explore the implications the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas had after being listed as terrorist organizations or liberation movements.

Significance of The Study

Many scholars have written about terrorism and liberation movements, however, the available literature on the issue lacks the comparative aspect on the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, and how regional and international politics such as the Cold War and the Arab Spring impact them and their designation. There are a lack of comprehensive studies that combine the point of view of non-state actors of liberation and terrorism (unit-level), especially in the cases of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. Also, the fact that these three non-state actors have various ideological backgrounds and have emerged throughout different periods under foreign domination in the Middle East enriches the debate on terrorism and liberation.

With a socialist-nationalist group, the FLN, a Shiite-Islamist group, Hezbollah, and a Sunni-Islamist group, Hamas as case studies, this research enriches the debate on how state-actors view the issues of terrorism and liberation theoretically and empirically. Examining how the three non-state actors view themselves also makes a valuable contribution to students and scholars of terrorism and liberation, and Area Studies. This research aims to further explore the debate on terrorism and liberation in the cases of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas on units and international levels. Additionally, this study aims to examine the role of regional and global politics in shaping the perception of states, namely France, Israel, Iran, Türkiye, the Arab League, the USSR, the GCC, the Non-Aligned Movement, EU, and the US vis-à-vis the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and how regional and international politics, such as the Cold War and Arab Spring, impact this process and the impact this designation have on them.

The impact of viewing the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations or liberation movements by the above-mentioned state and regional actors is undeniable as described above. Thus, providing a deep analysis of the impact and weight of a terrorist designation on the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and how it pushes non-state actors to shift their discourse and to change foreign policy, helps researchers of terrorism and liberation as well as Area Studies to better understand them. In the cases of Hamas and Hezbollah, the two groups published new documents and manifestoes, which reflects the impact of their terror designation on their thinking. In the case of the FLN, there was almost no direct impact on the group at the time due to the politics of the Cold War but having ties with the Non-Aligned

Movement impacted Algeria's designation and economy as well as politics during the War of Independence and in the following years. Engaging the theoretical with the empirical part of the study (a theory-oriented approach) and exploring different theories of liberation/war and terrorism, further strengthens the argument and provides an authentic analysis of the issue.

Limitations of The Study

This research has its possible limitations. This study covers the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas throughout different historical periods. In the case of the FLN, it covers the group from 1954 to 1991 and after 2019. This study overlooks the period from 1991 to 2019 because it had no direct connection to regional and global politics as well as designation of the FLN as it became a state-actor. In the case of Hezbollah, it covers the group from 1982 until 2016. This includes the emergence of Hezbollah during the Lebanese Civil War, its war against Israel, its military intervention in Syria in 2013 and its terrorist designation by the GCC and the Arab League in 2016. In the case of Hamas, the researcher covers the period from 1987 to 2017, which saw the emergence of Hamas and the change of its discourse due to its designation and isolation in the Gaza Strip, which saw issuing its 1988 Charter and 2017 Document.

Second, there is a lack of literature on the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas from the point of view of these three non-state actors. There are hundreds of studies on the three non-state actors which were mostly written about them using western-centric approaches. Apart from the founding documents and letters of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, one could hardly find academic materials and literature written by these movements or scholars who are part of these non-state actors to present their views to the outside world. This has created a vacuum that was mostly filled by western-centric scholars and their view of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. These non-state actors are to blame for the lack of such literature, especially as groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, have only produced new documents, manifestoes and charters in 2009 and 2017 respectively, introducing their discourse change to the world.

Lastly, travel restrictions resulting from COVID19 made it hard to do field work and meet people on the ground who are representative of both state and non-state actors of this study. Additionally, the lack of financial resources has further complicated the aspect of travel to conduct field research on the ground. For these reasons, the researcher has used the available literature on the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and made efforts to include writings by three non-state actors and the relevant positions of state-actors to conduct, fill in the gaps, and conclude this study.

Research Methods

This research utilizes a primarily qualitative method by using case-study theory to highlight state-actors' view of FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations or liberation movements at units and international levels and factors impacting this view. The research considers regional and international politics and applying a theory-oriented approach including theories of war and terrorism, namely the Theory of Just War, the Theory of National Liberation, and the Revolutionary Terrorism. International and regional politics are used in this study to analyze how and why relations, interests, ideologies, and histories between states impact their view of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, and why they adopt different positions vis-à-vis terrorism and liberation in the cases of these three non-state actors. More specifically, the researcher investigates how the politics of the Cold War and the Arab Spring have impacted the three case studies considering their terrorist or liberation designations. Designations by various countries/bodies including the US, the USSR, the EU, France, Britain, Israel, Iran, the GCC, Türkiye, and the Arab League are those primarily considered.

The researcher uses both primary sources such as documents, letters and press releases issued by the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as well as secondary resources such as books, journal articles, electronic articles, newspaper articles, and think-tank reports about the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas to collect the relevant data and make the needed analysis. The case-study approach is the main research technique used in this research. The collected theoretical as well as empirical data is analyzed and discussed in detail throughout the various chapters of the study to reach the conclusion by linking theory to the empirical approach. By doing

so, the research provides a critical review of the existing literature on liberation and terrorism in order to make an original contribution to the debate on terrorism and liberation movements.

By using comparison throughout the study between the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, this research aims to highlight the controversial nature of terrorism/liberation and how regional and international politics, including during and after the Cold War and following the outbreak of the Arab Spring, shape (and will continue to) the terrorism-liberation debate. Highlighting the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas' self-perception and considering the concerned states/bodies' view of the three non-state actors on units' levels, contributes to bridging the gap between the two opposing views through applying a theory-oriented approach. Finally, contextualizing the three case studies in settler-colonial settings (which is less the case in Lebanon) provides an understanding as to how concerned state and non-state actors view the issue of political violence and why it is significant.

Organization of The Study

In the Introduction, the researcher presents an overview of the issue of terrorism and liberation in a Middle Eastern context, theoretically and empirically, using a theory-oriented approach through connecting the theoretical part of the study with the empirical one, namely the theories of liberation/just war and terrorism vis-à-vis the view of concerned state actors of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. The chapter applies a theory-oriented approach to touch on the self-view (unit-level) of the three case studies as liberation movements and how it clashes with much of the international/state/intergovernmental view of these groups as terrorist organizations. The research lists why and how the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas view themselves as liberation groups and are also viewed as either liberation groups or terrorist organizations by relevant state actors and the impact their designation has on them.

In the Literature Review, by highlighting the issues of terrorism and liberation and taking the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as case studies, the research provides examples of how the unit (non-state actors) level of analysis have a drastically different view of the issue of terrorism compared to the state-level. In this study, Israel, France, Britain, the EU, US, the Arab League, the GCC, Iran and Türkiye as state actors and intergovernmental bodies are

considered. In addition, the research investigates the changing the view of relevant state actors towards the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and highlights the role of international politics and the Cold War between the US and the USSR, as seen in the case of the FLN and Hezbollah, and sectarian politics between the Saudi and Iranian axis, of which Hezbollah and Hamas have been a part. The research notes that sectarian politics had a strong impact on the designation of non-state actors, namely Hezbollah and Hamas, after the Arab Spring, in similar ways that the politics of the Cold War had an impact on the designation of the FLN as terrorist/liberation group during the 1950s and 1960s.

In Chapter one, the Theoretical Framework: Terrorism and Liberation, the study outlines the Just War Theory which calls for applying principles such as proportionality and discrimination, and the National Liberation Theory, which highlights taking arms and stresses the role of ideology as well as national education and history, provides a multi-faceted and reasonable theoretical framework of the three case studies. At the same time, Revolutionary Terrorism Theory provides the needed theoretical deliberation of state-actors that view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations. Since the debate between what designates non-state actors as liberatory or terrorist is not resolvable with these theoretical frameworks and the gap between the viewpoints and perceptions of resistance and terrorism are so wide between the non-state actors and state-actors, and state actors are usually those that 'designate' non-state actors, there is further research and exploration necessary to address this. Finlay proposes a theory of non-terrorist resistance that gives agency to non-state and state actors alike and accept that state and non-state actors might use terrorist tactics and that state-actors will put their interests first when deciding a group is terrorist or not.⁴⁹

Chapter two, the FLN of Algeria: Between colonial history and modern political practice, addresses the foundation of the FLN and the context in which it emerged in Algeria. The FLN used arms, adopted an ideology (socialist) and a strategy of targeting urban centers to create an international outcry in favor of the Algerian people. It is true that the FLN sided

⁴⁹ Finlay, p. 7.

with the Non-Aligned Movement and adopted a socialist ideology which has decreased the burden of listing it as a terrorist organization by France due to the politics of the Cold War. Some FLN leaders even used the term terrorism to describe their actions, considering it the only way for people under colonialism to attain their rights. The FLN's involvement in the Cold War not only meant receiving arms and training from the Non-Aligned Movement, hosting anti-US government figures but also importing a USSR-like economic model to Algeria. The Algeria-USSR-like economic model proved destructive and paved the way to the 1988 protests, the civil war in the 1990s and the 2019 protests over economic conditions in the country. The FLN has also applied a policy balancing between global powers benefiting from its ties with the USSR, China, Non-Aligned Movement, the US to balance against France, which proved to be successful.

Chapter three, Hezbollah's Ideology and Political Structures: Re-visiting its Liberation Discourse and Terrorist Designation in Theory and Practice, examines the liberation discourse of Hezbollah and its designation as a terrorist organization in light of its regional role, relations with Iran and the ongoing sectarian politics after the Arab Spring. Hezbollah sees itself as a legitimate force in Lebanese politics and it justifies keeping its arms under the pretext of Israel's occupation of Shibaa farms, which Lebanon claims to be occupied Lebanese territory and the UN considers part of Syria. Hezbollah, unlike Hamas, has been very clear since day one that it views itself as an extension of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Theoretically, the Theology of Liberation largely explains the self-perception of Hezbollah which saw in the Iranian clerks and theology an inspiration in its fight against other Lebanese factions during the civil war and later against Israel. Just like the FLN and Hamas, which were involved in civil wars, Hezbollah fought during the Lebanese Civil War. Some scholars, such as Eduardo Wassim Aboultaif, view Israel's war with Hezbollah in 2006 as a just war from a Lebanese point of view.⁵⁰

Different states have different views of Hezbollah. Not only this, some states and intergovernmental bodies make a differentiation between the political wing of Hezbollah and

⁵⁰ E.W. Aboultaif, "Just war and the Lebanese resistance to Israel," **Critical Studies on Terrorism**, 9(2), (2016), pp. 334-340.

its armed wing. Israel views Hezbollah as a whole a terrorist organization because of attacking Israel and making explicit calls to destroy it. So does the US, which attributes its designation of the group to its anti-US policies in the Middle East and its targeting of Israel. When it comes to the EU, however, it only listed the armed wing of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in 2013 following an attack in Bulgaria in 2012 that targeted Israeli tourists which it accused Hezbollah of standing behind. Hezbollah's relations with and support for Palestinian armed groups such as Hamas, namely providing them with weapons, training, and know-how, are the reasons why the EU view the group as terrorist, which is in line with the policies of Israel and the US. The Arab League and the GCC listed Hezbollah as a terrorist group in 2016 over its involvement in Syria, some GCC countries, and Yemen, in addition to its strong ties with Iran, which complicated the strategic environment for Hezbollah in the region.

The sectarian politics of the Middle East has impacted the designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in the Middle East region. Hezbollah clearly choosing to side with the Iran-led bloc against the Saudi-led bloc after the Arab Spring could be viewed as an emergence of a new regional order in the Middle East. In this emerging new regional order, Iran and Saudi Arabia, and their allies and proxies, fight over influence and control of the Middle East. The Lebanese group has been an active tool of implementing Iranian foreign policy in this process, thus increasing the negativity surrounding its view as a terrorist group by the anti-Iranian bloc. This is true in light of Hezbollah's earlier targeting of some GCC countries during the Iran-Iraq war. Hezbollah's intervention in Syria too, which is about survival due to the centrality of Syria in the group's line of communication and support from Iran through Iraq was another factor that contributed to isolating the Lebanese group. It is also part of the unfolding regional order which includes Iran and Saudi Arabia and their allies as rivals, thus increasing the view of Hezbollah as a terrorist group by specific anti-Iran forces in the post Arab Spring.

Chapter four, Hamas: A terrorist Organization or A Liberation Movement: Perspectives of International Relations, investigates Hamas' self-perception and states' view of the group (units' level) through investigating founding documents, statements, analyzing positions and

actions by especially focusing on its 1988 Charter and its 2017 document of general principles. The Hamas Charter, although it has articles stressing the liberation nature of Hamas, and its Palestinian nationalism in addition to its Arab and international dimensions, contains religious discourse which invites accusations of anti-Semitism against the movement. Considering Europe's anti-Jewish history, it is another factor why the EU, Israel and the US view the group as terrorist. Hamas has modified its language throughout the years and officially adopted a more moderate document in 2017, which accepts two-state solution without recognizing Israel, differentiates between Zionism and Judaism, and accepts non-armed resistance in addition to armed resistance as tactics for liberation. Yet, this document has done too little to change Hamas' terrorist designation by Israel and the West.

From a state/intergovernmental perspective, namely Israel and the US, and to some extent the EU, Hamas targets civilians and urban centers, which makes it fit the description of a movement that uses urban terrorism. The Just War Theory makes a distinction between terrorism and liberation by stating that liberation involves assassinations while terrorism involves the random use of violence against civilians. Throughout the years of Intifada, Hamas has targeted Israeli cities, public transportation, restaurants, and markets, which makes it similar to the FLN in this sense. The Theory of Just War recognizes people's right to self-determination but at the same time prohibits targeting civilians, the definition of which is still vague in the context of Hamas-Israel, which creates a dilemma for the group. From Israel's perspective, just like Hezbollah, Hamas has heavily used psychological warfare, in other words, psychological terrorism, against Israel, by video-taping its attacks, sending threats to Israelis, hacking into Israeli systems, and sending barrages of rockets into Israel, thus keeping Israelis inside shelters as Israel bombed Gaza.

Looking at the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, the latter has been impacted the most by its designation as a terrorist organization by Israel, the US, and the EU. This sense of isolation for Hamas has pushed the group to change its discourse, unlike the FLN and Hezbollah, though it did not result in removing the group off the terrorism lists of these countries. To add insult to injury, the politics of the Arab Spring has impacted Hamas' umbrella organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, which has been classified as a terrorist group in some

Arab countries, therefore impacting Hamas and contributing to its terrorist designation. Most recently, some courts and officials in countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt have made statements suggesting that Hamas is a terrorist organization, which complicates the surrounding environment for the group especially in light of its siding with the Iranian axis and its relations with Hezbollah. This is to say that the post-Arab Spring cold war has impacted Hamas negatively too, the same as it negatively impacted Hezbollah, but to a lesser degree for now.

Chapter five, Reflections on Liberation, Terrorism: FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, covers the analysis of the researcher vis-à-vis the theoretical and empirical parts of the study. The researcher calls for the need to develop the existing theories on liberation and terrorism to reflect the changing nature of liberation and terrorism especially in relation to including non-violent resistance as an increasingly acceptable approach alongside armed resistance. The researcher also calls for the need to study the foreign policy of non-state actors accused of terrorism, namely the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. It also calls for the need to highlight counterterrorism to make the debate, which is controversial in essence, a more balanced one. The researcher outlines the theories of terrorism and liberation that fit the case studies of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas from the point of view of these non-state actors and the relevant and involved state actors alike, keeping in mind the dynamics of international politics, especially the Cold War and the Arab Spring. The researcher concludes that state-actors will continue to put their interests first when it comes to viewing the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorism or liberation groups and this is unlikely to change. Regional and global politics such as the Cold War and the Spring will continue to be major factors that shape how state-actors list a group and why.

The Reflections Chapter draws similarities and differences between the three-case studies of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas by making cross-references and comparisons. The three groups have existed in settler-colonial contexts, which suggests that the use of violence is inherent to the colonial state, thus creating a dilemma for non-state actors fighting what they perceive as a just war. The three groups have social, economic, educational, and political activities, thus complicating the task for state actors that view them as purely terrorist. The

three case studies have been impacted differently by the politics of the Cold War with the FLN being impacted the least due to its Non-Aligned Movement membership and support and exploiting differences between the US and the USSR on one hand and differences within the Western bloc on the other hand, which gave it the freedom to maneuver. Hamas and Hezbollah have been impacted by the post-Arab Spring politics between the Iranian and the Saudi axes. This is especially true to Hezbollah, which has been designated as a terrorist organization by the Arab League and the GCC in 2016, and to lesser extent Hamas, whose umbrella organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, was viewed as such too by some Arab governments in 2013.

The Conclusion, notes that state or non-state-actors are not going to easily change their designation of the three state actors of this study, namely the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, because their designation of these non-state actors is tied to history, national interests, ideology, economic ties, approaches, and threat perception. At the same time, the three non-state actors will not change their view of themselves as liberation groups based on their statements, actions, and internal documents. This debate is rather about factors and conditions that make these state and non-state actors view the issue of liberation and terrorism so drastically different, including how Cold War and the Arab Spring politics played a major role in understanding these designations and the changes that have taken place since then.

As for Hezbollah in particular, and Hamas to some extent, the politics of the Arab Spring impacted the two groups the most. Hamas and Hezbollah have been at the heart of regional and international politics because of their strong ties to Iran and being part of the Iran-axis. Meanwhile, the concept of terrorism has gained a more negative interpretation after the end of the Cold War, and in light of the escalating Arab normalization bids with Israel. Hamas and Hezbollah are and will continue to find themselves increasingly isolated in the region. Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories might provide a relief to Hamas when it comes to the EU at least, yet as normalization with Israel increases, the group will find itself more strangled and the U.S. is unlikely to change its view of it. Countries such as Algeria, Qatar, Iran, Malaysia, and Türkiye will likely continue to maintain ties with Hamas in the future for political and historical reasons.

Literature Review

There are plenty of materials, studies, journal articles, books, letters, press releases, statements, and documents on the designation of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as liberation movements/terrorist organizations. However, much of the available literature on the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas is written from a state-centric point of view. Aside from founding documents and charters of the said non-state actors, most of the literature in this context comes from state-oriented perspectives. This is the case because addressing liberation, settler-colonialism, military occupation, self-determination, and legacy of colonialism is mostly done through the lenses of state-actors.

Another aspect is the lack of literature that explains the point of view of state-actors that consider the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as liberation groups such as Iran, or the self-perception of these groups is that these non-state actors made humble efforts to explain their discourses and how they perceive themselves to the rest of the world, except for stating their views in their founding documents, some of which were published decades ago. Except for the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas did not use the term terrorism to refer to their actions, as the concept has become very negative over the years, thanks to the politics of the Cold War, which provided the FLN with a cover of legitimacy and military support to conduct its attacks.

For this reason, the impact of designating the FLN as terrorist organization was not as negative and harmful as it was in the cases of Hezbollah and Hamas. Hezbollah and Hamas were negatively impacted the most by their designation as terrorist due to the end of bipolar politics and the rise of regional politics which they were part of, unlike the FLN which used balancing against global powers to its benefit. State differences over dealing with Hezbollah has contributed to the same end of lessening the isolation of Hezbollah up until the outbreak of the Arab Spring as not all state-actors and bodies view the group's political and military wings as terrorist/the same, the EU being a prime example.

The literature review reveals that state-actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist because they challenge state interests and values. States view political violence as

terrorism when it harms their interests and targets civilians including by taking hostages, kidnappings, indiscriminate shootings, piracy, threatening “the democratic order.”⁵¹ The literature also reveals that regional and international factors such as the Cold War and the Arab Spring have an impact on the process of designation. In the 1970s, the US viewed terrorism “as a minor annoyance within the larger cold war struggle.”⁵² Meanwhile, the EU’s focus on terrorism and counterterrorism has spread through a “supranationalization processes.” Therefore, countries such as the US increasingly coordinate their terrorism strategy with the EU, where 71% of EU nationals and 76% of US nationals share concerns about terrorism, whereas 54% of Americans and 28% of Europeans prefer a military solution to it.⁵³ This partially explains why the EU adopts a different approach to viewing Hamas and Hezbollah than the US. Among the three groups, the literature reveals that the FLN was more willing to accept the designation of its actions as revolutionary terrorism.

The available literature on the FLN unveils that the group was viewed through the lenses of revolutionary terrorism which the FLN saw as the only means to end French rule and at the same time to win the support of Algerians.⁵⁴ France’s view of the revolution waged by the FLN as an issue of law and (dis)order speaks volumes of how it viewed Algeria as part and parcel of France. Thus, the FLN’s taking arms would harm France’s established economic, political, and cultural interests in Algeria, largely increasing its overall dependency on Algeria, and therefore, was eventually deemed unacceptable by the French state. The FLN’s leaders were more willing to accept the revolutionary terrorism designation to describe their actions, viewing it as “the only method of expression of a crushed people.”⁵⁵ Thanks to the politics of the Cold War, the perception of terrorism was less negative than how it was perceived at the end of the Cold War. Hence, Hezbollah and Hamas did not have such a privilege of referring to their actions as terrorism.

⁵¹ William D. Perdue, **Terrorism and the state: A critique of domination through fear**, Library of Congress, 1989, p. ix.

⁵² Beverly Gage, “Terrorism and the American experience: A state of the field,” **The Journal of American History**, 98(1), (2011), p. 90.

⁵³ Christian Kaunert, “The external dimension of EU counter-terrorism relations: competences, interests, and institutions,” **Terrorism and political violence**, 22(1), (2009), p. 41.

⁵⁴ John G. Horgan, Kurt Braddock. **Terrorism Studies: A reader** (Eds.), Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2012.

⁵⁵ Thornton, p. 73.

The GCC's designation of Hezbollah, which maintains strong ties with Hamas, moved from imposing sanctions on the group in 2013 to listing it as a terrorist organization in 2016. This became possible after Hezbollah's military involvement in Syria, Yemen and some GCC countries such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, thus taking the GCC threat perception of the group to a new level.⁵⁶ Hezbollah was involved in the sectarian war in the region and the Iranian factor played a major role in designating it as such. Hezbollah's alleged involvement in Yemen and providing know-how to the Houthi group, another Iran-proxy, as Saudi Arabia says, only further complicated Hezbollah's ties with the GCC. The decision of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to cut diplomatic ties with Lebanon towards the end of 2021 is only a manifestation of the GCC's view of Hezbollah, at least in the short term. Hezbollah has always maintained ties with Hamas.

Hamas has too been negatively impacted due to its designation by some state actors in the Middle East as a terrorist organization. The GCC has always dealt with Hamas with caution, towing a sensitive line, while maintaining their relationships with the West so not to anger them, especially the US. But this working relationship with Hamas did not stay the same as it was impacted by sectarian politics following the Arab Spring, where Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain as well as Egypt, have distanced themselves from Hamas. Some Gulf officials such as in Saudi Arabia and the UAE have referred to Hamas as a terrorist organization and so did some Arab courts, including Egypt, whose ties with Hamas were from security lenses.⁵⁷ The increasing terrorist designation of Hezbollah and the growing ties between Israel and some Arab countries will likely contribute to further isolating Hamas.

The literature shows that state actors' viewpoints are prominent and are reflected in both the state-actors' narratives, in the literature and the reality on the ground for the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. Non-state actors are on the defensive in their attempt to negate their terrorist designation by state-actors and they continue to lack the privilege and power in this debate

⁵⁶ Imad K Harb, "The Hezbollah-Iran Pivot: the controlling agencies behind Lebanon's sectarian politics," 18 July 2016, *SAGE*, (2016), p.1.

⁵⁷ Ahmed Al Madani, "Qatar Crisis and Its Impact on the Palestinian Cause," **Proceedings of the International Conference on Contemporary Social and Political Affairs**, (2018), pp. 58-60.

of defining themselves. The following sections explore the available literature on the FLN, Hezbollah, and Hamas and the concerned state-actors view of them, as terrorist or liberation groups, connecting theory with the empirical part of the study. Consequentially, the researcher puts forward the suggestion by Finlay that the way out is a theory of non-terrorist resistance that bridges the gap between terrorism and liberation designations in the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, by looking at the existing theories of terrorism and liberation that gives agency to both state and non-state actors and provide a guide to their behavior before, during and after the end of war.⁵⁸

The View of The FLN and Its Tactics

The literature on the FLN states that France dubbed the Algerian War of Independence, *Harb Al-Tahreer* (1954-1962), as a campaign against law and order. The National Liberation Front of Algeria (FLN) waged a liberation war against France after it refused demands of granting Algerians their independence, as the Theory of Just War stipulates, a principle Walzer wanted to be a last resort and to avoid at all when possible.⁵⁹ The FLN sought every possible way to have a dialogue with the colonial authorities to get out of Algeria and to grant Algerians their long-awaited independence, the same as France did to neighboring Tunisia and Morocco. Making going to war its last resort did not convince the French to go to the negotiation table. Having been defeated in Indochina, there were voices in the French National Front (French: NFF) and military suggesting that the next war should be in Algeria. The French connection to Algeria was exceptional as France viewed Algeria part and parcel of its soil, using all possible means to stop any form of disobedience to its rule. The French state viewed the actions of the FLN not as liberation acts but rather as acts of riots that were attempting to create a state of disorder in the country and against the French state, and rule of law.

Since France believed that “Algeria is France,”⁶⁰ as Harvey G Simmons notes, it deemed it necessary to crush any Algerian revolt that would challenge its long settler-colonial rule in

⁵⁸ Finlay, **Terrorism and the right to resist: a theory of just revolutionary war**, 2015, p. 7.

⁵⁹ John W. Lango, “The just war principle of last resort. Instituto Galego de Estudos de Segurança,” **Internacional e da Paz**, 1(2), (2006), p.8.

⁶⁰ Harvey G. Simmons, **The French National Front: the extremist challenge to democracy**, New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 13.

the country by any means necessary. Paris' view of Algeria as French (Algérie française) had various serious implications on Algerians, the least of which was completely subjugating their economy to serve the interests of France which considered it a French territory in 1848.⁶¹ Not only this, France denied Algerians their identity, imposing French on them, not just at educational institutions, but in all walks of life. For this reason, Algerian resistance was centered around rejecting French cultural imperialism and attempting to keep the Algerian culture alive as exemplified by the Algerialization (reads Arabization) of the institutes of the Algerian state, especially the educational system, following independence as explained by Alf Andrew Heggoy.⁶² In the same context, Amílcar Cabral stressed the need to resort to national education to face the colonial authorities, by returning to the source, which he saw as the history of the African nation, and Algerialization of institutions of the state in post-independence Algeria is in line with his approach and this understanding.⁶³

The FLN's violence against French cultural imperialism is seen by Cabral as "returning to the source,"⁶⁴ a means to defeat the cultural dominance of the colonizer, and a process the FLN engaged in even after independence to minimize the still-strong French cultural influence in the country. P. François explains that French view of Algeria as French soil meant that France was not even willing to consider the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) as a revolution, but simply an issue of law and (dis)order.⁶⁵ In this context of education and culture, Cabral stressed the importance of education and cultural resistance outside the official institutions. He noted that an uneducated nation will be less able to lead a liberation struggle and called for re-creating a nation's own history and culture. The FLN pursued this by introducing Arabic after the end of the French rule as the medium of instruction at schools and state-institutions.⁶⁶ Tristan Dunning adds that Hamas and Hezbollah too have placed a

⁶¹ Steven Loyal, "The French in Algeria, Algerians in France: Bourdieu, colonialism, and migration," **The sociological review**, Vol. 57, No. 3, (2009), p. 407.

⁶² Alf Andrew Heggoy, "Education in French Algeria: An Essay on Cultural Conflict," **Comparative Education Review**, Vol. 17, No. 2, (1973), p. 180.

⁶³ Amílcar Cabral, **Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amílcar Cabral**, New York: African Information Service Monthly Review Press, 1973, p. 11.

⁶⁴ Cabral, **Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amílcar Cabral**, p.11.

⁶⁵ Canuel, p. 56.

⁶⁶ Cabral, **Return to the Source**, p. 11.

considerable importance on education, equating western culture and secularism to “de-culturalization, colonialism and exploitation.”⁶⁷

Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen assures that with the declaration of the Algerian war of independence in 1954, which aimed at defeating the regime created by France in Algeria, a brutal battle began especially in Algiers.⁶⁸ The FLN adopted guerrilla warfare tactics, including assassinations, planting bombs in urban centers, hit and run operations, and targeting French neighborhoods and military posts. The FLN’s use of arms and the excessive violence against France was in response to French state and settler violence against Algerians which was unprecedented in the country’s history. Ahmad Bin Bella, an FLN leader who became Algeria’s president after independence, shared with Cabral the need to take arms to revolt against colonialism, considering it central to the fight against settler-colonialism, which is too violent in nature.⁶⁹

Ali Haroun adds that besides targeting police stations as part of its urban terrorism campaign, a tactic both Hamas and Hezbollah used too, the FLN targeted Algerians working for France known as Hirakis, and European settlers, in attempt to push France to leave Algeria. The attacks also targeted Algerians in France who adopted a different approach than that of the FLN. Algerians who refused to pay “revolutionary taxes” to the FLN were targeted as well.⁷⁰ The FLN knew that targeting civilians on a large scale would lead to a more violent French reaction which would result in an international outcry to pressure the French authorities. This is exactly what happened after the May 1945 protests which the French authorities crushed with an iron fist, killing 45,000 Algerians in a few weeks, thus pushing more Algerians to stay away from the French authorities and resulting in more international pressure. As a strategy, inviting more violence from the settler-colonial or occupying authorities has been

⁶⁷ Tristan Dunning, “Mind Forged Manacles”: Hamas, Hezbollah and Orientalist Discourse,” **Australian Political Studies Association conference**, University of Queensland, (2008), pp. 6-9.

⁶⁸ Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen, “The spectacle of de Gaulle’s coup d’état: The Situationists on de Gaulle’s coming to power,” **French Cultural Studies**, Vol. 27, No. 1, (2016), p. 97.

⁶⁹ Amilcar Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, NYU Press, New York, (1979), p. 121.

⁷⁰ Ali Haroun, “Le 25 août 1958: Une date tombée dans l’oubli. **El Watan**, El Watan, 25 August 2008, <https://www.elwatan.com/archives/histoire-archives/le-25-aout-1958-une-date-tombee-dans-loubli-25-08-2008> (26 June, 2021).

adopted also by Hezbollah and Hamas against Israel. They have carried out attacks that result in more violent Israeli attacks that invite international criticism of Israel exemplified during the 2006 Lebanon War and most recently during the 2021 Gaza war, which saw the killings of hundreds of Palestinian civilians by Israel.

The FLN and The Politics of The Cold War

The politics of the Cold War and the FLN siding with the Non-Aligned Movement exploited the weaknesses of France by deeply understanding global power balances. This meant that the French designation of the FLN as a terrorist organization that threatened French interests in Algeria, used violence against civilians, and whose members are involved in riots and disorder, would have less impact on the Front compared to Hezbollah and Hamas. After Algeria's independence, the FLN's connection with the Non-Aligned Movement and importing a socialist economic model from the USSR would have a major impact on Algeria for years to come, including before and after the Algerian civil war in the 1990s, which proved to be destructive to Algeria, as outlined by Byrne.⁷¹ This FLN relationship with different global powers and blocs and its strategy of balancing these, eased the impact of the FLN's terrorist designation, but had negative impacts on the group later.

Compared to Hezbollah and Hamas, Martha Hutchinson asserts, the FLN successfully exploited internal politics and these strategic or political balancing acts to its benefit, by engaging in a relentless campaign of revolutionary terrorism targeting French cafes and restaurants as part of its liberation war, which drew successful attention to the cause of Algerians in the international community.⁷² The FLN, just like Hezbollah and Hamas, were successful at using psychological terrorism by targeting markets and public spaces which had a strong psychological impact on French settlers in Algeria, French politicians, international actors and the Algerians themselves. Meanwhile, Zahera Harb suggests that Hezbollah was very successful at employing the media war by videotaping its attacks against Israeli targets

⁷¹ Jeffrey James Byrne, "Our Own Special Brand of Socialism: Algeria and the Contest of Modernities in the 1960s," (2009), *Diplomatic History*, 33(3), pp. 427-430.

⁷² Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 383.

in Southern Lebanon, which had a positive impact on its supporters as part of its campaign to push Israeli forces out of Southern Lebanon.⁷³

However, Sam F. Ghattas notes that the FLN-Non-Aligned Movement relations meant that it would remain distant from western powers, most importantly the US, maintain closer ties with the USSR and China, and build strong ties with regional powers such as Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia who helped the FLN realize Algeria's independence in France in 1962.⁷⁴ The politics of the Cold War helped the FLN apply a strategy of power-balancing in the face of global powers, by exploiting differences among the US, France, the USSR and China for its own benefit. Emphasizing the impact of the Cold War on the FLN, Julian Go states that the Algerian Constitution, introduced in 1963, declared independence from France by forming a socialist government and society "ensured by the workers,"⁷⁵ which affirms the extent the Cold War politics had on Algeria during and after the War of Independence, especially during the Black Decade and the civil war of the 1990s.

The FLN and Psychological Terrorism

The literature mentions that the FLN, although at a high cost, used revolutionary and psychological terrorism to draw the attention of the world, inflicting high casualties on French forces and settlers in Algeria to force them to leave the country and to create an international uproar in favor of Algerians. The cost-benefit analysis of the FLN gave the Front further assurance that France would leave Algeria, which eventually happened, as explained by David Webber and Arie W. Kruglanski in the psychological theories of terrorism.⁷⁶ The psychological impact of the FLN's attacks against France and European (most of them were French) settlers in Algeria was undeniable and it pushed more Algerians

⁷³ Zahera Harb, **Channels of resistance in Lebanon: liberation propaganda, Hezbollah, and the media**, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011, pp. 178-9.

⁷⁴ Mohammed Lakhdar Ghattas, **Algeria and the Cold War: International Relations and the Struggle for Autonomy**, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017, pp. 19-23.

⁷⁵ Julian Go, "A globalizing constitutionalism? Views from the post-colony, 1945-2000," **International Sociology**, Vol. 18, No. 1, (2003), p. 76.

⁷⁶ David Webber and Arie Kruglanski, "The social psychological makings of a terrorist," **Current opinion in psychology**, 19, (2018), p. 131.

to join the FLN as France turned more violent against Algerians refusing its long colonial rule.

Likewise, Ronald Schleifer writes, starting from 2009, Hamas has invested more resources in its psychological war against Israel by producing various materials in Hebrew that target the Israeli public opinion, especially during escalations with the Gaza Strip, which left a relatively negative impact on Israelis and boosted the morale of the Palestinians.⁷⁷ Hamas and Hezbollah paid more attention to their international perception as the end of the Cold War resulted in a bipolar world that would translate into more sanctions and isolation (reads containment) by the US and its allies against the two groups. This policy of containment against Hamas and Hezbollah by Israel and the United States materialized considering the US-Israel strong alliance in the Middle East and the fact that two groups have killed American nationals in their attacks, while engaging in war with Israel. The use of such psychological tactics to impact Israelis might have been effective throughout the course of war, but instead it contributed to the negative and terrorist image of the two non-state actors, adversely affecting their status. According to Schleifer, this contributed to the motivations and justifications to designate them as terrorist organizations by relevant state actors.⁷⁸ Despite this designation, the FLN maintained a view of itself as a national liberation movement.

Internal Documents of The FLN and Self-View

The Proclamation of Independence of the FLN in 1954 reveals that the group considered Islam a part of its ideology as stated in its Proclamation.⁷⁹ The FLN outlined the religious foundation to gather Algerians which is in line with the notion of using religion as a vehicle to get involved in public life. The FLN, at the same time, adopted a socialist ideology and was one of the main forces within the Non-Aligned Movement. Christopher Wise shares the idea that the FLN's Liberation discourse saw Islam as a central pillar to the Algerian identity

⁷⁷ Ron Schleifer, "Psychological Warfare in Operation "Cast Lead," in **Psychological Warfare in the Arab-Israeli Conflict**, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, (2014), pp. 165-171.

⁷⁸ Ron Schleifer, "Propaganda, PSYOP, and political marketing: The Hamas campaign as a case in point," **Journal of Political Marketing**, 13(1-2), (2014), pp.152-3.

⁷⁹ **National Liberation Front**, "Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation," p.1.

as opposed to the Christian identity of the French settlers. The use of the word *Nasara* to refer to the French settlers and soldiers/European settlers, and *Mujahideen* to refer to the FLN fighters, is rooted in this debate and context of Muslims versus Christians, in other words Algerians vs. European settlers.⁸⁰ The politics of the Cold War would play into how this socialist and Islamic mix of ideology benefitted the FLN. The FLN fighters emerged before the Islamic revolution in Iran and the rise of what became known as religious terrorism,⁸¹ which gained a negative connotation especially after the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979) and the subsequent fall of the USSR (1991). Therefore, Hezbollah and Hamas were more impacted than the FLN fighters from the shift in perceptions after these major historical events and onwards.

In the context of state violence and terrorism, Zohra Drif, one of the main women figures of the FLN, outlines the reasons that made her join the Front in her book, *Inside the Battle of Algiers*. She notes that the French's brutal repression of the Algerian people, especially in the eastern Mountains areas, pushed her to join the FLN as her last resort after strikes failed to push France to agree to the demands of the Algerian people. According to Drif, this included French massacres that claimed the lives of thousands of people in response to FLN attacks on French targets after exhausting all possible means to engage with the French authorities through dialogue, as explained by the Theory of Just War. The area of Skikda saw many of these massacres by the French, from where Drif's family comes. French massacres pushed *Drif* to join the local resistance in 1955, which led to her arrest in 1956.

As the Theory of Just War notes, all means of dialogue should be exhausted before waging a war. According to *Drif*, the Algerian resistance to the French rule also included non-armed resistance, such as the general strike of January 20, 1956, in which large sectors of the Algerian society took part. Upon their participation in the strike, her four brothers were arrested then released. As a result, they decided to hide in the mountains and joined the armed

⁸⁰ Christopher Wise, "The actuality of Frantz Fanon: critical Fanonism, Thomas Sankara, and Islamic 'Resurgence'", *Arena Journal*, (12), (1989), pp.129-132.

⁸¹ Edgar O'Ballance, **Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, 1979-95: The Iranian connection**, Germany: Springer, 1996, pp. 44-48.

resistance led by the FLN against the French.⁸² The early non-violent beginnings of the FLN resonates with the history of Hamas which started non-violently too and turned to violence over the years. The FLN and Hamas turning to violence (as a strategy, tactic) can't be viewed in isolation from the violent nature of settler-colonialism in Algeria and Palestine. According to Hezbollah, the ongoing effects of Israeli foreign domination of Lebanon eventually led to Hezbollah's violent resistance. Joseph Alagha asserts that Hezbollah too, according to its literature, emerged initially as a social movement that provided educational and medical services to the Shiites of Lebanon, who were largely marginalized, or in Hezbollah's words "oppressed (mustad'afin)".⁸³

The French View of the FLN

According to Maxime Macé, France viewed the FLN differently over the years from being a (dis)order and law issue to a terrorism/insurgency/war issue. Initially, the French authorities described the insurgency of the FLN as merely events, yet after the attacks escalated, the French Governor-General of Algeria, Jacques Soustelle, decided to confront the FLN, a move he described as "an evil confrontation."⁸⁴ Alagha notes that in this confrontation, French settlers in Algeria carried out attacks against Algerians in response to the FLN attacks against them, with France arming and asking them to protect themselves. France's arming of settlers claimed the lives of 12,000 to 20,000 Algerians between 1954-1962.⁸⁵ The armed involvement of French settlers killing Algerians and the violent nature of the French state posed a moral dilemma to the FLN and made it more challenging to make a distinction between combatants and non-combatants as Walzer calls for. The Just War Theory notes that all means for dialogue should be exhausted before resorting to war. The FLN responded to the French refusal to give the Algerians their independence by waging urban guerrilla

⁸² Zohra Drif, **Inside the Battle of Algiers**, Washington DC: Just World Books, Virginia, translated from the French by Andrew Farrand, 2017, pp. 55.57.

⁸³ Joseph Alagha, **Hizbullah's documents: from the 1985 open letter to the 2009 manifesto**, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011, p. 4.

⁸⁴ **Maxime Macé**, "Guerre d'Algérie: du commencement à la fracture (1954-1958)," 1 November 2014, FranceSoir, Available at: <https://buff.ly/371mwoy> (24 May 2022).

⁸⁵ Macé, 2014.

warfare, which was seen as terrorist by the French.⁸⁶ The use of violence by the FLN was why France viewed the actions of the FLN as terrorism. In addition, the FLN threatened French economic, military, and diplomatic interests in Algeria and its cultural influence charted over 132 years, which prompted the French state to view it as terrorist.

Table 1: Actions by France and the FLN

S N	France	FLN	Nature
1.	Arming settlers between 1954-1962: 12,000 to 20,000 Algerians killed.	Attacks against French targets between 1954-1962: 42,000 attacks killing 18,000 French nationals and wounding 65,000 others.	Indiscriminate
2.	France sent more than 500,000 troops to Algeria.	The FLN organized 30,000 to 40,000 Algerians between 1954-1957.	Disproportionate
3.	French forces killed some 45,000 Algerians in May 1945.	86 European settlers (mostly French) were killed, including 11 soldiers.	Indiscriminate & Disproportionate
4.	France claims that 300,000 Algerians were killed between 1954-1962.	The FLN claims that one and a half million Algerians were killed between 1954-1962.	Disproportionate

Source: Francesoir and Francois, P., (2008) and Bolt Rasmussen, Mikkel (2016).

According to Yacine Tassadit, this bloody confrontation between France and the FLN produced a generation in Algeria and France that was more willing to accept the fact that Algeria could no longer be part of France, a notion some in the French Fourth Republic, such

⁸⁶ Krista Mosbacker, "Are the National Liberation Front (FLN) Terrorists or Heroes?", **Journal of History**, (2015), p.21.

as Charles de Gaulle understood after too late.⁸⁷ The Algerian War of Independence, thus, became known as one of the bloodiest wars for independence in modern history, forcing France, in the end, to agree to the demands of the FLN and Algerians, the most important of which was granting them their independence. The Algerian people from all walks of life took part in the revolution which awakened their sense of nationalism against France. This was translated into bloodshed and massacres on the ground, the lion's share of which was paid by Algerians, who became united behind the FLN.

Francois P. notes that the FLN, despite its liberation discourse, waged thousands of attacks against French targets. France viewed the FLN as a group that aimed to create lawlessness and disorder by waging an estimated 42,000 attacks, killing 18,000 French nationals and wounding 65,000 others between 1954-1962. Many in the French military think the counterinsurgency in Algeria was an operational and tactical success story unlike the political outcome of it, which they view as a political failure. According to them, this failure had a lasting impact on the French state and military for years to come.⁸⁸ France saw divisions between two groups, one advocating departure from Algeria and another calling for keeping Algeria French. The decision of de Gaulle to withdraw from Algeria created serious opposition and rifts in France that still surface from time to time. The French military believed that only brutal force would work against the FLN insurgency, which viewed using violence as a last resort for a crushed people. Not only this, but some French army officers also rejected the orders of their civilian leaders, describing the move to grant Algeria its independence a complete betrayal. The French withdrawal from Algeria also led to a coup and two assassination attempts against Charles de Gaulle, revealing the extent of French opposition to the withdrawal from Algeria.⁸⁹

General de Gaulle, too, initially adopted the French view of Algeria as French, denying Algerians their national aspirations, and he tried during his 1958 visit to Algeria to reach a

⁸⁷ Tassadit Yacine, "Pierre Bourdieu in Algeria at war: Notes on the birth of an engaged ethno-sociology." **Ethnography**, 5, No. 4, (2004), p. 490.

⁸⁸ Canuel, p. 56.

⁸⁹ N. S. Shvab, "Algeria and France: A difficult Path to Independence," **Young Scholars Search in the Humanities**, Russia: Saratov State University, 2017, p. 57.

peace agreement with the FLN leaders, urging them to run for the National Assembly election. The FLN rejected de Gaulle's proposal, and the elections were won by advocates of integration with France, which the FLN boycotted. There were still some Algerians that advocated for integration so there were divisions among Algerians. Overall, de Gaulle was not an advocate of keeping Algeria under French rule by force, unlike many of his generals. De Gaulle understood well that as part of the politics of the Cold War, the anti-colonization movement was gaining more support globally and the conditions were in favor of the FLN and Algerians. Despite numerous difficulties, the least of which were the Organization of the Secret Army (French: OAS) attacks against Algerians, de Gaulle managed to convince his cabinet to give Algeria its long-awaited independence. This came after France granted neighboring Tunisia and Morocco their independence too. This only happened when France realized, at a very high cost, that the price of granting Algeria its independence, will outweigh the benefits of keeping Algeria French against the will of the FLN and Algerians.⁹⁰

The FLN, being a socialist movement, had drawn upon a lesson learnt from Vietminh in Indochina, a Vietnamese communist nationalist movement advocating for independence from France, where the French suffered a great defeat. The FLN adopted a nationalist approach inspired by the pan-Arab discourse of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser along with making Islam central to its discourse. France believed that the Algerians, at the start of the insurgency, did not lend much support to the FLN because of the brutal means it used against them indiscriminately. According to N. S. Shvab, the French response to the FLN and Algerians was so brutal. However, the lack of proportional French response to the FLN, as suggested by the Theory of Just War, served the exact opposite of the French goal of spreading fear amongst Algerians not to join the FLN. The FLN advocated for the independence of Algeria and equality for all. The goal of the FLN, according to France, was to draw the attention of the world through carrying out provocative actions and terrorist attacks. The FLN used psychological warfare to control the population through radio programs, letters, articles, and violence to intimidate Algerians, especially in areas away from

⁹⁰ Shvab, p. 140.

city centers, which had less French presence, a tactic that proved to be effective against France as world pressure on France mounted, urging Paris to end its colonial rule in Algeria.⁹¹

Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen draws the attention that France used state-violence as part of its counterterrorism efforts in Algeria. This was exemplified by the French army's response to the FLN's use of force, where the French authorities used torture and killings, claiming the lives of 300,000 Algerians between 1954-1962, according to French sources, and one and a half million Algerians, according to Algerian sources.⁹² The Algerian War of Independence not only had an impact on Algerian society, part of which fought alongside the French, but also affected mainland France, almost throwing it into a civil war, following the declaration of French Algeria at the hands of right-wing settlers, officials and colonial officers. As a result of this declaration, Charles de Gaulle took office again and the rebellion of the French army stopped for a while in French Algeria in 1958.⁹³ However, the Algerian War of Independence that lasted eight years continued and had a tremendous impact on the future of Algeria for decades to come. France recently has shown some readiness to accept some responsibility for alleged crimes committed against the Algerian people whereby French president Macron, during a meeting in 2021, apologized to Anne Boumendjel, the wife of FLN lawyer Ali Boumendjel, for killing him under torture, according to Albert Jean-Marc.⁹⁴

According to Shvab, France believed that the FLN established the National Army of Liberation (LAN) in an attempt to carry out terror operations and to have a firm control over the FLN's formations and guerrilla units. The French claimed that the FLN, in order to be successful, organized itself in a manner that did not allow its members, except for the high-ranking officials, to identify each other. To carry out its war of independence, the FLN organized 30,000 men and trained them in Algeria and Tunisia in preparation for war. The number jumped to 40,000 in 1957, reflecting the growing popularity of the FLN at the time. After 1957, France started to realize that the FLN war in Algeria was not a law and (dis)order

⁹¹ Shvab, p. 140.

⁹² Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen, p. 97.

⁹³ Shvab, p. 98.

⁹⁴ Jean-Marc Albert, "Affaire Boumendjel: Emmanuel Macron n'en fera jamais assez aux yeux du pouvoir algérien," **FigaroVox**, 08 March, 2021, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/monde/affaire-boumendjel-une-victoire-pour-la-pensee-decoloniale-20210308> (26 June 2021).

issue, but rather a full-scale insurgency.⁹⁵ From the French point of view, Alagha claims, the FLN's use of violence ignited the retaliatory terror of the anti-separatists, prompting France to form self-defense groups from which the OAS later emerged.⁹⁶

The Impact of The Designation on the FLN

The literature reveals that the FLN did not see being listed as a terrorist organization by France or its use of violence as a major challenge. The international bipolar system, mainly the politics of the Cold War and the FLN's siding with the Non-Aligned Movement, positively helped the FLN in its efforts then; the FLN was able to establish ties with other parties and have access to training and weapons as well as diplomatic support by building on differences between major powers. Just like the FLN, Hezbollah has adopted a more regional approach by strengthening its ties with Iran and Syria. This explains why it was impacted the most by the politics of the Arab Spring compared to the FLN and Hamas. However, today's regional and global politics are more complicated and different. Hezbollah, which emerged towards the end of the Cold War, has outlined in its Open Letter in 1985 that it "reject(s) both the USSR and the US, both Capitalism and Communism, for both are incapable of laying the foundations for a just society."⁹⁷

Unlike the FLN which was able to use their position in the Non-Aligned Movement, Hamas and Hezbollah on the other hand have been affected by US and its allies focus on containing non-state actors in the region who do not have the kind of protection and support that existed for the FLN in the Non-Aligned Movement. Karen A. Feste adds that Hezbollah was involved in kidnapping Soviet diplomats in 1985, and its Cold War involvement also included kidnapping foreign nationals in what known as the hostage crisis from 1980-1990, which helped serve the interests of Iran and Syria as well.⁹⁸ Hamas, on the other hand, got less involved in the politics of the Cold War as it emerged in 1987, where the US used a strategy

⁹⁵ Shvab, p. 98.

⁹⁶ Maurice Vaisse (Eds), **Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie** Andre Versaille, 2011, pp. 449-450.

⁹⁷ Alagha, "Hezbollah's documents: from the 1985 open letter to the 2009 manifesto," p 4.

⁹⁸ Karen A. Feste. "Terrorist negotiation strategy in Lebanon," in Guy Olivier Faure and I. William Zartman, **Negotiating with Terrorists: Strategy, Tactics and Politics** (Eds), Abingdon: Routledge, 2020. pp. 87-94.

of containment against state and non-state actors, according to Aran Amnon.⁹⁹ However, Israel's strong ties with the US, which emerged as the only superpower, and the EU, meant these global powers viewed the group as terrorist. The US' strategy of containing some state-actors has continued after the end of the Cold War, though labeling state actions as terrorism is more challenging. However, US containment primarily has been focused on non-state actors by the US and its allies, including Israel, and this applies to Hamas and Hezbollah.

Revolutionary Terrorism too, which the FLN is more willing to accept as defining of some of its actions from 1954-1962, compared to Hezbollah and Hamas, applies to the three case studies especially the FLN in Algeria. Though the elements of cold war politics allowed for the FLN to use particular strategies for liberation from France, Algeria's adoption of the Soviet economic model after independence eventually led the way to an internal civil war and protests in 1988-91 and 2019. The cold war politics have too impacted Hezbollah, although indirectly, as will be discussed in the following section of the literature review.

Hezbollah's Foundation and Structure

The Lebanese Hezbollah Shiite group, roughly translated into *the Party of God*, was established in 1982 in Lebanon by Lebanese cleric Hassan Fadlallah. It was inspired by the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978, where the party's leaders spent some time in the city of Najaf in Iraq, a holy city for Shiite Muslims, during which they forged the needed political, religious, and social ties with Iranian clerics to establish the party. Hezbollah views itself as a resistance movement against the western presence in Lebanon, including Israel. Although, its attacks against Israeli, American, French, and Italian targets in the 1980s gave it the needed domestic legitimacy in Lebanon as a resistance group, it also gave it the international designation as a terrorist organization by state-actors such as Israel and the US, and intergovernmental bodies such as the EU and the GCC. Edwin O. Rueda

⁹⁹ Amnon Aran, "Containment and territorial transnational actors: Israel, Hezbollah and Hamas," **International Affairs**, 88(4), (2012), p. 20

advocates that Hezbollah's ideology is based on two founding concepts: *Jihad* and martyrdom.¹⁰⁰

Understanding the nature of Hezbollah is essential in this debate. Due to Hezbollah's wide network of social services, it held eight out of 27 seats in the Lebanese parliament in 1992. In 2006, following Israel's destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure, the supporters of Hezbollah threatened to take to the streets demanding the Lebanese Prime Minister give the group one-third of the cabinet. Hezbollah would not dare to ask for this share in the cabinet before 2006; however, its programs of paying the families of those killed due to the 2006 war, and its reconstruction efforts gave it the political legitimacy foundation to do so.¹⁰¹ Hezbollah's goal and main principle of resistance is emphasized clearly in its Open Letter in 1985, which states that:

“Our primary assumption in our fight against Israel states that the Zionist entity is aggressive from its inception...Therefore, our struggle will end only when this entity is obliterated. We recognize no treaty with it, no cease-fire, and no peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated.”¹⁰²

Hezbollah's strategy of resistance gave it much of the support it received from the Lebanese public, most of which was lost during and after the Arab Spring.

Hezbollah is largely tied by its loyalty to Iran.¹⁰³ To spread its ideology, Hezbollah built a specific structure, which consists of the military, political, and social wings, directly connected to the *Shura* Council.¹⁰⁴ Matthew Levitt discusses the role of the *Shura* Council in Hezbollah's centralized structure that takes responsibility for running the affairs of the group,

¹⁰⁰ Edwin O. Rueda, “New Terrorism? A case study of Al-Qaida and the Lebanese Hezbollah,” **(Master Thesis)**: Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California, (2001), pp. 57-58.

¹⁰¹ Michael Keene, “Social Justice Initiatives as A Legitimizing Force as Seen In Hamas And Hezbollah,” **Rivier Academic Journal**, 3, (2007), p.3.

¹⁰² Michael Thomas Jackson, “Hezbollah: organizational development, ideological evolution, and a relevant threat model,” **(PhD Dissertation)**: Washington DC, Georgetown University, (2009), p. 69.

¹⁰³ Cam Caldwell and Mayra Canuto-Carranco, “Organizational terrorism” and moral choices—Exercising voice when the leader is the problem, **Journal of Business Ethics**, 97(1), (2010), p.159.

¹⁰⁴ James B. Love, “Hezbollah: A Charitable Revolution,” **(Monograph)**: Kansas, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, (2008), pp. 52-56.

and at the same time has a decentralized command of groups operating abroad.¹⁰⁵ According to Levitt, the decentralization of the group command and structure was done intentionally to give the group more flexibility to operate. Despite its decentralized structure, which also involves a top-down approach of control, “Hezbollah purposefully structures the command and control of its covert operations...to be as opaque as possible.”¹⁰⁶ Daniel Odin Shaw adds that Hezbollah’s access to other groups outside Lebanon such as Hamas and the Houthis, further strengthens its liaison ability, and gives it more operational freedom, which influenced its terrorist designation by the GCC, while leaving the relationship with Iran and political relations with other parties and state-actors to its political leadership.¹⁰⁷

Regardless of its social and political structures, Hezbollah has been classified as a terrorist group by the US, the EU, the UK and most recently by some Arab countries including by the GCC in 2016. Since its foundation and due to its strong ties with Iran and its leaders, and repeated statements of being inspired by the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Hezbollah is viewed mostly as an Iranian proxy in the Middle East regional order, with Israel-linked sources not even considering it a Lebanese national group in the first place as noted by Naim Qassem, the deputy head of the group.¹⁰⁸ Not only this, during the first days of the establishment of Hezbollah, the coffins of its fallen fighters were wrapped with Iranian flags, which reveals its Iran-inspired theology of liberation and its strong ties to the Iranian axis. This practice was later replaced, and its fallen members were wrapped by the group’s flag. According to Jacques Neriah and Shimon Shapira, the strong ties the group has with Iran have contributed to its terrorist designation by the GCC and the Arab League after the Arab Spring.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Matthew Levitt, “Hezbollah Finances: Funding the Party of God,” in J. K. Giraldo and H. A. Trinkunas (Eds.), **Terrorism Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspective**, Redwood: Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 145.

¹⁰⁶ Matthew Levitt, “Hezbollah’s Criminal Networks: Useful Idiots, Henchmen, and Organized Criminal Facilitators,” in H. Matfess and M. Miklaucic (Eds.), **Beyond Convergence: World Without Order**, Washington D.C: Center for Complex Operations, National Defense University, 2016, pp. 159–160.

¹⁰⁷ Daniel Odin Shaw, “Beyond necessity: Hezbollah and the intersection of state-sponsored terrorism with organized crime,” **Critical Studies on Terrorism**, 12(4), (2019), pp. 596-597.

¹⁰⁸ Qassem, p. 22.

¹⁰⁹ Neriah and Shapira, p. 4.

As part of the Iran-Iraq war, Hezbollah also targeted GCC countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Terence D. Trenchard argues that the US considers Hezbollah a terrorist group funded by Iran to increase Iranian outreach and influence in the Middle East. It believes that Hezbollah's increasing military capabilities in the region might harm the interests of the US and its main ally in the region, Israel.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Hezbollah directly targeted American forces in Lebanon in 1982, 1983 and 1984, killing hundreds of American marines, which early on influenced the US view of it as working against the interests of the US in the region. These attacks also claimed the lives of American diplomats and US state department officials.

As noted by Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders, the US believes that Hezbollah will continue to be on the terror list because its "animosity toward the United States has not abated."¹¹¹ Additionally, Hezbollah's support for Palestinian armed groups such as the Islamic Jihad and Hamas including providing them with arms and know-how is another factor in the US and Israel designating it as a terrorist group. Moreover, as explained by Krista E. Wiegand, Hezbollah trained members of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad when Israel deported 415 of them to Southern Lebanon for one year in 1992.¹¹² Wiegand notes that Hezbollah rejects Israel's existence quoting the group as saying, "The only way to negate Israel is for them to leave Palestine—it's not good enough until they leave completely."¹¹³ These factors are directly in opposition to US and Israeli interests and provide justifications as to why these two state-actors to view Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

Throughout the region, the Arab League and the GCC, and more recently a considerable portion of the Arab population, started viewing Hezbollah as Iran's proxy and a destabilizing force especially after the group's direct military involvement in Syria in 2013 and its alleged involvement in Yemen and the internal affairs of GCC countries. Andrew Dalack notes that

¹¹⁰ Terence D. Trenchard, "Hezbollah in Transition: Moving from Terrorism to Political Legitimacy," **Strategy Research Project**, The US Army, U.S. Army War College, Pennsylvania, 24 March 2011, p. 3.

¹¹¹ Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders, "Know thy enemy: Hezbollah, 'terrorism' and the politics of perception," **Third World Quarterly**, 26(1), (2005), p. 192.

¹¹² Krista E. Wiegand, "Reformation of a terrorist group: Hezbollah as a Lebanese political party," **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, 32(8), (2009), p. 672.

¹¹³ Wiegand, p. 672.

the group plays an important role in Lebanon and in the region.¹¹⁴ Since it started providing services to the marginalized, Hezbollah gained much popularity in Lebanon, representing the Shiites of the country and advocating for marginalized groups in the society. Hatem El Zein argues that it is in line with this understanding that Hezbollah was first named “*the Movement of the Deprived*” when it was first established in 1974 by Musa Al-Sadir.¹¹⁵ Unlike Hamas and to a lesser degree the FLN, Hezbollah emerged as a force in Lebanon during the civil war, which made seeking violence central to its approach from day one and this explains why the group only sees the conflict with Israel through the lenses of arms. Hamas and the FLN too were engaged in civil war at different stages, which explains the role of colonial violence in civil wars.

The Hezbollah Case and Theories of Terrorism and Liberation:

Theoretically, among other theories of liberation and terrorism, Revolutionary Terrorism and the Theory of National Liberation partially explains the actions, structures, and beliefs of Hezbollah at both units and international levels of analysis. Unlike the FLN and Hamas, Hezbollah was clear from the very beginning that it sees itself as a continuation of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in Lebanon. Although the Theology of Liberation has emerged in Central and South America, it made a move to the Middle East, with Christian, Jewish and Muslim theologians using it as a basis to explain their religious commitment and engagement in different causes, including in Palestine,¹¹⁶ Syria, Lebanon and Egypt.¹¹⁷ According to Wiegand, for Hezbollah, the theology and clerics of Iran continue to provide inspiration and the group continues to swear allegiance to them.¹¹⁸ Year after year, Hezbollah’s relations with Iran and its Middle East ally Syria has only grown stronger, especially after the 2011 Syrian Civil War, in which Hezbollah intervened militarily, a move that contributed to its

¹¹⁴ Andrew Dalack, “Hezbollah: A localized Islamic resistance or Lebanon’s premier national movement?”, (MA Thesis): Department of Near East Studies University of Michigan, (2010), pp. 3-5.

¹¹⁵ Hatem El Zein, “Identifying and understanding the media discourse of Hezbollah,” **Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication**, 30(2), (2014), p.119.

¹¹⁶ Naim Stifan Ateek, **Justice and only justice: A Palestinian theology of liberation**, New York: Orbis Books, (2014), p. 55.

¹¹⁷ Khaled Abou El Fadl, “Islam and the Theology of Power,” **Middle East Report**, (221), (Winter, 2011), pp. 28-31.

¹¹⁸ Wiegand, pp. 669-680.

terrorist designation by the GCC in 2016. To a lesser degree, the impact of the Arab Spring applies to Hamas, which has strong ties with Iran and views Sunni Islam as central to its approach and ideology. It is important to clarify that although Hamas has strong ties to Iran, it does not adhere to the Shite branch of Islam as Hezbollah does.

The Theology of Liberation, on which Hezbollah bases its approach of liberation, is strongly connected to the Theory of Just War. According to David Luban, the Theology of Liberation was mainly formulated by theologians and provides a religious justification to waging war.¹¹⁹ It calls for meeting a few conditions before, during and after waging a war. Eric E. Smith concludes that the Just War Theory could be applied to armed non-state actors including in the case of Hezbollah in Lebanon. This is especially the case with Israel's invasion of Lebanon from 1978-1982, and its 2006 war with Hezbollah vis-a-vis the principles of proportionality, discrimination, and the concept of last resort.¹²⁰

The Theory of National Liberation also partially provides an explanation for the case of Hezbollah, the same as it provides a theoretical explanation for Hamas and the FLN. It is central to Hezbollah and Hamas' approach and thinking of taking arms and using political violence. Cabral advocates taking arms to end foreign domination and makes it central to his theoretical deliberations, which applies to Hezbollah at the unit-level of analysis of this study. Cabral also stresses the role of ideology, which is part and parcel of Hezbollah's formation, as the group repeatedly speaks of its inspiration by the Islamic Revolution in Iran. As Cabral raises in the Theory of National Liberation, Hezbollah places a strong emphasis on the importance of education to prepare its members spiritually and intellectually to win the war with Israel.¹²¹ Hamas¹²² and the FLN equally emphasized the importance of education in their literature, which makes them similar to Hezbollah in this regard, although the three adopt different ideologies.

¹¹⁹ David Luban, "Just war and human rights," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Winter, 1980), p. 173.

¹²⁰ Eric E. Smith, *Just War Theory and Non-State Actors: Using an Historical Body of Knowledge in Modern Circumstances*, United Kingdom: Routledge, (2020), p. 240.

¹²¹ Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amílcar Cabral*, p. 11.

¹²² Paul Scham, "Hamas: Ideological rigidity and political flexibility," *United States Institute of Peace*, Vol. 31, (2009), p. 18.

Hezbollah's Tactics, War with Israel and Designation

Hezbollah waged a psychological war against Israel and made even more use of media to maximize its impact. Psychological terrorism and media war have been an integral part of Hezbollah's strategy against Tel Aviv. Hezbollah's use of psychological warfare has been one of the most effective approaches by the group in terms of impact and documentation, which also later inspired Hamas to follow suit. According to Pete Ajemian, Hezbollah fighters targeted Israeli (and pro-Israeli) forces in Southern Lebanon, and the group would make sure it documented and published these attacks to boost the morale of its supporters and maximize its popularity in Lebanon and beyond.¹²³ Not only this, but Hezbollah's strategy also proved to be effective in gaining more popular support, and contributed to spreading fear among Israeli and Southern Lebanese Army (SLA) forces. Ron Schleifer notes that the Lebanese group waged a campaign against Israeli and SLA forces towards the end of the 1990s, with visual media being one of the main tools in this psychological war.¹²⁴

Due to the nature of Israel's direct military occupation of Southern Lebanon and its dependence on loyal Lebanese forces, namely the SLA, to control Southern Lebanon, including populated areas, Hezbollah was able to engage in a guerrilla warfare and urban terrorism that largely surprised Israeli forces, attacking them quickly before disappearing among the population again. Paul Wise argues that this contradicts the principles of Just War Theory, which calls for avoiding civilian targets or fighting from within populated civilian areas.¹²⁵ Israel found it increasingly difficult to face this kind of warfare as Hezbollah, having known the terrain and enjoyed popular support, had the upper hand in this warfare. Israeli forces were largely vulnerable to the attacks of the Lebanese group, which had gained military experience through its engagement in the Lebanese civil war and improved the capabilities of its fighters in waging a guerrilla warfare. Daniel Byman suggests that attacks by Hezbollah targeting Israel were effective, pushing Israel to withdraw from Southern

¹²³ Pete Ajemian, "Resistance beyond time and space: Hezbollah's media campaigns," **Arab Media & Society**, 5, (2008), p. 15.

¹²⁴ Ron Schleifer, "Psychological operations: A new variation on an age-old art: Hezbollah versus Israel," **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, 29(1), (2006), p.16.

¹²⁵ Paul H. Wise, "The epidemiologic challenge to the conduct of just war: confronting indirect civilian casualties of war," **Daedalus**, 146(1), (2017), p.148.

Lebanon in May 2000, and Hezbollah claimed victory.¹²⁶ By comparison, Nurit Kliot and Igal Charney advocate that the FLN too used urban terrorism and guerrilla warfare against France, as has Hamas against Israel to a much lesser degree, because of the nature of the Israeli military occupation which separates Israeli settlers from Palestinian population centers.¹²⁷

The 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel was a turning point in the group's history, performance, and international designation, which drastically increased Hezbollah's popularity throughout the region and motivated Iran to increase its military aid to the group. The 2006 Lebanon war could be viewed as a classic example of unjust wars especially the element of proportionality.¹²⁸ At the time, a considerable portion of Lebanese people showed readiness to stand behind Hezbollah as Israel bombed their towns and infrastructure, although there were criticisms of the group's war with Israel especially from parties close to Saudi Arabia as part of the growing sectarian rift between the Kingdom and Iran. This criticism is attributed to the huge destruction the war caused to Lebanon's infrastructure. According to Phillip Manyok, Hezbollah, on its part, made use of this increasing popular support to present a vision for the Lebanese society setting itself as an alternative to the Lebanese government as the latter failed to protect Lebanon from Israel's attacks in 2006.¹²⁹ This, in addition to Hezbollah's social network, created a strong popular base for the group in Lebanon, and at the same time made the US view it as "a hybrid terrorist organization."¹³⁰

Hezbollah, The Iran Connection, The Arab Spring and The Cold War

The Iranian impact on Hezbollah throughout its foundation and later expansion is undeniable. However, viewing Hezbollah through these lenses only deprives the group of its own agency as a Lebanese party. Even though Iran is the major supporter of Hezbollah, and the group adopts its theology, it is not fully accurate to assume that the group lacks the agency and

¹²⁶ Daniel Byman., "Should Hezbollah be next?," **Foreign Affairs**, Vol. 82, No. 6, (2003), pp.54-66.

¹²⁷ Kliot N, Charney and Igal Charney, "The geography of suicide terrorism in Israel," **GeoJournal**, 66(4), (2006), p. 359.

¹²⁸ Eric E. Smith, **Just War Theory and Non-State Actors**, United Kingdom: Routledge, (2020), p. 240.

¹²⁹ Phillip Manyok, "State within a State: How Hezbollah Programs are challenging the Lebanese Government Legitimacy," **(Research Paper)**: Nova Southeastern University, Florida, (2011), pp. 3-4.

¹³⁰ Azani, "The hybrid terrorist organization: Hezbollah as a case study," p. 903.

agendas in Lebanon and beyond. According to Fariborz Mokhtari, Iran's support for Hezbollah has gone up and down over the years, increasing the most during the reign of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and after 2017 (depending on sanctions and oil prices), further empowering the group and pushing it to run for Lebanon's elections.¹³¹ Bryan Early suggests that by running for Lebanese elections, Hezbollah sees itself as a legitimate Lebanese political force that has the right to have representatives both in the Lebanese parliament and government despite the Israeli view that Hezbollah is more than a Lebanese party yet smaller than the Lebanese state.¹³²

In the same vein, Krista E. Wiegand notes that Hezbollah's strong Iran connections, hostile discourse against Israel, targeting US and French forces in Lebanon, and unfriendly tone towards the West have made the US, Israel, and the EU list it as terrorist.¹³³ Hezbollah declared that it has trained and sent arms to Palestinian groups such as Hamas, a factor that contributed to the terrorist designation by those states and state collectives. Hamas, on the other hand, has always called for copying the Hezbollah model in the Gaza Strip. It has repeatedly expressed appreciation for the Hezbollah support. Geraint Alun Hughes concludes that the relationship between both non-state actors have been strong except for a limited deterioration which was largely fixed following Hamas' withdrawal from Syria after the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, in which Hamas refused to support the Syrian government, placing both Hamas and Hezbollah at the heart of the politics of the Arab Spring.¹³⁴

Despite their differences over Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas have maintained a strong relationship with each other, and Hezbollah continues to condemn Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, governed by Hamas. The relationship between both groups is getting warmer over time as they both share the same enmity towards Israel and their dislike of some Arab

¹³¹ Fariborz Mokhtari, "Countering Terrorism: Could Hezbollah and Hamas Show the Way?", **Contemporary Security Policy**, Vol. 27, No. 3, (2006), p. 378.

¹³² Bryan R. Early, "Larger than a party, yet smaller than a state: locating Hezbollah's place within Lebanon's state and society," **World Affairs**, 168, (2005), p.115.

¹³³ Wiegand, p. 672.

¹³⁴ Geraint Alun Hughes, "Syria and the perils of proxy warfare," **Small wars & insurgencies**, Vol. 25, No. 3, (2014), pp. 526-527.

governments, which they think are in line with American and Israeli policies in the region. On the other hand, the FLN, the main party in the current Algerian government chose to distance itself from Hezbollah to avoid international pressures that might result from such ties by countries such as France and the US, while it continues to support the Palestinians including Hamas (but only politically) in response to popular demands and a feeling of a shared and similar history. Hezbollah's relationship with Hamas will continue to strengthen the position of the US and Israel to keep them on the terror lists. Amon Aran asserts that the US foreign policy towards Russia today and what the US calls "rouge" states such as Iran, and Israel's foreign policy towards Hamas and Hezbollah, suggest that "transferability" is part and parcel of the US and Israel's foreign policy visa-vis Hamas and Hezbollah and their main sponsor, Iran.¹³⁵

The Open Letter of Hezbollah reveals that the group was involved too in the politics of the Cold War as it was in opposition to both the US and the USSR.¹³⁶ Mathew Levitt notes That the group was also involved in targeting western forces in Lebanon on behalf of Syria and Iran, which benefited the USSR, and some Gulf Arab countries as part of the Iran-Iraq War.¹³⁷ The politics of the Arab Spring, however, has impacted Hezbollah the most compared to Hamas and the FLN. Hezbollah's military intervention in Syria on the side of Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad impacted its relationship with Hamas for a period of time but both groups chose to resume relations following the outbreak of the Arab Spring and after some Arab countries designated them as terrorist organizations. Philipp O. Amour argues that this new regional order emerged in the post Arab Spring era, which created new regional blocs and further weakened the fragile order in the region.¹³⁸ Byman suggests that the Arab Spring and its ongoing reverberations have severely contributed to the isolation of Hezbollah and Hamas due to their strong ties with Iran, but more importantly due to Hezbollah's intervention in Syria and in the affairs of some Arab countries, and due to the ideological

¹³⁵ Aran, pp.835-855.

¹³⁶ **ICT Staff**, "The Hizballah Program - An Open Letter," Israel. International Institute for Counterterrorism, 1 January 1998, <https://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=294#gsc.tab=0> (25 March 2020).

¹³⁷ Michael Levitt, "Could Hamas Target the West?" **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, 30(11), (2007), p.928.

¹³⁸ Amour, "Introduction: The Regional Order in the Gulf Region and the Middle East," p. 4.

connection between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.¹³⁹ This is especially true to Hezbollah and to a lesser degree Hamas, which explains the Arab League and the GCC's listing of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in 2016. Jennifer L. Jefferis concludes that Hamas has been indirectly impacted by the designation of its umbrella organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, as a terrorist organization and by the anti-political-Islam discourse of some Arab governments, with some courts and officials in countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE effectively calling Hamas a terrorist organization and cracking down on political Islam.¹⁴⁰

The Arab League's designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in 2016 makes the surrounding environment more challenging for both Hezbollah and Hamas. Hezbollah, along with Hamas, but to a lesser degree, found themselves at the heart of an emerging regional order between different regional blocs in the Middle East. It is not only Israel and the West that sees the Lebanese and Palestinian groups as terrorist due to their Iran connections, but also a number of Arab countries that once saw Hezbollah and Hamas as political forces in Lebanon and Palestine. Furthermore, more Arab peoples and governments will likely continue to view Hezbollah as part of the Iranian axis, costing the group much of its popularity in Sunni-majority Muslim countries. The designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist group by governments in the Arab world has contributed to increasing sectarian tensions in the region. The fragile regional order that emerged after the Arab Spring, according to Amour, would thus be further weakened by sectarian tensions.¹⁴¹ Hezbollah, which is at the heart of these sectarian tensions, will continue to be isolated in Lebanon and more sanctions are expected to be imposed on the group which would impact Lebanon's political system and at the same time push Hezbollah to further tighten its grip on the neck of the Lebanese state for its own survival in a hostile region.

¹³⁹ Daniel Byman, "Israel's pessimistic view of the Arab Spring," *The Washington Quarterly*, 34(3), (2007), p. 129.

¹⁴⁰ Jennifer Jefferis, **Hamas: Terrorism, Governance, and Its Future in Middle East Politics: Terrorism, Governance, and Its Future in Middle East Politics**, Connecticut: Praeger, 2016, p. 2.

¹⁴¹ Amour, "Introduction: The Regional Order in the Gulf Region and the Middle East," pp. 409.

The Establishment of Hamas and Internal Documents of Hamas

Born from the womb of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas emerged in the Palestinian Territories in 1987 as a social, political, and military force. The outbreak of the First Palestinian Intifada uprising against Israel coincided with the establishment of Hamas. Hamas' internal documents including its 1988 Charter viewed that the group views itself as a legitimate liberation movement with Islamic background and Palestinian national approach. The Muslim Brotherhood, the umbrella organization of Hamas, has been present in Palestinian politics in different forms, but more specifically with Hamas' emergence, and during the Arab Israeli war of 1948. Nathan Brown mentions that the Islamic Complex in the Gaza Strip was founded in 1973, through which Hamas ran its network of NGOs, where most Hamas leaders worked and where Hamas' supreme leader Ahmad Yassin headed the Complex in the 1970s.¹⁴² As part of its participation in the Intifada, Ziad Abu-Amr explains that the Muslim Brotherhood issued a statement in December 1987 urging Palestinians to face the Israeli occupation, and Hamas was officially founded in 1987. However, the name Hamas was not used until a year later in 1988 when Hamas issued its Charter, adds Abu-Amr.¹⁴³ Ahmad Yasin, Hamas' founder, according to Abu-Amr, saw it necessary to establish a new group that served as an extension of the Brotherhood to resist the Israeli occupation. Yasin believed that using a different name will give the group more freedom to act and avoid any backlash due to Hamas' association with its umbrella organization. Yasin thought that the new name could help the Intifada continue, and the Brotherhood could claim Hamas as its own, while it could act independent of it.¹⁴⁴ Additionally, Hamas outlined its particular ideology, goals and political plans in its Charter issued in 1988 and in other internal documents.

As for its ideology, the movement's 1988 Charter explained that Islam is a system for life, from which it reaches its concepts and ideology, as well as the universe and humanity. Hamas outlines in its Charter that it is the Palestine branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, stressing that

¹⁴² Nathan J. Brown, "Principled or Stubborn? Western Policy toward Hamas," **The International Spectator**, 43(4), (2016), pp.77.

¹⁴³ Ziad Abu-Amr, "Hamas: a historical and political background," **Journal of Palestine Studies**, Vol. 22, No. 4, (1993), pp. 7-9.

¹⁴⁴ Brown, p. 11.

the umbrella organization has a comprehensive explanation and understanding of life. According to the Charter, the movement accepts as its members Muslims, “who are loyal to God,” and adopts its ideology and guard its secrets.¹⁴⁵ The Charter, at the same time, notes that Hamas is a Palestinian national movement. The goals of Hamas include supporting the weak and the oppressed, a discourse that is also used by Hezbollah, as well as defeating “falsehood.”¹⁴⁶ To achieve these goals, the Charter explains, Palestine should be considered an Islamic Trust for which all Muslim subjects worldwide are responsible. The movement rejects the path of peace talks to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, noting that giving up any part of British Mandate Palestine (that includes today’s Israel) is like giving up Islam, and advocates the use of *Jihad* as the only way to liberate Palestine.¹⁴⁷ Hamas issued a political document in 2017 outlining its vision and changes from the original Charter, in which Hamas’ use of Islamic theology that was outlined in the Charter has now shifted into a more nationalistic discourse.

As a result of the mounting regional and international pressure on Hamas, the group issued a Document of General Principles and Policies in May 2017, which reflected its new approach. The movement accepted a Palestinian state on the 1967 boundaries, yet it refrained from recognizing Israel. Another important principle stated in the document was Hamas’ insistence on fighting Israelis not because of their religion, but because of their occupation of the Palestinian Territories, and that it rejects anti-Semitism and Zionism as two forms of explicit racism. The movement, however, rejected the idea of recognizing Israel by any means.¹⁴⁸ In the same document, the group also separated itself from the Muslim Brotherhood, negating any organizational connection between the two, a move that reflects the impact of the Arab Spring on Hamas. It also offered readiness to adopt non-armed resistance along with armed resistance as a strategy to establish a Palestinian state on the 1967 boundaries. The 2017 document adopts a more practical political discourse compared

¹⁴⁵ Maqdsi, pp. 122-124.

¹⁴⁶ Abu-Amr, p. 11.

¹⁴⁷ Maqdsi, pp. 124-126.

¹⁴⁸ **Hamas**, “A Document of General Principles and Policies,” The website of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, 1 May 2017, <http://hamas.ps/en/post/678/a-document-of-general-principles-and-policies> (4 March 2019).

to its 1988 Charter and avoids using religious rhetoric. The Hamas 2017 document also contains ambiguous articles that allow for loose interpretation and flexibility, giving the movement flexibility to shift goals, which the 1988 Charter did not have the capacity to do.

Khaled Horoub suggests that such articles show Hamas has learned from the language used in its 1988 Charter, which was full of explicit statements and articles that could be interpreted more rigidly and in one way (often religious).¹⁴⁹ The Hamas 2017 document, therefore, adopts both nationalistic and religious discourse, in line with its theology of liberation, asserting Hamas' founding principles, and giving the movement the regional and international appeal, which would allow it to sell itself to different actors in the region and the West and get itself off the US and EU terror lists. The liberation discourse of Hamas, too, has been part and parcel of its statements over the years. Jason Blessing adds that Hamas has moved from adopting a more religious discourse to a nationalist one, and from the total liberation to the phased liberation.¹⁵⁰ Hamas' commitment to non-violence and its recent increasing focus on targeting military targets in Israel goes in line with the later contributions by Walzer to the Just War Theory, where he highlights the notion of "non-combatant enemy."¹⁵¹ Despite Hamas' involvement in non-violent resistance, it has also targeted Israeli civilians, considering all Israelis as armed and part of the settler-colonial project of Israel. Doug Lieb points that Israel's targeting of civilians and ambiguity about specifying what makes a civilian/militant still poses a challenge in Palestine/Israel.¹⁵² The same applies to Hezbollah, which just like Hamas, targeted Israeli towns with rockets without a distinction between the military and civilians. It is worth mentioning that Israeli settlers are also involved in armed and violent attacks against Palestinian civilians especially in the West Bank.

Hamas' documents, both its 1988 Charter and 2017 document, stress the liberation nature of the group. In the chapter "The Liberation Ideology of Hamas," Azzam Altamimi, a childhood

¹⁴⁹ Khaled Hroub, "A Newer Hamas? The Revised Charter," **Journal of Palestine Studies**, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2017, p. 100.

¹⁵⁰ Jason A. Blessing, "From "Total Liberation" to "Phased Liberation": Temporality and Identity in the Provisional IRA and Hamas," (**PhD Dissertation**): Virginia, Virginia Tech, (2013), p. 85.

¹⁵¹ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 334.

¹⁵² Doug Lieb, "Gaza: A Just War: A Response to Jerome Slater," **Tikkun**, 24(2), (2009), p.58.

friend of Khaled Mishaal, a long-time Hamas leader, urges that “[t]heir language has become virtually indistinguishable from that of any freedom fighter in Latin America, South Africa or East Asia.”¹⁵³ In a speech he gave in 2013, Khaled Mishaal, the outgoing head of the political bureau of Hamas, and its current leader outside Palestine, stressed that Hamas is “a national liberation movement.”¹⁵⁴ Rashmi Sing notes that marking twenty-four years since its establishment, Hamas noted in a press statement that “Our people are...determined to achieve liberation, and to establish their independent state.”¹⁵⁵ Despite Hamas’ insistence on its nature as a liberation movement, which combines both nationalism and Islam, the movement has long been designated as terrorist by different parties, including Israel, the United States, the European Union, and more recently by some Arab governments, as the group was part and parcel of the sectarian politics of the Arab Spring by choosing to side with the Iranian axis, which Hezbollah is part of too. The FLN, being the force behind government in Algeria, was less impacted by state-level politics of the Arab Spring, but it was impacted by protests that broke against it as part of the waves of pro-democracy protests of the Arab Spring in 2018 in Algeria.

How Do State Actors View Hamas?

Aligning with Israeli and US policy, the EU listed Hamas as a terrorist organization in 2001, keeping the group on the terror list after it won the 2006 PLC elections, which the EU supported and monitored to promote democracy in the Palestinian Territories. Catherine Charrett urges that the EU chose “its strategic interests”¹⁵⁶ by continuing to adopt the US and Israel position vis-à-vis Hamas after 2006, as it enjoys strong economic and political ties with both countries. Both the US and Israel view Hamas as a terrorist organization which should face sanctions and the Palestinian people, by extension, who chose Hamas in the elections, “should be punished for voting for terrorism.”¹⁵⁷ The US and Israel wanted Hamas to face sanctions due to its refusal to recognize Israel after it won the PLC elections. The EU adopts

¹⁵³ Azzam Tamimi, **Hamas: Unwritten Chapters**, London: Hurst, 2007, p. 147.

¹⁵⁴ Aljamal, p. 41.

¹⁵⁵ Rashmi Singh, “The discourse and practice of ‘heroic resistance’ in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict: The case of Hamas,” **Politics, Religion & Ideology**, Vol. 13, No. 4, (2012), p. 539.

¹⁵⁶ Catherine Charrett, **The EU, Hamas and the 2006 Palestinian Elections: A Performance in Politics**, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019, p. 25.

¹⁵⁷ Charrett, p. 25.

a slightly different view of Hamas than Israel and the US, although, according to Almut Möller the EU “decided to block all aid to the Hamas government.”¹⁵⁸ The EU position vis-à-vis Hamas considers both its military and political wings as terrorist, but EU officials have repeatedly spoken to Hamas, directly and indirectly, and there were attempts by EU legal bodies to reconsider Hamas’ designation, following some legal efforts by EU bodies and nationals, which have failed so far.

From Israel’s point of view, Hamas propagates a policy based on using armed struggle to destroy the State of Israel. Israel claims that Hamas has resorted to using violence and terrorism against civilians including children. The group, Israel adds, has over the years trained suicide bombers to target Israeli urban centers which are densely populated to inflict more damage on Israelis, such as targeting malls, markets, shopping centers, and bus stations. For Israel, there is no difference between the political and military wings of Hamas. Efraim Halevy explains that for this reason, Israel assassinated the supreme leader of Hamas who was on a wheelchair in 2004.¹⁵⁹ Israel views Hamas and its commitment to political violence a threat to its very existence and it has over the years taken actions to eliminate this threat including by means that resulted in considerable Palestinian civilian losses. Israel refuses to engage with Hamas before the group gives up its arms and recognizes Israel, which Hamas refuses to do. This suggests that Israel is likely to continue to view Hamas as terrorist in the short and long term. Hamas has over the years strengthened its arms arsenal which suggests that the group and Israel will unlikely change their perceptions of the other and that arms will continue to be the language both actors will use to communicate.

Stephen Sloan and Sean Anderson draw the attention that according to Israel, after its deportation of 415 Palestinians, mostly Hamas members, to Southern Lebanon in 1992, these members had the opportunity to meet with Hezbollah members, who taught them how to make explosives.¹⁶⁰ This connection between Hamas and Hezbollah likely pushes countries

¹⁵⁸ Almut Möller, “After Gaza: A New Approach to Hamas,” **The Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy**, February 2009, p.1.

¹⁵⁹ Efraim Halevy, “Israel's Hamas Portfolio,” **Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs**, 2(3), (2008), p.41.

¹⁶⁰ Stephen Sloan and Sean Anderson, **Historical Dictionary of Terrorism**, London: The Scarecrow Press, (2002), p.195.

like Israel and the US to view it as terrorist, especially since Hezbollah has targeted both Israeli and American interests. The same applies to the GCC, where increasingly countries have viewed Hamas with terrorist lenses because of its ties to Iran and Hezbollah after the Arab Spring. According to Aron Mannes, with the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada and the assassination of the supreme leader of Hamas Ahmed Yasin by Israel, Hezbollah has also provided Hamas with the know-how to manufacture weapons.¹⁶¹ Hamas has used these weapons during its subsequent military confrontations with Israel, strengthening Israel's perception of the two groups as terrorist which pose serious threats to its existence. Hamas has also been involved in kidnapping Israelis, a tactic that was used by the FLN and Hezbollah too. It is not coincidental that Hamas has been influenced by Hezbollah as both non-state para-military groups have the same enemy: Israel. They also have the backing of the same regional ally, Iran.

The US cites Hamas' targeting of Israeli civilians and the actions of its military wing, the Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, against Israel, as a justification to list it on the Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) list, issued by the US Department of the State. American nationals, although not directly targeted, have lost their lives in Hamas' attacks against Israel. Glenn E. Robinson, a scholar who researched Hamas, sees Hamas' designation as an only terrorist group as problematic because it denies the fact that Hamas is also a social, religious and educational group with thousands of followers, similarly to Hezbollah and the FLN. It also ignores that Hamas uses violence "periodically" to achieve specific purposes. The group uses violence and engages in social and political work; viewing its social actions and commitment to arms as separate does not help provide a comprehensive image of Hamas.¹⁶² According to Youssef Cohen et al., some western nations, which cite the use of violence as a justification to view Hamas and non-state actors such as Hezbollah and the FLN as terrorist, are

¹⁶¹ Mannes, Aron, "Dangerous Liaisons: Hamas after the Assassination of Yassin," **Middle East Intelligence Bulletin**, 6, (2004), p, 4.

¹⁶² Glenn E. Robinson, "**Hamas as social movement, Islamic activism: a social movement theory approach**," Indiana University Press, 2004, pp.112-113.

themselves the product of violence, namely countries that emerged in Europe after 1648 and the rise of nation states.¹⁶³

Despite the US and EU's designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization, the group has not directly attacked any Western target thus far. Mathew Levitt, a scholar who studied Hamas also, advocates that Hamas is a national Palestinian movement which adopts a violent approach, and unlike other terrorist organizations, has thus far only targeted Israel, not the West. While western nationals have been killed in Hamas' bombings accidentally, the movement did not target western allies of Israel, differently than Hezbollah that launched attacks against Israeli targets in the EU as well as against American, French, and Italian forces in Lebanon. Levitt notes that Hamas is unlikely to target the West, or Israeli targets abroad, but these calculations might change in the future.¹⁶⁴ The regional order in the Middle East, after the Arab Spring, which is not in favor of Hamas, will make the group less likely to change its approach, as this change may result in further isolation and invite new sanctions against it, where donor money and financial transactions by the EU and the US used by the Palestinian government, run by Hamas after election, were blocked.

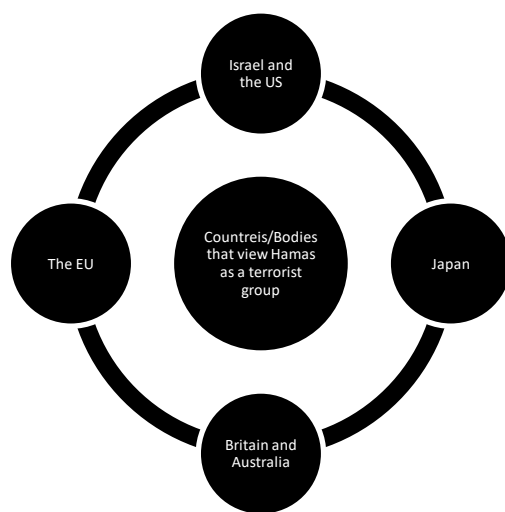


Figure 1: Countries/Bodies that view Hamas as a terrorist group

¹⁶³ Youssef Cohen, Brian R. Brown and A. F. K. Organski, "The paradoxical nature of state making: The violent creation of order," **American Political Science Review**, 75(4), (1981), pp.901-910.

¹⁶⁴ Levitt, "Could Hamas Target the West?" p. 941.

On the other hand, Israel, with the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000, used a violent approach towards Palestinian factions, including Hamas. The policy of Israel's iron fist against the Palestinians prompted a violent response led by Hamas and other factions, whereby they waged a campaign of suicide bombings against Israel.¹⁶⁵ Despite its advocacy of political violence, Hamas has at some stages refrained from targeting civilian objects in its direct attacks starting from 2005. Hamas has too refrained from admitting targeting civilians during Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip in 2008/9. Hamas, thus, lives what seems to be a moral dilemma, where it sometimes targets civilian objects and claims otherwise. At the same time, Boaz Ganor draws the attention that Hamas seeks to change its designation as a terrorist organization, a tactic that will make the EU, the US and even some Arab countries, which have strong ties with Israel, skeptical of the group.¹⁶⁶ This is true in light of Hamas' strong ties with Hezbollah, and the ways Hamas uses some of Hezbollah's tactics, such as waging psychological warfare against Israel.

Hamas and Theories of Liberation and Terrorism

Theoretically, the Theory of Just War, the National Liberation Theory, and Revolutionary Terrorism, explain the actions of Hamas against Israel. Following Israel's Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip against Hamas and other Palestinian factions in 2008/9, Hamas seems to have realized the full impact of psychological warfare, whereby Hezbollah's influence over the group in this regard can't be denied. Schleifer notes that "Hamas created a successful and unique campaign, in which violence—bombings and guerrilla warfare—were used together with a massive persuasion campaign."¹⁶⁷ By using violence, Hamas was able to create an uproar internationally, following years of the group being viewed as an illegitimate terrorist organization especially in the West. Schlifer adds that the group has realized the importance of waging a war and social media to win people's hearts and minds, as was the case with the 2014 military escalation between Palestinians in Gaza and Israel.¹⁶⁸ Jinjin Zhang notes that Hamas has too launched a social media campaign on Twitter in English such as #AskHamas,

¹⁶⁵ Shamir Hassan, "Hamas: A New Phase of Palestinian Resistance," India: **Proceedings of the Indian History Congress**, Vol. 66, (2005), p. 1317.

¹⁶⁶ Ganor, p. 303.

¹⁶⁷ Ron Schleifer, "Propaganda, PSYOP, and political marketing," p.163.

¹⁶⁸ Ron Schleifer, p. 169.

which aims at explaining its positions to the outside world and to highlight its liberation discourse, a move which reveals Hamas' interest in reaching out to the outside world.¹⁶⁹ This focus for Hamas is unlike Hezbollah, which was not interested in promoting itself due to the political nature of the Arab Spring and unlike the FLN, because of Cold War politics.

Unlike the FLN and Hezbollah, Hamas has engaged less in guerrilla warfare with Israel because of the nature of the conflict where Israeli settlers/forces and the Palestinians live separately from one another. According to Singh, guerrilla warfare in the context of Hamas and Israel is mainly limited to specific confrontations and is evident during Israel's military operations against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. More specifically, guerrilla warfare between Hamas and Israel took place on a limited scale during the Second Palestinian Intifada and in 2008/9 and 2014 when Israeli forces invaded parts of the Gaza Strip and Hamas used rocket attacks against Israel, an increasingly sophisticated form of guerrilla warfare over the past 22 years.¹⁷⁰

Hamas, just like Hezbollah and to a lesser extent the FLN, has largely used Islamic Theology as a driving force behind its actions against Israel. Hamas' Islamic discourse is still prominent even after issuing its 2017 political document. As Paul Scham explains, Hamas leaders and members have always sought theological explanations for their attacks against Israel including suicide bombings.¹⁷¹ Hamas' theology is explained by the Theory of National Liberation advocated by Cabral,¹⁷² which gives importance to theology, embodied in its Islamic approach, and national education respectively. Hamas believes in the need to take arms and apply national education to prepare its members spiritually and intellectually and views this theological and religious education as a necessary foundation for its members to be able to fight Israel. Hamas achieves this by organizing regular weekly educational meetings for its members to study Islamic texts. The theological interpretation of Hamas'

¹⁶⁹ J. Zhang, "The Politics of Representation on Social Media: The Case of Hamas during the 2014 Israel–Gaza Conflict," *Arab Media and Society*, Vol. 24, (2017), p. 11.

¹⁷⁰ Rasmi Singh, *Hamas and suicide terrorism: multi-causal and multi-level approaches*, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2013, p. 5.

¹⁷¹ Scham, p. 18.

¹⁷² Cabral, *Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral*, p. 11.

behavior can also be connected to the Just War Theory, which explains how “just wars”¹⁷³ should be waged.

Keeping Israel’s view of Hamas in mind and looking at the nature of Hamas’ war with Israel, it would be more comprehensive and appropriate to look at its fight against Israel through the lenses of urban terrorism. Despite Hamas’ view of its actions against Israel as legitimate resistance, Israel, and other non-state actors and intergovernmental bodies such as the US and the EU view its actions as illegitimate terrorism. A big part of Hamas’ campaign against Israel has targeted urban centers including bus stations, restaurants, markets, main squares, and more recently major cities.¹⁷⁴ To a lesser degree, the FLN, and Hezbollah too have targeted urban centers as part of their guerrilla warfare against France and Israel respectively. During the Second Palestinian Intifada, Hamas (and other factions) targeted urban centers in Israel that proved to be effective, pushing Israel to respond with more violence against the Palestinians and to build a new wall that separates the West Bank from Israel. Although Hamas’ attacks against Israel considerably threatened its security, they brought international condemnation against the group. On the other hand, Israel and France’s targeting of civilians, as state-actors, “has the effect of mobilizing other civilians and bringing them into the insurgent camp,” as outlined by Walzer.¹⁷⁵ Israel has additionally targeted Palestinian urban centers to pressure Hamas and other Palestinian factions to cease their attacks against it. Israel used the same tactic against Hezbollah in Lebanon, all aiming at distancing the population from these non-state actors, which in some cases backfired.

The Impact of Hamas Designation in Light of The Cold War and The Arab Spring

Hamas was less impacted by the Cold War politics compared to the FLN and Hezbollah as it emerged towards the very end of the fall of the USSR. Its ideology too was critical of any approach that is not Islamic, which by extension included the USSR. However, according to Michael Herzog, Hamas has been seriously impacted by its designation as a terrorist group by Israel, the US, and the EU, especially after it won the 2006 PLC elections, Israel, the US,

¹⁷³ Kennedy, pp.1-21.

¹⁷⁴ Lian Zucker and Edward H Kaplan, “Mass casualty potential of Qassam rockets,” **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, 37(3), (2014), p. 262.

¹⁷⁵ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 334.

and the EU, in an attempt to tame the movement, designated it as a terrorist group, seriously impacting Hamas (effectiveness, popularity, leadership).¹⁷⁶ The fall of the USSR and the emergence of the US as the only superpower has further complicated the equation for Hamas, with the US, a strong ally of Israel, viewing Hamas as a terrorist group. Hamas has fought hard to remove itself off the terror lists of the EU and the US by changing its political and religious discourse. Yet, the movement has largely failed to promote itself as a liberation movement in the West, despite the limited meetings held between the movement's leadership and EU representatives in 2013¹⁷⁷ and former US and EU officials in 2020,¹⁷⁸ as explained by Harriet Sherwood and Adnan Abu-Amer. In the same context, Glenn E Robinson notes that Hamas leaders met with UN officials repeatedly including in 2021 to discuss the most recent Gaza ceasefire with Israel.¹⁷⁹ This backdoor diplomacy policy by the EU and US, be it direct or not, is similar to the EU Good Neighborhood approach towards Hezbollah.

In the same context, Samuel C. Rajiv adds that Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel, accept agreements signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and its lack of readiness to denounce armed resistance presented Israel with an opportunity to further isolate and squeeze the group after its violent takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007.¹⁸⁰ Israel's siege has impacted Hamas in two different ways. On the one hand, Robinson notes, it pushed the movement to enlarge its military arsenal and stockpile of rockets and anti-tank missiles, drones, and tunnels, and on the other hand, it pushed Hamas to present to the world a more pragmatic discourse by publishing its 2017 document.¹⁸¹ The 2017 Hamas document emphasized, along with some other issues, the centrality of Islamic theology, its liberation

¹⁷⁶ Michael Herzog, "Can Hamas be tamed? Foreign Affairs," **Council on Foreign Affairs**, 85(2), (2006), p.83.

¹⁷⁷ Harriet Sherwood, "Hamas claims increased contact with European countries," **The Guardian**, 12 July 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013-jul/12/european-hamas-contact-eu-gaza> (30 June 2021).

¹⁷⁸ Adnan Abu-Amer, "Hamas intensifies Western dialogues to break political isolation," **Al-Monitor**, 10 January 2021, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/01/palestinian-eu-relations-internationaldiplomacy-.html#ixzz6zGvyG5a2> (30 June 2021).

¹⁷⁹ Nour Abuaisha, "Hamas leader warns Israel over Gaza blockade," **Anadolu News Agency**, 21 June 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/hamas-leader-warns-israel-over-gaza-blockade/2280681> (30 June 2021).

¹⁸⁰ S. Samuel and C. Rajiv, "The Hamas Takeover and its Aftermath," **Strategic Analysis**, 31(5), (2007), p. 849.

¹⁸¹ Glenn E. Robinson, "Gaza 2014: Hamas' strategic calculus," **The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters**, 44, No. 4/11, (2014), p. 102.

nature, the centrality of nationalism, its willingness to accept a two-state solution without recognizing Israel and its adoption of non-armed resistance along with armed resistance.

Yet, despite Hamas's attempts to promote itself as an acceptable political actor in the region by highlighting its liberation discourse, it continues to be treated as an isolated non-state actor by most countries in the Arab world. This will likely continue to be the case as long as Hamas adheres to the use of armed resistance/violence and the anti-political Islam discourse in some parts of the Arab world continues. Hamas, furthermore, has not shown any concrete steps to give up its arms, which further complicates its regional position. The movement has major disagreements with the more moderate Fatah movement in Palestine, and the existence of moderate Palestinian groups allow for Hamas to be deemed as terrorist. This is especially true as long as the Palestinian political rift remains unresolved, as explained by Amour.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Philipp O. Amour, "Israel, the Arab Spring, and the unfolding regional order in the Middle East: a strategic assessment," **British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies**, 44(3), (2017), p.299.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims to outline the relevant theoretical framework for this study and how it is related to the empirical part, levels of analysis (units and international), research questions and goals. The theories outlined in this chapter include The National Liberation Theory, The Just War Theory, and Revolutionary Terrorism. By looking at these theories, the research aims to theoretically provide an answer as to why and how specific state-actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as liberation or terrorist groups and how factors such as the Cold War and the Arab Spring as well as national interests impact this process of designation and non-state actors. Except for the National Liberation Theory, all other theories explain both levels of analysis of this study. This chapter, thus, aims to contribute to the main question of the research theoretically by examining different theories of liberation and terrorism and their relevance to the research questions, objectives, and the units (state and non-state actors) as well as the international level of analysis (the Cold War and the Arab Spring) in the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as well as how these three non-state actors view themselves.

The above theories of liberation and terrorism provide critical theoretical deliberations, although mostly state-centric, to explain the debate on what makes a terrorist/liberation group in the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas from the point of view of relevant state-actors. This debate is very often controversial,¹⁸³ merely a reflection of the nature of the two concepts that are deeply rooted in intra-state relations, normative debates, and realpolitik. The above-mentioned theories, too, highlight the self-view of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as non-state actors (unit level), and the view of relevant state actors of them, namely Israel, France, the EU, the US, Iran, Türkiye, the GCC, and the Arab League (units-level) as well as the international level of analysis which examines the role of the Cold War and the Arab Spring in the designation process. The theories considered in this study are the Just War Theory, the Theory of National Liberation, and Revolutionary Terrorism.

¹⁸³ Anthony J. Marsella and Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The origins and nature of terrorism: Foundations and issues," **Journal of aggression, maltreatment & trauma**, 9(1-2), (2005), p. 23.

The Just War Theory was introduced by Michael Walzer, who divides going to war into three phases. Walzer, the most prominent theorist to advocate for just war, in his book *Just and Unjust Wars*, urges that for a war to be just, certain conditions before, during and after war breaks out should be met. As for the conditions leading to the outbreak of war (the resort to war), which he called *Jus Ad Bellum*, Walzer notes that a ‘just’ war should be a last resort, declared by a legitimate authority, have the right intention, have a chance of success, and proportional.¹⁸⁴ While waging a war, the rules of just conduct, which Walzer calls *Jus In Bello*, should be discriminate and proportional.¹⁸⁵ In *Jus post bellum*, namely justice after war, other scholars such as Orend and Kant, call for the need to treat prisoners fairly and engage in reconstruction, as part of bearing responsibility after the end of hostilities.¹⁸⁶ In addition to the principles of Just War Theory proposed by Walzer, James Childress adds the “announcement of intention,” noting that going to war is in itself “prima facie wrong,” noting that ‘it is still morally wrong’ but necessary.¹⁸⁷ The three stages of just war are all relevant to the non-state actors of this study, namely the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.

In the same vein, the Theory of National Liberation sheds lights on three major concepts: taking arms to end foreign domination, making ideology central to armed struggle, and advocating the importance of education as a means to achieve awareness and unity, both necessary to achieve victory during a liberation war.¹⁸⁸ The Theory of National Liberation partially explains the behavior of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as they have advocated the use of arms, adopted an ideology and stressed the need for a national education to face foreign domination. For this reason, the Theory of National Liberation complements the Theory of Just War and contributes to providing the theoretical framework for this study.

¹⁸⁴ Daniel Brunstetter and Megan Braun, “From jus ad bellum to jus ad vim: recalibrating our understanding of the moral use of force,” **Ethics & International Affairs**, 27(1), (2013), p.92.

¹⁸⁵ Ruti Teitel, “Rethinking Jus Post Bellum in an Age of Global Transitional Justice: Engaging with Michael Walzer and Larry May,” **European Journal of International Law**, 24(1), (2013), p. 341.

¹⁸⁶ Alex J. Bellamy, “The responsibilities of victory: Jus post bellum and the just war,” **Review of International Studies**, 34(4), (2008), p. 618.

¹⁸⁷ **Brian Auten**, “James Childress and the Presumption Against War,” Political Theology Network, 5 February 2015, <https://politicaltheology.com/james-childress-and-the-presumption-against-war/> (8 May 2022).

¹⁸⁸ Reiland Rabaka, **Concepts of Cabralism: Amilcar Cabral and Africana Critical Theory**, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014, p. 219.

The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have used Revolutionary Terrorism to inflict damages on state-actors which have had two consequences. One is creating pressure on France in the case of the FLN and Israel in the case of Hezbollah and Hamas. Local guerrilla groups had the advantage of knowing the terrain and were able to hit and run, thus having the element of surprise. The targeted French and Israeli forces would respond to these attacks, killing many civilians, creating an international outcry in favor of the three non-state actors, and pushing more people to support the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. The lack of proportional response by France and Israel contradicts the principles of just war, which states that the principles of discrimination and proportionality should be respected, during the conduct of war or *Jus In Bello* as advocated by Walzer.¹⁸⁹ In the same vein, the FLN,¹⁹⁰ Hezbollah¹⁹¹ and Hamas¹⁹² used tactics such as shootings, suicide bombings, targeting urban centers and kidnappings, which contributed to their terrorist designation by some state-actors.

The following section provides a critical review of the relevant theories on liberation and terrorism in the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas used in this study, and the view of concerned actors, France, Israel, the US, the EU, Iran, Türkiye, the GCC and the Arab League of the three non-state actors as liberation movements or terrorist organizations. This section explains how and why state-actors consider them as one or the other from a theoretical point of view by looking at the theories of National Liberation, Just War and Revolutionary Terrorism and units' levels of analysis. It also highlights the impact this designation has on the three non-state actors, and how they view themselves in light of their statements and internal and founding documents. The theories of liberation and terrorism are a reflection of the controversial nature of the debate, but as suggested by Finlay, a theory of non-terrorist resistance could draw a line between the two sides of the controversy.

¹⁸⁹ Ruti Teitel, "Rethinking Jus Post Bellum in an Age of Global Transitional Justice: Engaging with Michael Walzer and Larry May," *European Journal of International Law*, 24(1), (2013), p. 339.

¹⁹⁰ Irene Bignardi, "The Making of The Battle of Algiers," *Cineaste*, 25(2), (2000), p.19.

¹⁹¹ Schleifer, pp. 12.

¹⁹² Singh, p. 5.

Definitions of Terrorism

The existence of different definitions of terrorism by different bodies and state-actors such as the UN and the US suggest the controversial nature of the concept. The League of Nations defined Terrorism in 1937 as “criminal acts directed against a state which aim, or are of a nature, to provide terror.”¹⁹³ The definition of the League of Nations of terrorism does not address the issue of counterinsurgency and state terrorism, which makes it one-sided and state centric.

Unlike the League of Nations, the United Nations defined terrorism using more reflective terms vis-a-vis the intentions of terrorism and the targeting of infrastructures to inflict economic losses. The UN defined terrorism as threatening to cause:¹⁹⁴

“(a) death or serious bodily injury to any person; or (b) serious damage to public or private property, including a place of public use, a State or government facility, a public transportation system, an infrastructure facility or the environment; or (c) damage to property, places, facilities, or systems [...], resulting or likely to result in major economic loss, when the purpose of the conduct, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.”

The UN definition of terrorism, compared to that of the League of Nations, focuses more on intimidation and using force against a government/population, including to cause economic losses that could be translated into victories for non-state actors, and inflicting damage against infrastructure, such as the cases for the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. Similar to the League of Nation’s definition, the UN’s definition of terrorism places the state in a central place but still highlights other aspects behind the motivation of waging it.

¹⁹³ Hutchinson, “The concept of revolutionary terrorism,” p. 383.

¹⁹⁴ **UNHCR**, “Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter-terrorism,” Factsheet No. 32, the United Nations, The Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public Information, 1 July 2008, p. 6.

Title 22 of the US Code, published in 1926, defines terrorism as “politically motivated violence perpetrated in a clandestine manner against noncombatants.”¹⁹⁵ This definition precisely cites political violence against civilians that is carried out in an organized and coordinated manner. Part of the tension in these definitions is the nature of their ambiguity or how they might be interpreted based on understanding not only the definitions, how they are similar and where they depart from one another. For example, defining civilian in a settler society or a foreign occupation – as well as any strategic interests that might influence these interpretations. Though the scope of this research does not address this, the tension exists in the context of foreign occupation.

The US defines international terrorism as an intentional intimidation of civilian population, in order to influence the policy of a government, by assassination or kidnapping. According to this US definition of terrorism, it could happen both inside and outside the boundaries of the United States.¹⁹⁶ For this reason, the United States has two different definitions for domestic and international terrorism and scholarly work on terrorism has somehow been influenced by the US definition of terrorism following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The 9/11 attacks have significantly impacted the United States approach towards terrorism as a poll suggested that 46% of Americans have expressed that the 9/11 attacks were the most important incident that happened during their lifetime.¹⁹⁷ The 9/11 attacks have also contributed to enforcing the US-centric view of terrorism.

Definitions of terrorism are not limited to governments only, but they include academicians specializing in terrorism studies. H. H. A. Cooper, following teaching terrorism at universities for 25 years, has defined terrorism as “intentional generation of massive fear by human beings for the purpose of securing or maintaining control over other human beings.”¹⁹⁸ He notes that one of the plagues of defining terrorism is the urge to identify who

¹⁹⁵ Charles L. Ruby, “The definition of terrorism,” **Analyses of social issues and public policy**, 2 (1), (2002), pp. 9-11.

¹⁹⁶ Gregor Bruce, “Definition of terrorism social and political effects,” **Journal of Military and Veterans Health**, 21(2), (2013), p. 26.

¹⁹⁷ Diana Hess and Jeremy Stoddard, “9/11 and terrorism: The ultimate teachable moment in textbooks and supplemental curricula,” **Social Education**, 71(5), (2007), p. 231.

¹⁹⁸ H. H. A. Cooper, “Terrorism: The problem of definition revisited,” **American Behavioral Scientist**, 44(6), (2001), p. 883.

is responsible for it, especially in the international arena.¹⁹⁹ Thus, this definition highlights the impact of terrorism by spreading fear, which the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as non-state actors make central to their approach, as it resonates in the context of national liberation. In the case of the FLN, it targeted markets and popular cafes to spread fear among the settler population in Algeria.

Although brutal, it worked for the benefit of the FLN by drawing international attention to their struggle. This particular definition of terrorism also explores the notion of “control” as a final end of carrying out terrorism where non-state actors have the final say in the street by pushing the masses to protest and design the lifestyle of people it targets. Examples of this include the fear the FLN planted among French settlers by targeting public markets, Hezbollah’s targeting of Israeli forces and settlers and video-taping its attacks, and Hamas’ targeting of Israeli public spaces to spread fear among the settler population. Wacziarg makes control and domination central to his definition of terrorism. He defined terrorism as “a method of action by which an agent tends to produce terror in order to impose high domination.”²⁰⁰

The FLN was very successful at imposing its control over the French settler population in Algeria by making the cost of using public spaces very high for settlers who feared being targeted. This also pushed the French authorities to respond with more force to the FLN, which served the group by causing an international outcry against French policies. At the same time, it pressed more Algerians to support the FLN in response to the French violence.²⁰¹ In the words of Walzer, “In fact, the guerrillas mobilize only a small part of the nation, a very small part, when they begin their attacks. They depend on the counter-attacks of the enemy to mobilize the rest.”²⁰² Hezbollah’s men, who were well-versed on the terrain and used guerrilla tactics against Israeli forces, were able to claim public spaces by making

¹⁹⁹ Cooper, p. 883.

²⁰⁰ Cooper, p. 883.

²⁰¹ Kelsey Lilley, “A policy of violence: The case of Algeria,” **E-International relations**, 12 September 2012, p. 2, <https://www.e-ir.info/2012/09/12/a-policy-of-violence-the-case-of-algeria/> (30 January 2023).

²⁰² Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 180.

it nearly impossible for Israeli forces to get into populated areas.²⁰³ Hamas, on the other hand, was successful at making the cost of a ground invasion of Gaza high by coercing Israel to invade that would result in a backlash in the Israeli society.

Regional and international politics (levels of analysis) and self-view have always determined the debate over terrorism where state-actors, when deciding on their view of non-state actors as terrorist or not, focus on their national and economic interests first. For state-actors, the non-state actors' self-view and their own actions are tied to their own cost-benefit analysis. In terms of self-view, the FLN in rare cases referred to its actions as terrorism but this had to do with the wave of support of anti-colonial movements across the globe as has been outlined in the thesis. They had the support of important regional powers like Egypt, and the FLN positioned itself politically by choosing not to ally with the Western bloc or the USSR during the Cold War, leading to a less negative view of using political violence at the time. Hezbollah and Hamas did not refer to their actions as terrorism as the concept bore a more negative connotation and implications in light of the Israel-US alliance and Israel-EU strong ties and sectarian politics after the Arab Spring. The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have, for the most part, viewed their actions as liberation acts and legitimate resistance.

The discussions around terrorism and liberation involve contrasting views by state and non-state actors, where they stand on opposite sides of a heated debate vis-à-vis how they perceive the use of violence in foreign domination contexts. This applies to the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and how relevant state-actors view their actions. Groups waging liberation wars or revolutionary terrorism very often, except in limited cases, show no interest or rarely make policy or discourse changes because of how states perceive them. In the cases of Hezbollah and Hamas, they did not use terrorism as a term to describe themselves or their actions, which could harm their image and legitimacy in what they perceive as a legitimate liberation war. The FLN is an exception in this regard because during the Cold War, anti-colonial struggles admittedly used what is understood to be terrorist tactics, for their liberation from colonial

²⁰³ Iver Gabrielsen, "The evolution of Hezbollah's strategy and military performance, 1982–2006," **Small Wars & Insurgencies**, 25(2), (2014), p. 267.

powers to balance against global powers at the time and international support for anti-colonial struggles, both played into its favor.²⁰⁴

The same as there are different definitions of terrorism, there are different theories that explain both liberation and terrorism. The following section outlines theories of terrorism and liberation and their relationship to the thesis' main question: How and why specific state-actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as liberation or terrorist groups? It also connects to the impact this designation has on them as well as the impact the Cold War and the Arab Spring on the three non-state actors and on the whole process of designation. This section focuses on Revolutionary Terrorism Theory, which includes Psychological and Urban Terrorism and overlooks other theories of terrorism. After outlining Revolutionary Terrorism, the researcher discusses two Theories of Liberation, which are related to this research, The Just War Theory and the National Liberation Theory.

Theories of Terrorism: Revolutionary Terrorism

Different theories of terrorism provide the basis to explain the designation of and tactics by the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. For the purpose of this study, the Revolutionary Terrorism Theory is used to explain the factors that push state-actors to view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist or liberation groups. The theory includes two main tactics: Psychological and Urban Terrorism. Providing the theoretical framework for this study will help understand and explain the empirical part of it, the state view of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations and their own self-view of themselves as liberation movements and how this process functions. This includes explaining the causes, objectives, nature, ideology, motivations, implications, and tactics of the three groups. Non-state actors apply terrorist tactics to achieve political objectives by using violence and intimidation.

An important theoretical question that needs to be answered is why individuals and groups choose terrorism or revolutionary violence. David Webber and Arie W. Kruglanski focus on the making and unmaking of a terrorist where three factors contribute to a person choosing to become a terrorist/using violence. They are: (1) The individual need that pushes a person

²⁰⁴ Alexander and Keiger, pp.6-24.

to act violently, (2) the ideological narrative that justifies this engagement in violence and (3) the social connections that justify such actions.²⁰⁵ In the case of Hamas, for instance, dozens of its members have defected and joined other factions using violence during periods in which Hamas entered into a ceasefire agreement with Israel. This could mean that some of its members have a personal interest in being engaged in violence in addition to other motives, be it national or Islamic. Many FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas members have joined the groups after their friends or family members were killed. Psychological experiences—such as terror and helplessness often leave remarkable scars on the psychology of people affected.²⁰⁶ Pearlstein conducted a study on terrorists noting that most of those involved have suffered from special circumstances in life that inflicted damage on their psychology eventually pushing them to join terrorist groups.²⁰⁷ Despite this, it is simplistic to ignore the role of nationalism and ideology in revolutionary terrorism.

For specific acts to be considered terrorism, they have to be intentionally designed to target civilians, which contradicts the principle of discrimination of Just War Theory that calls for targeting combatants only.²⁰⁸ Terrorism differs from other political violence by its ‘extranormality’.²⁰⁹ For instance, the FLN violence against French rule in Algeria was considered by France illegitimate terrorism, due to its exceptional use of violence, including throat and nose-cutting, as a punishment for those collaborating with the French authorities.²¹⁰ The violence included targeting cafes and restaurants on a large scale. At the same time, French states violence against Algerians exceeded that of the FLN. The FLN saw urban terrorism as a necessary tool to achieve liberation even though it resulted in human casualties as France refused the path of dialogue with the Front. France then carried out a more brutal campaign of terror and bloodshed against the Algerian people for simply calling for their independence from France in 1945, which resulted in the killing of some 45,000

²⁰⁵ Webber and Kruglanski, p. 131.

²⁰⁶ Fathali M Moghaddam, “The staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration,” **American psychologist**, 60(2), (2005), p.161.

²⁰⁷ Martha Hutchinson, “The psychology of terrorism: An agenda for the 21st century,” **Political psychology**, 21(2), (2000), p. 408.

²⁰⁸ Lazar, pp. 47-51.

²⁰⁹ Hutchinson, “The psychology of terrorism: An agenda for the 21st century,” p. 384.

²¹⁰ Hutchinson, “The psychology of terrorism: An agenda for the 21st century,” pp. 384-385.

Algerians in six weeks in 1945.²¹¹ An FLN official noted “Urban terrorism like guerrilla warfare is the only method of expression of a crushed people.”²¹²

Revolutionary Terrorism explains the self-view of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas of their actions from a theoretical point of view. Revolutionary terrorism applies to certain conditions such as in the case of lengthy (and violent) conflicts in which a self-described liberation group and a regime fight over control and power distribution including in the cases of foreign occupation. Revolutionary Terrorism is often a deliberate strategy, and it is less found in coups and internal rebellions. In most cases, Revolutionary Terrorism apply to non-state actors rather than the government’s use of violence. For it to be useful, it has to be functional, which convinces non-state actors that it is an effective strategy and push state-actors to offer concessions. Revolutionary Terrorism is also a subject of influence by the public, who might pressure non-state actors to carry out more violence even when these non-state actors are less willing to do so at some stages.²¹³

Revolutionary Terrorism could be a type of violent resistance to the state by harming its interests and it could take different forms such as targeting urban centers or suicide terrorism such as attacks carried out against cafes and public transportations by Hamas and the FLN.²¹⁴ Crenshaw argues that the study of terrorism could be centered around three major questions: Why terrorism happens, how it functions and what is its impact, be it political or social?²¹⁵ To answer the first question, urban centers have been a main target for terrorist acts and this applies to the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, as well as by France and Israel. Urbanization as well has been connected to the rise of revolutionary terrorism, where terrorist organizations have found it easier to identify targets in cities and urban centers, a concept that is connected to the late 1960s Latin America experience and was later applied in the Middle East.²¹⁶ Suicide bombings, which is a form of psychological terrorism, have been an effective tactic

²¹¹ Ali Tablit, “A Black Paper on French Repression in Algeria,” *Almasadir*, (22) 12, (2010), p. 43.

²¹² Thornton, p. 73.

²¹³ Hutchinson, “The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism,” p. 394.

²¹⁴ Horgan, p. 379.

²¹⁵ Hutchinson, (1981), p. 379.

²¹⁶ Hutchinson, “The psychology of terrorism: An agenda for the 21st century,” p. 382.

used by Hezbollah and Hamas against Israel and was connected to the rise of religious terrorism and the Iranian Revolution.

Revolutionary Terrorism is a tactic that is often dictated by circumstances rather than choice.²¹⁷ Revolutionary Terrorism has been characterized by its political motivation, the context, and its variety of space and actors, who aim to practice their social control over a population.²¹⁸ Revolutionary Terrorism is directed often at governmental targets in order to inflict fear and bring about change.²¹⁹ Yet, the morality of terrorism has always been challenged and questioned as terrorist acts cause harm to people who are not involved in the conflict. At the same time, when all other means are exhausted, non-state actors find no other options. When the issue is related to “political self-determination, democratic living conditions, just distribution of goods,”²²⁰ Revolutionary Terrorism does not take into consideration ethical values. Increasingly, some non-state actors do not particularly shy away when their actions are described as terrorist since they either see no other options or are fighting for particular goals; this applies to the FLN and Hezbollah and to a lesser extent to Hamas. Thus, the ethical consideration of terrorist actions remains a major challenge for normalizing defined terrorist groups at least among ordinary people.

Examining revolutionary violence by non-state actors without examining state violence, a factor which often pushes peoples and groups to take arms, does not do justice to the debate. State-terrorism is older and has arguably been more costly than insurgent terrorism.²²¹ However, it is less researched for academic and political reasons. Labeling any organization terrorist is challenging for different reasons but calling state-actors or their actions as such is even harder due to the complications of international politics, state interests and alliances. During the Cold War, however, there was more room for researching state terrorism, albeit it was ideologically motivated and aimed to criticize Western democracies for supporting

²¹⁷ Ariel Merari, “Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency,” **Terrorism and political violence**, 5, No. 4, (1993), pp. 217.

²¹⁸ Donald Black, “Terrorism as social control,” in Mathieu Deflem (Ed.), **Terrorism and counter-terrorism**, Bradford: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, (2004), pp. 14-18.

²¹⁹ Horgan, **Terrorism Studies: A Reader**, pp. 112-114.

²²⁰ Edwin R. Micewaki, “Terror and Terrorism: A History of Ideas and Philosophical-Ethical Reflections,” **Strategic Insights**, Vol. 6, No. 8, (2005), p. 13.

²²¹ Schmidt-Peterson, p. 203.

dictator regimes elsewhere that practiced terrorism against their own people.²²² This includes countries such as Libya and Iraq which provided weapons to non-state actors working against states that these dictator regimes had political differences with.²²³

The use of violence, psychological terrorism, urban terrorism, and revolutionary terrorism often results in pushing targeted state actors to use excessive violence and to engage in a counter-terrorism campaign. The engagement by state-actors in counterterrorism or insurgency often results in more violence that claims more lives and causes an international outcry. France's use of counterterrorism measures to quell the FLN campaign cost the Algerian people hundreds of thousands of lives and benefited the FLN in the sense that it distanced Algerians from France. Walzer noted that non-state actors' violence often pushes state-actors to use more violence which distance the population from the state and push them to join non-state actors.²²⁴ A considerable portion of Algerians became more convinced of the FLN's view of taking arms to win Algeria's long-awaited independence. It also created an international opinion against French policies in Algeria, including by the US which was more aware that the French strategy in Algeria would eventually hit a dead-end. Israel's excessive use of violence against both the Lebanese and the Palestinian populations have resulted in some international criticisms but to a lesser degree than what France faced in the case of the FLN, considering Israel's strategic relations with both the US and the EU.

More recently, the study of terrorism started including state actions and counterterrorism. Counterterrorism is the process in which the state engages in activities that aim to eliminate and mitigate terrorism. However, this is not always true, especially when it comes to undemocratic regimes that might use counter-terrorism as a cover up to suppress political opponents.²²⁵ Scholars have on different occasions asserted the failure of counterterrorism strategies to combat terrorism especially after the 9/11 attacks.²²⁶ This academic critique has

²²² Schmidt-Peterson, 2011, p. 203.

²²³ Daniel Byman, **Deadly connections: States that sponsor terrorism**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 3.

²²⁴ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 334.

²²⁵ Daniel G. Arce M. and Todd Sandler, "Counterterrorism: A game-theoretic analysis," **Journal of conflict resolution**, (2005), p. 186.

²²⁶ Cynthia Lum, Leslie W. Kennedy, Alison J. Sherley, "The effectiveness of counter-terrorism strategies," **Campbell systematic reviews**, 2(2), (2006), p. 1.

contributed to improving tactics and strategies used to combat terrorism especially with the rise of ‘new terrorism.’²²⁷ An example of this is the use of drone airstrikes as a counter terrorism strategy which has caused many civilian losses, raising questions about the legality of these drone attacks.²²⁸ France’s use of state violence against Algerians because of the attacks of the FLN and Israel’s use of state-violence against the Palestinians and the Lebanese even with Hamas and Hezbollah attacks, as counterterrorism, have drawn international criticism over the use of such disproportionate and discriminatory violence and the lack of a last resort, as urged by the Just War Theory.

There is a link between failing states and the promotion and support of terrorist groups.²²⁹ Terrorism, as a study conducted on 153 states in the world, reveals it arose in places where states were weak or failing.²³⁰ Looking at the available literature on terrorism, the regime type is considered an important factor to determine if states suffer from or support terrorist attacks.²³¹ International politics allowed for French actions in Algeria to rarely be described as state-terrorism even though “episodes of violence — police repression, torture, and terrorism — were often excluded from popular, political and historical accounts on both sides of the Mediterranean.”²³² Similarly to Israel, whose actions are portrayed as self-defense while Hezbollah and Hamas’ actions toward Israel are referred to as terrorism.²³³ One issue that arises when talking about revolutionary terrorism and counter terrorism is the use of force, which may fall under the category of the prohibited use of force.²³⁴ An example of this as part of counterterrorism is the US use of force after 9/11. Whether it meets the

²²⁷ D. Tucker, “What is new about the new terrorism and how dangerous is it?” **Terrorism and Political Violence**, 13(3), (2001), p.7.

²²⁸ Michele L. Malvesti, “Bombing bin Laden: Assessing the effectiveness of air strikes as a counter-terrorism strategy,” **Fletcher F. World Affairs**, 26, (2001), p.17.

²²⁹ James A. Piazza, “Incubators of terror: Do failed and failing states promote transnational terrorism?”, **International Studies Quarterly**, 52(3), (2008), p. 470.

²³⁰ Bridget L. Coggins, “Does state failure cause terrorism? An empirical analysis (1999–2008),” **Journal of Conflict Resolution**, 59(3), (2015), p.458.

²³¹ Matthew C. Wilson and James A. Piazza, “Autocracies and terrorism: Conditioning effects of authoritarian regime type on terrorist attacks,” **American Journal of Political Science**, 57(4), (2013), pp.941.

²³² Maria Flood, **France, Algeria and the Moving Image: Screening Histories of Violence 1963-2010**, Cambridge: Legenda, (2017), p. 151.

²³³ Raphael Bitton, “Getting the right picture for the wrong reasons: intelligence analysis by Hezbollah and Hamas,” **Intelligence and National Security**, 34(7), (2019), p.1030.

²³⁴ Charney, “The use of force against terrorism and international law,” **American Journal of International Law**, 95, No. 4, (2001), p. 835.

requirements of self-defense under international law is debatable.²³⁵ Very often, when non-state actors use excessive force or inflict heavy losses on state-actors, states tend to respond with lethal force, and this applies to the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas equally.

Urban and Psychological Terrorism

Urban Terrorism suggests that groups aim to target urban centers to inflict economic damages against state-actors and to show that they have the ability to paralyze the state by putting its vital infrastructure and institutions at threat, a tactic employed by the FLN in Algeria, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine.²³⁶ Urban terrorism also includes targeting symbolic institutions of the state in order to leave a psychological impact where the state-actor is weak to protect its subjects, vital interests and infrastructure, and the non-state actor is in control. The FLN was successful in conveying this message to French settlers in Algeria whereas Hezbollah and Hamas have been less successful in this tactic (except during major military confrontations with Israel). The FLN is a prime example of a group using urban terrorism deemed indispensable to achieve national liberation. Hezbollah has used urban terrorism in Lebanon while also engaging in guerrilla warfare against the Israeli army. Hamas targeted urban centers in Israel, mainly public transportation, and entertainment facilities, much more than Hezbollah did, especially with the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada in 2000.²³⁷ These attacks have in particular seen the use of suicide bombing.

On the other hand, suicide terrorism aims “to coerce modern liberal democracies to make significant territorial concessions.”²³⁸ He notes that this form of terrorism has risen in the last few years because it shows it pays off. Pape notes that military occupation of countries is a major reason why suicide terrorism takes place too.²³⁹ As for the FLN, it used suicide bombing less, and largely applied planting bombs in urban centers by European-looking FLN

²³⁵ Charney, p. 853.

²³⁶ P. N. Grabosky, “The urban context of political terrorism,” in Michael Stohl (Ed.), **The politics of terrorism**, Florida: CRC Press, 2020, p. 77.

²³⁷ H.V. Savitch, “An anatomy of urban terror: Lessons from Jerusalem and elsewhere,” **Urban Studies**, 42(3), (2005), p. 372.

²³⁸ Robert. A. Pape, “The strategic logic of suicide terrorism,” **American political science review**, 97(3), (2003), p. 347.

²³⁹ Scott Atran, “The moral logic and growth of suicide terrorism,” **Washington Quarterly**, 29(2), (2006), pp. 127-147.

members. In the cases of Israel/Palestine, and Lebanon suicide terrorism showed to be effective, pushing Israel, in the case of Lebanon, to leave Southern Lebanon. Yet, in the case of Türkiye, as an example, the PKK failed to advance its goals,²⁴⁰ especially after 1985 when the PKK further isolated itself from Soviet socialism, adopting scientific socialism instead.²⁴¹

Psychological terrorism is central to the thinking of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. In order to carry out violence, this theory notes, terrorists do a sort of cost-benefit analysis and evaluate the extent of success of their actions and take a decision to carry out any act or not. Psycho-social theories of terrorism, for example, highlight the role of “planting fear” as a main goal of terrorist groups, a concept highlighted by the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.²⁴² The Psychological approach suggests that terrorists use violence for “the sake of using Violence.”²⁴³ This aspect, however, does not apply to the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas because their violence, according to each group, has been politically motivated with a political purpose.

Psychological terrorism explains the actions of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas from the point of view of some state-actors and intergovernmental bodies. The idea of psychological terrorism is to engage in actions that might have a psychological impact on the targeted state/population. The FLN, by targeting restaurants and cafes, was able to spread fear among the French population in Algeria and cause an international outcry about the injustice of French colonialism. The FLN used this outcry for their benefit, by exploiting differences among the Western bloc and applying a strategy used by the global south to intervene on Western powers during the Cold War. It is important to highlight that according to the FLN, its use of psychological warfare was a response to France’s use of brutal force against the FLN members, including France’s strategy of torture to death to get confessions from FLN members, which France still largely denies. This cycle of psychological violence seemed

²⁴⁰ Atran, pp. 137-141.

²⁴¹ Ali Balci, **The PKK-Kurdistan workers’ Party’s regional politics: During and after the cold war**, Springer, 2016, p. 146.

²⁴² Abbasi, Khatwani, and Soomro, pp. 320-322.

²⁴³ Abbasi, Khatwani, and Soomro, pp. 320-322.

endless as the war continued unabated in Algeria.²⁴⁴ Both Hezbollah and Hamas have invested heavily in psychological warfare against Israel in the last two decades by video-taping their attacks, sending messages in Hebrew to Israelis, issuing statements and threats, and waging cyber-attacks against Israel.²⁴⁵ For the three non-state actors of this study, this was a form of revolutionary terrorism for the FLN, and violence deemed necessary by Hamas and Hezbollah after other means to achieve independence have failed.

The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have all engaged in urban terrorism tactics as part of their strategy of using political violence. Attacking city centers, bus stations, markets and public spaces aimed at creating fear among civilians (settlers) to push them to leave, creating pressure on France and Israel as this translated into more economic losses, and pushed some sectors in the settler-society to give up the idea of settler-colonialism. This urban terrorism also aimed at creating a deterrence equation to increase attacks by the colonial authorities against the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, especially when this involved collective punishments and indiscriminate attacks against civilians in violation of the principles of just war. Additionally, this strategy focused on showing the weakness of the colonial state as opposed to showing the ability of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas to attack strategic sites.²⁴⁶

Finally, the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have employed psychological warfare tactics to impact the morals of French and Israeli forces/settlers. The FLN used “emotional terror” to impact the morale of French settlers, which proved to be very effective.²⁴⁷ Hezbollah has been very successful too at its psychological or media war against Israel by videotaping its attacks, a tactic that gave it much popularity inside and outside Lebanon up until the outbreak of the Arab Spring.²⁴⁸ Hamas came late to the game, but starting from 2009, it has heavily

²⁴⁴ Raphaëlle Branche, “Torture of terrorists? Use of torture in a **“war against terrorism”: justifications, methods and effects: the case of France in Algeria, 1954–1962**,” *International Review of the Red Cross*, 89(867), (2007), p. 549.

²⁴⁵ Joshua L. Gleis and Benedetta Berti, **Hezbollah and Hamas: A comparative study**, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012, p. 92.

²⁴⁶ Krista E. Wiegand, **Bombs and Ballots: Governance by Islamist Terrorist and Guerrilla Groups**, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2016, p. 437.

²⁴⁷ Mosbacher, p. 21.

²⁴⁸ Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz, “The Israeli—Hezbollah war of 2006: The media as a weapon in asymmetrical conflict,” **Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics**, 12(3), (2007), pp.48.

used psychological warfare against Israel through speeches, statements, cyberattacks, and other means to impact the Israeli public in order to push them to pressure their own government.²⁴⁹ Hezbollah's strategy against Israel proved to be effective and was translated into an Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon in 2000. As for Hamas, Israel launched a counter-campaign to mitigate the impact of Hamas' psychological war, which targeted Israelis through social media, hacking into their phones and airing propaganda to them through Israeli channels in Hebrew. Hezbollah's experience with psychological warfare has encouraged Hamas to invest more in this tactic.

The Theory of Revolutionary Terrorism provides a common ground that could serve as a bridge between the theories of terrorism and liberation. It combines both state-actors' perceptions of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist or liberation groups and the non-state actors' self-view as liberation groups. The FLN, because of the politics of the Cold War, was more willing than the other non-state actors to accept its actions as terrorism yet still without viewing them as illegitimate since Cold War politics provided a different context to consider their actions as legitimate. Hezbollah and Hamas, though sometimes accepts its actions defined as terrorism, continue to view their actions as legitimate liberation acts and refuse their terrorism designation.

Groups identifying their goals along the lines of national liberation, self-determination and freedom have often been described differently such as rebels, terrorists, and freedom fighters.²⁵⁰ Therefore, it is not surprising that the term terrorist, being complex and ambiguous, and has repeatedly been connected to the notion of legitimate armed resistance. Armed resistance could have "a neighborly" relationship with terrorism according to Quentin Skinner put it.²⁵¹ "Sometimes the two categories are treated as if they were mutually exclusive,"²⁵² by state-actors, although they refer to opposite concepts. For this reason, it is important to note that Christopher J. Finlay argues that the first step to address the theory of

²⁴⁹ Ofir Hadad, "A Battle of Names: Hamas and Israeli Operations in the Gaza Strip," **Terrorism and Political Violence**, (2019), p.10.

²⁵⁰ Finlay, **Terrorism and the right to resist: a theory of just revolutionary war**, p. 3.

²⁵¹ Finlay, **Terrorism and the right to resist: a theory of just revolutionary war**, p. 3.

²⁵² Finlay, **Terrorism and the right to resist: a theory of just revolutionary war**, p. 3.

war is “by offering a theory of legitimate, armed, non-terrorist resistance to oppression”²⁵³ as existing theories do not provide a full answer to why and how non-state actors are considered terrorist or liberation groups, as seen in the cases of FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. The following section outlines Theories of Liberation used in this study: The Just War Theory and the National Liberation Theory, which theoretically explain the position of non-state and state actors on terrorism and liberation in the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. This includes the two levels of analysis of this study (units: state and non-state actors, and international).

Theories of Liberation :The Just War Theory

The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas along with some state actors too, perceive their actions as legitimate to gain national liberation, even through the use of violence. This is the opposite view of Israel, France, the US, the EU, some GCC countries. In all/some case studies of this study, Türkiye, Iran, and some state-actors of the League of Arab Nations, view the three non-state actors as liberation organizations. One way to reconcile these two opposing perceptions of terrorism and liberation by state and non-state actors is the theory of legitimate, armed, non-terrorist resistance suggested by Finlay. This would therefore include the violence waged by the FLN against France in Algeria from 1954-1962, the violence by Hamas against the Israeli state and the violence by Hezbollah against Israel in Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East.²⁵⁴ This section addresses two types of theories, one that reflects the state-centric view of liberation through the Theory of Just War and another that reflects the point of view of non-state actors through the Theory of National Liberation.

The Just War Theory presents conditions that make wars “just,” noting that the end goal of wars is to achieve peace, stressing that they should be waged by a legitimate authority, have a just justification and be a last resort after attempting all possible peaceful means. In this context, the use of violence is viewed as a “cruel necessity.”²⁵⁵ The use of excessive force

²⁵³ Finlay, **Terrorism and the right to resist: a theory of just revolutionary war**, p. 7.

²⁵⁴ Robert Young, “Revolutionary terrorism, crime and morality,” **Social Theory and Practice**, 4(3), (1977), p. 290.

²⁵⁵ Robert J. Myers, “Notes on the just war theory: Whose justice, which wars?”, **Ethics & International Affairs**, 10, (1996), pp. 115-130.

without a justification too contradicts the principles of just war which calls for a proportional use of force.

For many years, the just war tradition was based on two concepts, *Jus ad bellum* and *Jus in bello* or the reasons to go to war and the rules of conduct of actions of forces during the war. For *Jus ad bellum*, war has to (1) have a just cause, (2) enjoys comparative justice (the suffering of one party has to be much greater than the other party), (3) should be waged by a legitimate authority, (4) the right intention, such as stopping a wrong and not taking over the resources of other people, (5) the principle of probability of success, (6) war should be a last resort, and (7) proportionality, which means the benefit of waging a war should outweighs the harms associated with it.²⁵⁶

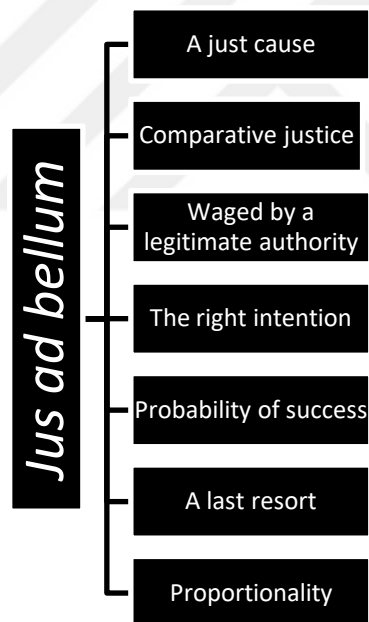


Figure 2: Justice before war

In Jus in bello, on the other hand, the conduct of combatants during the war must consist of three principles: Distinction, proportionality and military necessity. Forces engaged in a war should make a distinction between combatants engaged in a war and civilians. As for the

²⁵⁶ David Kretzmer, "The inherent right to self-defence and proportionality in jus ad bellum," **European Journal of International Law**, 24(1), (2013), pp.235-282.

principle of proportionality, it calls for checking if a military action will result in civilian casualties that will be much greater than the military advantage of the attack itself. The military necessity principle aims to decide if the attack is necessary and could contribute significantly to defeating the enemy.²⁵⁷ This stage of the theory aims to control the conduct of war, to make sure it is just, by focusing on the necessity of the military action and the benefits of it, to provide a better protection for civilians during the times of war. In other words, if targeting a place is not necessary to bring about victory or if targeting a military site would bring about much civilian casualties, then just war requires halting these attacks.

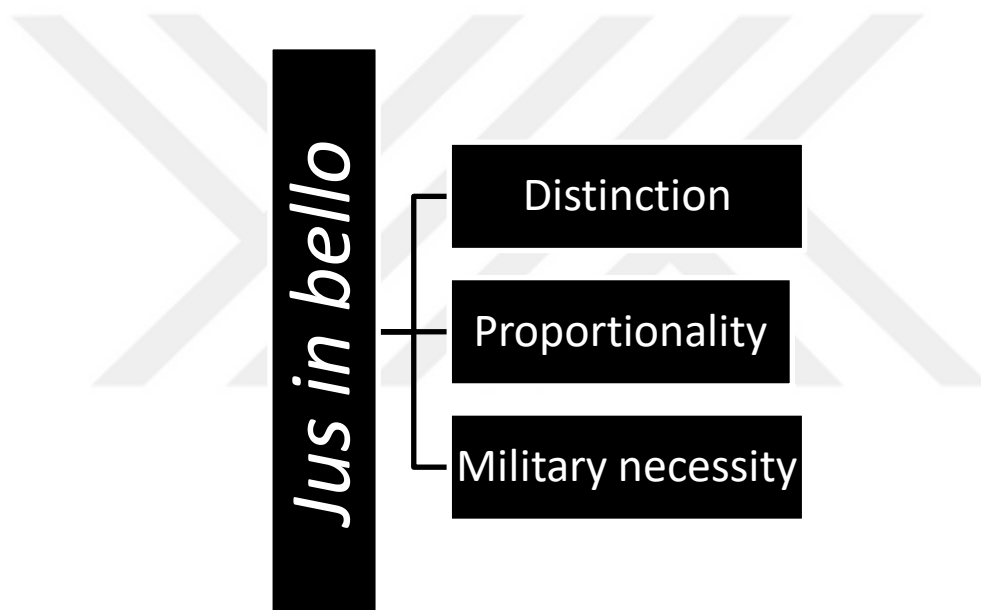


Figure 3: Justice during war

According to Walzer, there are two stages and rules for the just war theory, namely *Jus ad bellum*, the right to go to war (before going to war), and *Jus in bello*, the rules of conduct during the war. In recent years, theorists such as Brian Orend, Gary Bass, and Louis Iasiello have introduced the concept of *Jus post bellum*, which handles the post-war period, which Walzer did not address in his theory.²⁵⁸ In recent years, and since the just war tradition has focused on the reasons that lead to war and the conduct of combatants during it, including

²⁵⁷ Eyal Benvenisti, "Rethinking the Divide Between Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello in Warfare Against Nonstate Actors," **Yale Journal International Law**, 34, (2009), p.541.

²⁵⁸ Robert E. Williams Jr. and Dan Caldwell, "Jus post bellum: Just war theory and the principles of just peace," **International studies perspectives**, 7(4), (2006), p. 310.

contributions by Walzer, scholars such as Gary Bass, Brian Orend, and Louis Iasiello have introduced a third category to the just war tradition, *Jus post bellum* or post-war. This includes peace pacts, reconstruction efforts, prosecution for war crimes, and compensating people for sustaining losses during the war.²⁵⁹

Orend introduced five principles for war to be just, after the end of war. This includes (1) the just cause for termination, which calls for making sure that the justification of why war was launched are terminated, such as the aggression against a group of people or the surrender of the enemy. (2) The right intention should be provided, meaning that revenge can't be justified after the end of war. (3) A legitimate authority should accept the terms of the end of war, such as pacts and agreements and represent people in this sense. (4) Discrimination between military people and non-combatants should be provided. (5) Proportionality of measures imposed upon the surrender of the enemy should be reasonable and must be in line with the motivations behind waging the war in the first place.²⁶⁰

The Theory of Just War, notes that non-state-actors engaged in political violence use terror tactics at some point to win war or political legitimacy/sovereignty. FLN leaders believed that the use of terrorism was a necessary evil which had less impact on the Front because of the politics of the Cold War and the sweeping support for national liberation movements across the globe in the 1950s and 1960s. As part of the Algerian War of Independence, the FLN's use of guerrilla warfare and revolutionary terrorism was seen by its leaders as the only means for a crushed people.²⁶¹ The FLN was at the heart of the politics of the Cold War between the USSR and the US as it chose to be part of the Non-Aligned Movement, which provided it with arms, training, and political support.

In the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, claiming political sovereignty under occupation has been central to the discourse of the three non-state actors. The FLN in Algeria made reclaiming Algerian sovereignty and a state based on the framework of Islam central to its founding documents and discourse. The FLN stressed the importance of "the restoration

²⁵⁹ Maryann K. Cusimano, "Just peace and just war," *Expositions*, 12(1), (2018), p. 61.

²⁶⁰ Brian Orend, "Justice after war," *Ethics & International Affairs*, 16(1), (2002), p.48.

²⁶¹ Thornton, p. 73.

of the sovereign, democratic and social Algerian State within the framework of Islamic principles.”²⁶² Hezbollah’s running for elections, becoming part of the Lebanese state, and gradually infiltrating its institutions, is an attempt by the group to assert its political sovereignty in Lebanese politics today. Hence, the same applies to the group’s fighting Israel’s occupation of Southern Lebanon to claim Lebanese sovereignty.²⁶³ In the same lenses, Israel’s occupation of Palestine, and Hamas’ use of arms to end this occupation, and its subsequent takeover of the Gaza Strip after it was placed under siege following its winning the 2006 elections could be seen as a move to assert its political sovereignty.²⁶⁴

The Theology of Liberation, which stems from the Just War Theory, has been adopted largely in the Middle East by Christian, Islamic and Jewish theologians.²⁶⁵ In the context of this study, it is important to note that the FLN made Islam central to its discourse, although it adopted a socialist ideology which also made Algerian identity and history central. The FLN’s literature is driven by Islamic texts and views French settlers as *Nasara*, or Christians, as opposed to *El-Mujahideen*, Muslim fighters. The main newspaper of the FLN, *El-Moudjahid*, was edited by Frantz Fanon, which suggests that the meaning is more secular/nationalist than religious. Hezbollah too has drawn from the theology and teachings of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, making it the main source of inspiration.²⁶⁶ Lastly, Hamas’ Islamic theology, being central to its debate on Israel, has resulted in some accusations against the group of being antisemitic, pushing it to change its discourse, where “the theologian had given way to the politician.”²⁶⁷

²⁶² Daho Djerbal, “The National Liberation Front (FLN) and Islam concerning the relationship between the political and the religious in contemporary Algeria,” *上智アジア学*, (25), (2007), p. 297.

²⁶³ Imad Mansour, “The State of Hezbollah? Sovereignty as a Potentiality in Global South Contexts,” in **Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 441.

²⁶⁴ Benedetta Berti, “Non-state actors as providers of governance: The Hamas government in Gaza between effective sovereignty, centralized authority, and resistance,” **The Middle East Journal**, 69(1), (2015), pp.9-14.

²⁶⁵ Necati Polat, “Resistance to Regime Change in the Middle East: A Liberation Theology of the Neo-con Variety?”, **Interventions**, 16(5), (2014), p.639.

²⁶⁶ M. Dodson, “Liberation theology and Christian radicalism in contemporary Latin America,” **Journal of Latin American Studies**, 11(1), (1979), p. 209.

²⁶⁷ Jean-François Legrain, “Hamas according to Hamas: A reading of its Document of General Principles,” in Shahram Akbarzadeh (Ed.), **Routledge Handbook of Political Islam**, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2020, pp. 79-82.

As noted earlier, the Theology of Liberation first emerged in Latin America, and was adapted to the Middle East by the followers of the three Abrahamic faiths. This is true for both Muslim and Christian Palestinians. Palestinian Christians adopted a Christian theology of liberation against the Israeli occupation.²⁶⁸ Islamic parties in Palestine such as Hamas have too advocated a theology of liberation rooted in the Islamic faith.²⁶⁹ Palestinian Christian faith groups, for example, advocate for the cause of Palestine through the theology of liberation in the 2010 Kairos Palestine call, where Palestinian churches called on their counterparts to adopt the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement and are supported by 40 churches across the globe.²⁷⁰ The FLN, although adopting a socialist approach, made Islam central to its discourse as evident in its founding letters and documents. Though they were engaged in proselytizing, Christian settlers in Algeria drew on Christian theology to justify their being in Algeria and engaging in missionary trips to convert Algerians.²⁷¹ Hezbollah has clearly drawn on the Shiite Islamic theology since its foundation, seeing in the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran its source of inspiration.²⁷²

The National Liberation Theory

Another way to establish the theoretical foundations for the ongoing debate on terrorism and liberation is to look at the contributions made to the *Theory of National Liberation*.²⁷³ The National Liberation Theory addresses the self-view of the three non-state actors and that's why it is included in the theoretical framework to create a balance with-state centric theories of liberation and terrorism, thus addressing the unit-level of analysis. According to Maritza Montero and Christopher Sonn, liberation is a process of change that affects both parties that produce oppression as well as the oppressed people. It impacts people involved in the process

²⁶⁸ Laura C. Robson, "Palestinian liberation theology, Muslim-Christian relations and the Arab-Israeli conflict," **Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations**, 21(1), (2010), p.43.

²⁶⁹ Guy Burton, "Hamas and its Vision of Development," **Third World Quarterly**, 33(3), (2012), p. 529.

²⁷⁰ **Clint Le Bruyns**, "The rebirth of Kairos theology? A public theological perspective," Brazil-South Africa Consultation on Citizenship & Interculturality, **Missionalia** 43, 3, (2012), p. 23.

²⁷¹ Bradley Rainbow Hale, "Decolonizing Christianity: Religion and the End of Empire in France and Algeria," **Fides et Historia**, 49(2), (2017), pp.99-100.

²⁷² Wiegand, pp. 670-671.

²⁷³ Born to a family of landlords, Amirca Cabral was assassinated at the hands of Portuguese agents on January 20, 1973. He was able to translate his theories into concrete actions on the ground, as he was leading the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands.

of liberation who change and develop as this process takes place.²⁷⁴ Liberation has developed in contexts for people who have been victims and were oppressed due to the historical conditions that hindered their transformation. “Liberation is an ethical-critical-empowering and democratizing process of a collective and historical condition.”²⁷⁵

Cabral focuses on the nature and objectives of national liberation movements as well as the political dynamics of liberations, based on his own experience of leading national liberation in Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands.²⁷⁶ In his writings, as in *The Weapon of Theory*, he notes that any study of liberation movements should begin by looking at the history of the movement in relation to its social structure, where foreign domination serves as a contradiction.²⁷⁷ This relates to the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, which emerged as social movements with different wings and structures in the context of foreign domination (France in Algeria) and (Israel in Lebanon and Palestine). This foreign domination was in competition and contradiction with the national identities of Algerians, Lebanese, and Palestinians.

The Theory of National Liberation stresses the need to distinguish between the colonial authorities and civilians,²⁷⁸ a notion that is also in agreement with the Just War Theory that calls for applying the principle of discrimination while carrying out military acts, where civilians should not be involved or targeted. Cabral notes that colonized people “have been forced to take up arms in order to extirpate from the soil of our African fatherland, the shameful Portuguese colonial domination.”²⁷⁹ The FLN and Hamas both note that because other peaceful attempts to end foreign domination failed including dialogue, peaceful protests, and strikes, they took up arms. Therefore, their justification aligns with the Just War

²⁷⁴ Christopher C. Sonn, Maritza Montero, **Psychology of liberation: Theory and applications** (Eds.), Germany: Springer Science & Business Media, 2009, p. 1.

²⁷⁵ Sonn and Montero, p. 2.

²⁷⁶ Nzongola-Ntalaja, “Amílcar Cabral and the Theory of the National Liberation Struggle,” **Latin American Perspectives**, 11, No. 2, (1984), p. 43.

²⁷⁷ Ntalaja, pp. 43-54.

²⁷⁸ Amílcar Cabral, “National liberation and culture,” **Transition**, (45), (1974), pp.12-15.

²⁷⁹ Cabral, National liberation and culture,” pp.12-15.

Theory, *Jus ad bellum* or the reasons to go to war, where one of its main pillars is to make war a last resort after exhausting all other options.

In the Theory of National Liberation, the notions of solidarity and unity occupy a prominent place. The theory notes that colonized people should work together and support each other to end colonialism and imperialism which is directed at them as a whole. However, Cabral notes that despite the fact that there is one enemy for colonized people, there are different local and national contexts and circumstances that govern each liberation movement. The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas experienced divisions and civil wars amongst themselves, which reveal that the three non-state actors do not always have a notion of internal solidarity and unity. At the same time, the role of colonial French and Israeli colonial authorities as well as regional and international forces, can't be underestimated in planting the seeds of division and civil wars. It is also important to mention that in history non-state actors living under colonial rule have more often than not experienced division.

The FLN saw the importance and relevance of international solidarity, forging ties with the Non-Aligned Movement, especially with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and other liberation groups in Africa and beyond, promoting an approach based on north African solidarity. Cabral himself visited Algeria and met with Ahmad bin Bella, one of the leaders of the FLN, who later became Algeria's first president, who was later ousted due to internal differences within the FLN.²⁸⁰ The FLN received military, financial and political support from countries in North Africa, and achieving North African unity was one of its main goals, which it failed to realize.²⁸¹ The FLN believed not only in the notion of North African unity but beyond, forging strong ties with the Palestinians, namely the PLO. Today, Algeria remains a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause and it maintains good relations with Hamas, but this support is limited to political statements and financial support to the PLO and now the PA.

²⁸⁰ Natalia Telepneva, "Code Name SEKRETÁŘ: Amílcar Cabral, Czechoslovakia and the Role of Human Intelligence during the Cold War," **The International History Review**, 42(6), (2020), p.1269.

²⁸¹ John Damis, "Morocco, Libya, and the Treaty of Union," **American-Arab Affairs**, (13), (1985), p.44.

The Palestinians (PLO) has also drawn inspiration from the Algerian War of Independence.²⁸²

It is important to consider that the FLN from its inception was non-aligned. This was in part because the French Communist Party had been mostly opposed to Algerian independence. In 1945, it was a French Communist minister, Charles Tillon, who had ordered the massacres in Setif, which were a major turning point for many young Algerians who eventually became leaders of the revolution/FLN. Although most NATO countries did not openly back the FLN, John F. Kennedy as a young Senator came out in favor of Algerian independence in 1957.²⁸³ The mass massacres in Algeria by France, such as Setif in 1945, which claimed the lives of 45,000 Algerians and 86 Europeans, including 16 soldiers, were an important factor behind the change in the world's public opinion in favor of the FLN.²⁸⁴ These French massacres were not proportional nor discriminate and violated the principles of just war, *Jus in bello*, the rules of conduct during the war that call for the need to have proportional and discriminate actions.

Ideology, Taking Arms and Education

Cabral calls on non-state actors waging liberation wars to have a united ideology that is aware of the historical contexts and the goals they aspire to achieve. He notes that the lack of ideology is one of the greatest weaknesses of liberation movements.²⁸⁵ Although having an ideology will help guide liberation movements, it is unrealistic to think that all liberation movements will have the same ideology as suggested by Cabral. National non-state actors have different ideological backgrounds, with nationalism being the leading ideology for many, in addition to other ideologies that are motivated by religion and economic and

²⁸² Helga Baumgarten, "The Three Faces/Phases of Palestinian Nationalism, 1948—2005," **Journal of Palestine Studies**, 34(4), (2005), p. 33.

²⁸³ Anders Stephanson, "Senator John F. Kennedy: Anti-Imperialism and Utopian Deficit," **Journal of American Studies**, 48(1), (2014), pp.1-2.

²⁸⁴ Joshua Cole, "Massacres and their historians: recent histories of State Violence in France and Algeria in the Twentieth Century," **French Politics, Culture & Society**, 28(1), (2010), pp.106-109.

²⁸⁵ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, pp.122-123.

political approaches.²⁸⁶ Ideology for this reason, has played an important role for the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.

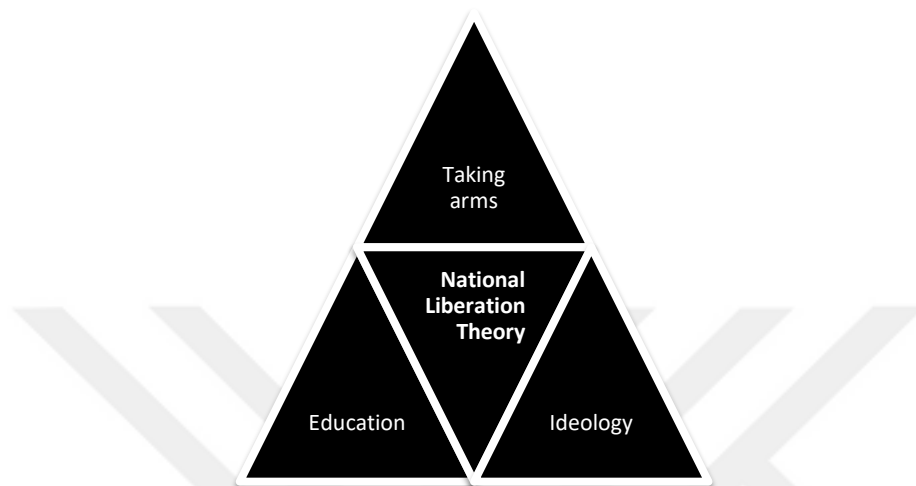


Figure 4: Pillars of the national liberation theory

Although the notion of being forced to take up arms to confront the colonial authorities is true for the FLN (which wanted to engage in a dialogue as a means to end French colonization of Algeria and was faced by French rejection), Hamas (which started as a non-violent movement with the outbreak of the First Palestinian Intifada in 1987 and turned violent over the years), and Hezbollah to a much lesser degree, not all three non-state actors seem to have successfully made the needed distinction between civilians and combatants.²⁸⁷ Walzer stresses the importance of making a distinction between civilians and non-civilians during war by noting that “civilians on both sides are innocent, equally innocent, and never legitimate military targets.”²⁸⁸ At the same time, in many cases, defining combatants and civilians, was not possible, as settlers in Palestine and Algeria were also heavily armed.

Hence, the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas say they took arms, because, as Cabral put it, speeches will not liberate people, nor will insults or shouting do. “For us, the worst or best

²⁸⁶ Karèn Nersesovič Brutenc, “National liberation revolutions today: some questions of theory,” **Progress**, Vol. 1, (1977), pp. 126-127.

²⁸⁷ Richard D. Rosen, “Targeting enemy forces in the war on terror: preserving civilian immunity,” **Vand. J. Transnat’l L.**, 42, (2009), p. 683.

²⁸⁸ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 296.

we can say about imperialism, whatever its form, is to take up arms and struggle. This is what we are doing and will go on doing until foreign domination has been totally eliminated from our African countries.”²⁸⁹ From a French point of view, the FLN’s taking arms against the French authorities was a form of civil war because France viewed Algeria as part of the French soil and acted as such.²⁹⁰ Walzer too viewed the engagement of the FLN in armed struggle against France as terrorism, noting that the FLN “killed Europeans at random.”²⁹¹ At the same time, he notes that “there are historical moments when armed struggle is necessary for the sake of human freedom.”²⁹² The FLN had the opposite view which saw France’s presence in Algeria as a foreign occupation that had to be removed by all possible means, a principle Walzer has recognized by stressing that people are “entitled collectively to determine their own affairs.”²⁹³ In the same vein, Hezbollah taking arms against Israel and other international forces on Lebanese soil was seen from the point of view of power politics, where countries, including Israel, the US and France, felt their national, political and economic interests were threatened by the group; thus they listed it as terrorist for waging a campaign of armed attacks against Israeli and Western targets in the country, similar to what the FLN and Hamas did with France and Israel respectively.²⁹⁴

Cabral understood the importance of education in shaping ideology for liberation to take place. He heeds that only “detailed knowledge of it (our struggle)” would lead to victory.²⁹⁵ Therefore, in all his writings, he stressed the importance of national education to realize national self-determination, and that knowledge and education given to people outside the classrooms are equally important to those given inside.²⁹⁶ For this reason, he stressed that

²⁸⁹ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p. 121.

²⁹⁰ Rosalie Calvet, “Thwarting the Other: A critical approach to the French historiography of Colonial Algeria,” **(PhD Dissertation)**: Columbia University, (2017), p. 19.

²⁹¹ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 205.

²⁹² Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 205.

²⁹³ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p. 87.

²⁹⁴ Matthew Levitt, “Adding Hezbollah to the EU Terrorist List. Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe United States House of Representatives,” Testimony of Dr. Matthew Levitt Director of the Stein Program on Terrorism, Intelligence and Policy, **The Washington Institute for Near East Policy**, (2007), p. 3.

²⁹⁵ Firoze Manji and Bill Fletcher, **Claim no easy victories: the legacy of Amilcar Cabral**, Dakar: The Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa and Daraja Press, 2013, p. 171.

²⁹⁶ Manji and Fletcher, p. 171.

national liberation is just the first step in a process that should end up with creating what he called “a new man and a new women,” bearing in mind that it is a complicated process that goes beyond the display of national independence symbols. As Cabral put it, “National liberation must put an end not only to suffering but also to backwardness.”²⁹⁷ For this to happen, he called on Africans to “return[ing] back to the source,” to re-create their own tradition and culture.²⁹⁸ The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have all placed a great importance to national education in their literature and activities.

Cabral learnt from understanding the social fabric that various social groups had different demands and suffered from various challenges.²⁹⁹ Therefore, his main challenge was to convince the population to stand united and fight the very structure that was causing them suffering and exploiting them for its colonial project. Yet, convincing them was a challenge, and bringing them together to fight colonialism was yet another challenge. The Portuguese response to the Pidjiguiti strike was a major factor that mobilized and brought the population together against a unified cause, that is fighting foreign domination.³⁰⁰ Based on that, it was the Portuguese response to the population’s just demands that awakened their national sentiments and sense of self-determination, a task that was facilitated by having a charismatic leader like Cabral.³⁰¹ This awakening speaks similarly to the three case studies of this study but more specifically to the FLN in Algeria, which realized the huge impact France had on Algeria, culturally, politically, economically and societally. At the same time, the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas’ engagement in civil wars explains that their understanding of the social fabrics of their societies were and have not been deep enough making them vulnerable to rifts and exploitation.

The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have shown a limited understanding of the existence of different social, religious, and political groups in their societies. The lack of understanding of these social groups and their demands was the trigger that led to civil wars for the FLN

²⁹⁷ Manji and Fletcher, p. 173.

²⁹⁸ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p. 11.

²⁹⁹ Peter Karibe Mendy, “Amilcar Cabral and the Liberation of Guinea-Bissau: context, challenges and lessons for effective African leadership,” **African Identities**, 4, No. 1, (2006), pp. 14-15.

³⁰⁰ Mendy, pp. 14-15.

³⁰¹ Mendy, pp. 14-15.

(during the Algerian War of Independence and after), Hezbollah and Hamas. This is not to negate the role of other factors related to settler-colonialism itself and the principle of divide and rule implemented by France and Israel and the intervention of regional and international powers in these civil wars. The failure of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas to contain all social groups during waging a guerrilla warfare has paved the way for the failure to work with other groups politically at later stages.³⁰² In this sense, as Cabral put it, all groups in the society must be mobilized to achieve their structural transformation and to realize “the divine force of natives.”³⁰³ A divided society can hardly defeat a colonial project and unity is the key to end foreign domination imposed on a nation by “returning back to the source” that is history and tradition.³⁰⁴

To give a deeper understanding of the unit-level analysis of this study, the research theorizes liberation through understanding the structures of non-state actors and how they engage with democratization and governance as part of their self-perception. There are mixed reactions as to how non-state actors run governments in post-independence periods. Yet, there are numerous examples of how a non-state actor could act when in government. There are a considerable number of non-state actors who fail at governance such as in South Africa and Liberia,³⁰⁵ Zimbabwe,³⁰⁶ Algeria, and Palestine. A clear example of this mixture between committing to governance and refusing to give up power/arms applies to Hamas in Palestine, the FLN in Algeria and to some extent Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hezbollah in Lebanon has ministers in the Lebanese cabinet and a political wing and institutions, and seats in the Lebanese parliament.³⁰⁷ However, it still refuses to give up arms, as does Hamas in Palestine, while the FLN still uses its liberation legitimacy to govern Algeria even today.

³⁰² Ferran Izquierdo Brichs, “Political Islam in the 21st Century,” *D’afers internacionals*, 93(94), (2013), p.280.

³⁰³ Alexis Wick, “Manifestations of nationhood in the writings of Amilcar Cabral,” *African Identities*, 4, No. 1, (2006), p. 52.

³⁰⁴ Sonn and Montero, p. 1.

³⁰⁴ Sonn and Montero, p. 1.

³⁰⁵ **Christopher Clapham**, “Why Many Liberation Movements Fail at Government,” *Politics Today*, February 26 2021, <https://politicstoday.org/why-many-liberation-movements-fail-at-government> (24 May 2022).

³⁰⁶ Henning Melber, “From liberation movements to governments: on political culture in Southern Africa,” *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, 6(1), (2002), pp.161-167.

³⁰⁷ Augustus Richard Norton, “The role of Hezbollah in Lebanese domestic politics,” *The International Spectator*, 42(4), (2007), p.480.

The debates surrounding terrorism and liberation and how relevant state-actors view non-state actors might benefit from accepting that the research points to the fact that most non-state actors in the context of foreign occupation use terrorist tactics. An approach to reconcile this tension is non-terrorist armed resistance as put out by Finlay. The notion of revolutionary terrorism could be a middle-ground approach to present the view of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas of themselves and the view of state-actors of their actions. The FLN, unlike Hezbollah and Hamas, was more willing to use this term in reference to its actions. Violence is central to this debate and non-state actors' reluctance to use it will likely improve their image and the way they are viewed. Because the nature of settler-colonialism is rooted in excessive violence and forms of domination, settler-colonial powers or occupying powers will continue to pose a challenge to these non-state actors vis-à-vis not using violence to avoid being listed as terrorist.

CHAPTER 2: THE FLN OF ALGERIA: BETWEEN COLONIAL HISTORY AND MODERN POLITICAL PRACTICE

This chapter attempts to answer why and how concerned state-actors and intergovernmental bodies view the FLN as a liberation or terrorist group by applying a theory-oriented approach. Theories used in this chapter are: Revolutionary Terrorism, the Just War Theory, and the National Liberation Theory. It also attempts to look at the impact the Cold War and the Arab Spring had on this designation. Compared to Hezbollah and Hamas, the FLN benefited the most from the politics of the Cold War and that's why leaders of the Front had (often) referred to their actions as revolutionary terrorism. To examine the designation of the FLN, the researcher looks at two levels of analysis, units (which includes state actors view of the Front and the view of the FLN itself of its actions), and international levels of analysis, which focuses on the impact of the Cold War and later the Arab Spring on the Front. This research covers the period from 1954-1962, which saw the outbreak of the Algerian War of Independence and the post-liberation period up until 2000. The research does not cover the period from 2000-2019 as it is not related to the FLN's designation, but rather discusses the post-2019 period, which is connected to the international level of analysis (the Arab Spring) of this study. As will be discussed in detail, the FLN saw no contradiction between designating its actions as revolutionary terrorism and viewing them as legitimate, thanks to the politics of the Cold War.

Martha Hutchinson asserts that the FLN is an example of revolutionary terrorism. She notes that one reason why the FLN engaged in revolutionary terrorism was to gain international recognition, including attacks that were carried out during the Battle of Algiers.³⁰⁸ The Just War Theory, namely the conditions leading to the outbreak of war, which Walzer called *Jus Ad Bellum*, include having a legitimate authority to wage it, being a last resort, discriminate and proportional, and have the right intention, and a chance of success to wage this war. The use of urban terrorism served as a double-edged sword for the FLN, with France classifying it as a terrorist organization following years of viewing its resistance as a law-and-order issue.

³⁰⁸ Jeffrey W. Mott, "The Road to Algiers: The FLN Challenge and the French Response 1954-1957", (MA Thesis): University of New Brunswick, Canada, (2010), p. 13.

At the same time, the international community grew more sympathetic to the cause of the FLN.³⁰⁹ Despite the negativity, the FLN was more willing to accept its actions as “necessary” terrorism. As Walzer notes, “most political militants, do not regard themselves as assassins but rather as executioners. They are engaged, or they so they claim, in a revolutionary version of vigilante justice.”³¹⁰

For France, however, they were a group of rioters who wanted to challenge the rule of law by creating lawlessness and disorder in the country. Scholars such as Sarte and Walzer noted that the FLN actions were terrorism and it took “one dead European to make a free Algerian,” adding that the FLN “targeted Europeans at random.”³¹¹ The French designation of the National Liberation Front (FLN) as a terrorist organization was part of the French efforts to delegitimize the Front and push Algerians away from it. The FLN has eventually adopted a military strategy to end France’s colonialism of Algeria, but O’balance argues that the political and diplomatic efforts that followed were more important in leading to the FLN’s victory such as the global solidarity with the Algerian people under French rule which proved to be effective in convincing France to end its 132-year settler-colonialism rule in Algeria.³¹²

The FLN’s War of Independence (1954-1962) was a milestone vis-a-vis the international history of the Cold War, which happened soon after the end of the first Indochina war in Vietnam. The FLN was successful at mobilizing pro-self-determination forces in the world, which greatly influenced the approaches of the Western bloc led by the US, and the Eastern bloc led by the USSR. The mobilization of these forces allowed the FLN to neutralize the impact of the US and the USSR and gave it more freedom to implement its own agenda by applying a strategy of balancing against global powers. Although the leaders of the FLN held socialist and leftist views, they did not identify themselves as such and viewed the Algerian Communist Party as “counter-revolutionaries,” and the French Communist Party as complicit

³⁰⁹ Mosbacher, p. 21.

³¹⁰ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 202.

³¹¹ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 205.

³¹² Edgar O’balance, **The Algerian Insurrection, 1954-1962**, Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1967, p. 220.

in the French colonization as they had ministers in the French cabinet.³¹³ In the case of the FLN, the Cold War impacted the actions, perceptions and choices of the group, pushing it to make use of differences among the Western bloc on Algeria to its benefit, which will be discussed in detail throughout the chapter.

The following section provides an overview of the impact of French on present-day Algeria and Algerian politics. This is done by connecting the theoretical and empirical parts of the study. It highlights the motivations behind designating the FLN as a terrorist group and how it views itself, the impact of the terror designation on the FLN by France and that of the Cold War, politically, socially, culturally, and economically. Coupled with this, the section pays attention to the role of the FLN in winning Algeria's independence and how the tactics used, which involved much violence, were viewed on a state-level. At the same time, the section looks at how the FLN itself viewed the use of revolutionary terrorism. Theoretically, the chapter highlights theories of war and terrorism, specifically the Just War Theory, the Theory of National Liberation, Revolutionary Terrorism to connect theory with the empirical part of the study and the levels of analysis (units and international). This is done by highlighting the view of the FLN (unit-non-state actor level) and France, the western bloc, the USSR and the Non-Aligned Movement (unit-state-actors-level) in light of the politics of the Cold War vis-à-vis the actions of the FLN during the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) and the post-liberation period up until 1991, and from 2019-until 2022.

³¹³ **Pierre Asselin**, "The Algerian Revolution and the Communist Bloc," Washington: Wilson Center, **CWIHP e-Dossier**, (62), <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-algerian-revolution-and-the-communist-bloc> (29 September 2022).

2.1. The French View of the FLN, Internal Documents and the Cold War

2.1.1. The French View of the FLN

This section sheds light on how and why France views the FLN, how the FLN views its own actions in light of the theories of liberation and terrorism, and the impact of the FLN's designation on the Front in light of the politics of the Cold War. It uses Revolutionary Terrorism, the Just War Theory, and the National Liberation Theory as a theoretical framework. After France failed to keep its promise to Algerians who fought under its command during the Second World War by granting Algeria its independence, national organizations started to emerge. One of the most important national organizations that was formed in Algeria after the Second World War was the National Liberation Front (FLN) that played a crucial role in Algerian politics prior to and after independence.³¹⁴ The leaders of the FLN initially adopted a diplomatic approach to gain more rights from France, yet this approach had not been effective, as France failed to keep its promises to Algerians, including those who fought with it during the Second World War.³¹⁵ Despite the fact that the FLN had a liberation discourse and tried diplomatic means before it engaged in violence to win liberation for Algerians, the Front was dubbed as terrorist by France and was outlawed in Algeria. As Camus put it, "Even in destruction, there is a right way and a wrong way and there are limits."³¹⁶ The FLN has largely adhered to the principle of making war a last resort as outlined by the Just War Theory before going to war, *jus in bello*, yet the French authorities refused all these calls for dialogue.

De Gaulle offered Algerians, following five years of gruella warfare, to choose between independence or to stay part of France, in line with the French view of Algeria as "French."³¹⁷ This unprecedented French offer faced resistance among the ranks of French army officers and settlers in Algeria and led to the formation of the Secret Army Organization (OAS), which wanted to keep Algeria French, attempting to assassinate De Gaulle.³¹⁸ The formation

³¹⁴ Mosbacher, p.21.

³¹⁵ Mosbacher, p. 23.

³¹⁶ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 199.

³¹⁷ Gil Merom, "A Grand Design? Charles de Gaulle and the End of the Algerian War," **Armed Forces & Society**, 25(2), (1999), p.270.

³¹⁸ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 54.

of the OAS resonates with Israeli settlers' formation of the price tag groups to deter Palestinians in the West Bank by carrying out arson attacks against them.³¹⁹ Israel's formation of the Southern Lebanon Army (SLA), which was loyal to it and aimed at suppressing Lebanese resistance to Israel's rule in Lebanon, also comes in the same context of outsourcing control of another nation.³²⁰ Harkis who were under French command in Algeria could also be viewed in the same lens of outsourcing suppression of local resistance at 'local' hands.³²¹ The proportionality of the number of victims on the FLN and the French sides can't be matched or compared, thus the French war in Algeria lacked the principle of proportionality, as advocated by Walzer. The May 8, 1945, massacres against Algerians by the French authorities claimed the lives of some 45,000 Algerians and 86 European settlers, nearly one fourth of them were armed, according to Algerian sources and 1,340 Algerians according to French sources, thus lacking two of the most important principles of just war: proportionality and distinction.³²²

Despite that the FLN has stressed its liberation discourse in its Proclamation of Independence in 1954, in addition to its initial commitment to dialogue, negotiations and diplomacy, the movement was dubbed as a terrorist group by France. The available literature on the FLN reveals that it was listed as terrorist due to its use of revolutionary terrorism in its war of independence.³²³ As Walzer noted, terrorism is a word used to describe revolutionary violence that is characterized by "randomness."³²⁴ According to Hutchinson, there are several elements for a group to be described as a subscriber to revolutionary terrorism including seizing political power from an existing government.³²⁵

³¹⁹ Lauren Fisher, "Oy Gevalt! Jewish Violent Extremism in the West Bank: A Framework for Analysis," **The Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Journal of Politics**, (2013), p. 40.

³²⁰ Stefan Malthaner, "Violence, legitimacy, and control: the microdynamics of support relationships between militant groups and their social environment," **Civil Wars**, 17(4), (2015), p.433.

³²¹ Martin Evans, "Reprisal Violence and the Harkis in French Algeria, 1962," **The International History Review**, 39(1), (2017), p.99.

³²² Cole, p. 112.

³²³ Mosbacher, p. 23.

³²⁴ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 197.

³²⁵ Hutchinson, "The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism," p. 385.

Hutchinson notes that another element of revolutionary terrorism “is manifested in acts of socially and politically unacceptable violence.”³²⁶ He notes that the FLN, for two years, fought the French in the countryside, which kept violence away from urban centers, yet this has changed. He does not point to the French violence directed at the Algerian people, which was at a much larger scale, such as killing protesters who went out to the streets to demand France to commit to its promise to grant Algeria its independence after the end of Second World War. The mounting violence directed at French settlers and soldiers and Algerians loyal to them was accompanied by increasing the number of French troops on Algerian soil from 80,000 in 1954 to 400,000 in 1956, which translated into more French violence directed at the Algerian people too.³²⁷

Hutchinson, however, has failed to provide a distinction when a group attempts to seize political power from a colonial government such as the case of the FLN. Unlike the FLN with France, Hezbollah and Hamas have not offered in their founding documents to engage in any dialogue to end the conflict with Israel as doing so could be understood as a recognition of Israel, which the two groups refuse. The FLN’s readiness to speak to France could be understood through the lens of the extent of influence France had on Algerians following 132 years of colonialism in all spheres. It could also be attributed to the divisions within the ranks of the FLN itself with some of its leaders advocating engaging in a dialogue with the French authorities such as Farhat Abbas, who eventually abandoned the notion in favor of armed struggle.

France’s view of the FLN did not pressure the Front to change its discourse or self-perception. It was the FLN’s strategy to fight a conventional war with the French army. In the words of Walzer, “In war, terrorism is a way of avoiding engagement with the enemy army.”³²⁸ On November 1, 1954, the National Liberation Front (FLN) adopted the Algerian Proclamation of Independence (API), which outlined its goals, strategies, and aspirations for an independent Algeria. In the 1954 Proclamation, the FLN put forward how it views itself

³²⁶ Hutchinson, “The concept of revolutionary terrorism,” p. 385.

³²⁷ John Ruedy, **Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation**, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005, p. 167.

³²⁸ Ruedy, p. 197.

as a liberation group. The API launched the Algerian War of Independence and put an end to the French rule in the country by 1962. It put forward the ideology of the post-independence state as a socialist one led by workers.

2.1.2. FLN's Proclamation of Independence

Unlike other documents, such as the Tripoli Charter and the Charter of El-Soumam, the Algerian Proclamation of Independence (API) reflected the general attitudes of the Algerian society.³²⁹ It, too, aimed at enlightening people around the world of the motivations that pushed the FLN to publish its proclamation, program, plan of action, and the eventual goal of winning independence. The proclamation was an explanation of the FLN, and at the same time, a document that refuted wrong claims maintained by colonial powers about the FLN which resulted in "confusion" among the masses. It was addressed to the Algerian people and the world, which explains the centrality of the public opinion to the FLN, which contributed to the group's eventual victory against French.³³⁰ The API drew parallels with the founding documents of Hezbollah and Hamas such as the Hamas Charter of 1988 and its Document of General Principles of 2017 as well as Hezbollah's 1985 Letter as to how the three groups perceive themselves as legitimate liberation groups.

In the API, the FLN noted that the goal of its revolutionary movement is to create favorable conditions so that it could start its operations for liberation as the internal and external circumstances were in favor of the Algerian people, specifically with the support of Tunisia and Morocco, which was crucial during the Cold War. The FLN called for putting aside personal interests and differences and to focus on ending colonialism, noting that having the FLN, will allow all segments of the Algerian society, regardless of their social class or ideology, to integrate into the movement, a claim that has proven to be partially true.³³¹

The goal of launching the FLN was to achieve national independence through claiming a democratic Algerian state and respecting basic liberties, a goal that proved to be rather

³²⁹ Soria Ghourari and Fatima Maameri, "The American declaration of independence (1776) and the Algerian proclamation of independence (1954)," (**Master Thesis**): Larbi Ben M'Hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi. Faculty of Letters and Languages: Department of English, (2014), pp. 20-21.

³³⁰ **National Liberation Front**, "Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation," p.1.

³³¹ **National Liberation Front**, "Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation," p.1.

theoretical after independence. Additionally, the FLN aimed to achieve national reform by combating corruption and bringing all parties of the Algerian people together to end the French colonial system. According to the API, the FLN sought to internationalize the Algerian question and realize the north African unity in addition to supporting all peoples who were struggling for freedom under the Charter of the United Nations.³³² For this reason, the FLN has supported the Palestinians represented by the PLO and it is no surprise that the Palestinian Declaration of Independence was made in Algiers on November 15, 1988. Algeria today still commits to supporting the Palestinians both politically and financially.³³³

To make war a last resort, in line with the just war theory, the FLN has called for negotiations with the French colonial authorities based on delegating an authorized French person to speak to a representative of the Algerian people, on the grounds of “the recognition of sovereignty through Algerian liberation,”³³⁴ and liberating political prisoners, in addition to recognizing the Algerian nationality and aborting all laws that calls Algeria a French land. In return, the FLN promised to respect French cultural and economic interests as well as families and individuals, unlike Hamas and Hezbollah, which call for a complete departure of Israeli settlers. The FLN offered French settlers, who were willing to stay in Algeria, to do so, where they would be treated as foreigners in line with Algerian laws and rules. As for settlers who wished to obtain Algerian nationality, they could apply, where they would be considered Algerian nationals with rights and duties.

The FLN offering French settlers the option to become Algerians and to stay in the country also meets the post just-war principle of treating civilians with dignity, *Jus post bellum*.³³⁵ Reaching a peace pact with France known as the Évian Accords of 1962 also enforces this understanding. However, the FLN’s failure to treat Harkis with dignity and torturing and killing many of them in addition to shaming their families violates this principle. The Proclamation noted that the relationship between Algeria and France will be outlined in

³³² **National Liberation Front**, “Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation,” p.1.

³³³ Johannes Tropper, “1988–Palestinian Declaration of Independence: A Tale of Poetry and Statehood,” **Austrian Review of International and European Law**, 23, (2020), p.172.

³³⁴ **National Liberation Front**, “Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation,” p.1.

³³⁵ Williams Jr. and Caldwell, p. 319.

agreements based on mutual respect and equality.³³⁶ It could be claimed that the French presence (and its length and impact) has partially impacted the FLN's thinking vis-à-vis European settlers, unlike the cases of Hezbollah and Hamas, where the Israeli project does not aim to assimilate the population and has not been going on for that long.

2.1.3. The FN and Political Violence

This section draws the attention to the FLN's use and view of political violence. Yacef Saadi, an FLN leader and one of the masterminds of the Battle of Algiers, notes that without violence that would bring about international attention, the Algerian revolution would not have achieved its desired goals.³³⁷ In other words, urban terrorism was the FLN's strategy and, to some extent, the preferred choice to reach out to the outside world. Being part of the Non-Aligned Movement, the FLN even received support from the USSR, by playing into differences among global powers at the time, which greatly contributed to the benefit of the group. This explains why the FLN cared less for designating its actions as terrorism than Hezbollah and Hamas did. In the same vein, France itself was late to consider the actions of the FLN as insurgency, and it only did so in 1957. France for a while considered the actions of the FLN as an issue of law and order in line with its view of 'French Algeria.'

In 1957, to draw the attention of world leaders who met at the UN, the FLN successfully began a campaign of urban terrorism which grabbed the attention of the world's leaders. The FLN campaign included killing scores of French nationals and detonating bombs on main streets as part of the Battle of Algiers, which proved to be detrimental to the Algerian fight for self-determination.³³⁸ Walzer described planting bombs in public spaces by the FLN as "aimless killing," a description the FLN cared less about, with Walzer noting that ordinary citizens who support laws that oppress people should be immune from these attacks.³³⁹ The revolutionary terrorism of the FLN, a discourse the group was more willing to accept, seemed

³³⁶ **National Liberation Front**, "Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation," p.1.

³³⁷ Mosbacher, p. 25.

³³⁸ Gilles Martin, "The French Experience," **Military Review**, p. 53.

³³⁹ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 200.

effective to end French rule, as it pushed some French leaders to rethink their Algeria strategy, especially with the rise to power of Charles de Gaulle in 1957.

The FLN chose their targets to get the message out the fastest way, regardless of who the targets were. This included targeting public busses, clubs, and cafes.³⁴⁰ Walzer notes that “a bomb planted on a streetcorner, hidden in a bus station, thrown into a café or pub, this is aimless killing.”³⁴¹ Hutchinson notes that the third element of revolutionary terrorism is the systemic selections of objects. Hamas and Hezbollah too have targeted civilian objects but at a lower scale than the FLN, due the nature of violence used by Israel and the way the settler society is designed to live away from Palestinian communities. The fourth and last element in Hutchinson’s definition of revolutionary terrorism is creating a psychological effect that might impact the masses and push them to change their attitudes and opinions. Hutchinson speaks of anxiety and fear among the population, which the FLN was successful at creating, just like Hamas and Hezbollah did, creating a sense of helplessness among the settler population. At the same time, state actors in the three case studies inflicted much psychological damage and fear among the population. Terrorism, according to Hutchinson, is irrational, and therefore people can’t respond to it rationally.³⁴²

2.2. French Violence to Suppress the FLN and The Cold War

2.2.1. French Violence Against the FLN and Algerians

States’ calculated reactions, often, keep their interests and how the concerned state-actors, in the case of this study France and Israel, would react in mind. Therefore, when states commit acts of terrorism, the criticism they receive tend to be less severe compared to when non-state actors do so. In the case of France in Algeria, the FLN was not the only party that used violence, as the French have used excessive violence against Algerians, manifested in the killing of 45,000 Algerians in 1945 for protesting French colonialism. “The French and their brutality were some of the reasons the revolution happened in the first place.”³⁴³ This

³⁴⁰ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 25.

³⁴¹ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 200.

³⁴² Hutchinson, “The concept of revolutionary terrorism,” p. 387.

³⁴³ Mosbacker, p. 29.

included bombing and burning Algerian villages and urban centers, as well as torturing and killing Algerians. Hundreds of thousands of Algerians were subjected to torture to extract information about the FLN and its leaders. In contrast, these French acts did not deter Algerians and pushed more people to join the revolution.³⁴⁴

According to Yacef Saadi, the use of violence in the Battle of Algiers made the French government authorize General Massu to use torture and killings to end the FLN revolution, which in turn drew the attention of the world to the plight of the Algerian people. It has split the French government, which eventually led to the independence of Algeria.³⁴⁵ Dubbed as “the father of paratroopers,” by French settlers in Algeria, Massu was known for his role in the brutal torture of FLN members. “Sometimes I captured high-ranking FLN (National Liberation Front) guys, and I said to myself: ‘That one’s dangerous; he has to be killed.’ And I did it, or I had it done, which is the same thing.”³⁴⁶ He challenged the film the *Battle of Algiers*, which exposed French torture in Algeria, including his own role in it, noting, “I am not afraid of the word torture, but I think in the majority of cases, the French military men [were] obliged to use it to vanquish terrorism were, fortunately, choir boys compared to the use to which it was put by the rebels. The latter’s extreme savagery led us to some ferocity, it is certain, but we remained within the law of eye for eye, tooth for tooth.”³⁴⁷ He later regretted the use of torture. France’s actions and policies of torture violate the principles of just war.

The French violence directed at the Algerian people could be viewed as a major motivation why the FLN chose violence over diplomacy, specially that calls for diplomacy did not reap fruits at the onset of the Algerian revolution, which also resulted in divisions within the ranks of the FLN regarding how to deal with France. The FLN calls for diplomacy and dialogue, as the Just War Theory argues, went on deaf ears. Revolutionary terrorism in the case of the

³⁴⁴ Ruedy, p. 168.

³⁴⁵ Mosbacher, p. 28.

³⁴⁶ Lara Marlowe, “French generals admit involvement in Algeria killings,” **The Irish Times**, November 23 2000, <https://buff.ly/3gC8kDY> (February 11 2022).

³⁴⁷ Michael T. Kaufman, The World: Film Studies; What Does the Pentagon See in ‘Battle of Algiers’? **New York Times**, September 7, 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/07/weekinreview/the-world-film-studies-what-does-the-pentagon-see-in-battle-of-algiers.html> (28 January 2023).

FLN in Algeria was the answer, as its benefits outweighed its costs from the FLN perspective. Therefore, using violence by the FLN was a last resort in line with the Just War Theory, namely the conditions leading to war: *Jus ad bellum*. As explained by an FLN official, urban terrorism was the only option.³⁴⁸ For the FLN, it was more effective to engage revolutionary terrorism than in organized guerrilla to force France on its knees and win the independence of Algeria.

In addition to using its own forces, France has also used Algerian forces working under its umbrella, known as Harkis, to crush the Algerian resistance to its colonial rule, which sheds light on the ethical nature of this act, as the Algerian society is yet to recover from divisions resulting from this French tactic.³⁴⁹ In the same context, Israel used the Southern Lebanon Army (SLA) against the Lebanese people and Hezbollah, which created similar challenges and divisions in Lebanon. It has too created the Villages Unions in the West Bank and is now coordinating its security with the Palestinian Authority, which further divides the Palestinians. All in all, the divide and rule tactics of settler colonial projects in Palestine, Lebanon and Algeria are clearly present.

Another form of terrorism that emerged in Algeria was at the hands of French settlers. In Algeria French settlers, and army officers formed secret organizations to carry out assassinations both in France and Algeria against Algerians, to pressure France not to give up its colony in Algeria. An example of these groups is the Organization of the Secret Army (French: Organisation Armée Secrète) (OAS), which was made of European settlers and army officers in Algeria who aimed to prevent a French withdrawal from Algeria through using terror tactics. Between May 1961 to January 1962, OAS carried out over 5,000 attacks, including attempts to assassinate De Gaulle, thus imposing a serious challenge to the Fifth French Republic.³⁵⁰ France responded brutally to the OAS as well, viewing it a threat to the French territorial integrity and to its political regime. In other words, despite carrying acts of

³⁴⁸ Hutchinson, "The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism," p. 387.

³⁴⁹ Yoav Gortzak, "Using Indigenous Forces in Counterinsurgency Operations: The French in Algeria, 1954–1962," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32(2), (2009), pp.307-22.

³⁵⁰ J. Shapiro, "French responses to terrorism from the Algerian War to the present," *The Consequences of Counterterrorism*, New York: **Russell Sage Foundation Publications**, (2010), p. 255.

terror, France did not view the OAS as a terrorist organization but rather a group that poses a threat to its interests in Algeria.

This reveals the double standards of the French government when it comes to groups using violence in Algeria. The background and ethnicity of people involved in the OAS and their goals prevented France from viewing it as a terrorist organization.³⁵¹ The way France viewed the FLN, and the OAS, was similar but not identical and, in both cases, it did consider them a security threat. In the case of the FLN, after France was convinced the group's attacks were part of an insurgency, it viewed the Front as a terror group. The French response to the insurgency in Algeria was largely influenced by its Vietnam experience, which included moving the population out of urban centers, carrying out research-and-destroy and border control operations. France made use of ad hoc bodies and extraordinary powers to crush the FLN, resulting in mass arrests of Algerians where 40% of males in Casabah were arrested and heavily tortured in 1956. The French government has also combed villages, assassinated people involved in smuggling arms and attempted to assassinate the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdelnasser for his role in supporting the FLN.³⁵² In the case of the OAS, France made sure that the OAS' infiltration of the French army does not harm its own security and it tasked agents to infiltrate the ranks of the OAS in response.³⁵³

It could be argued that the involvement of French settlers in OAS and taking part in terrorist acts was an important factor that made European settlers leave Algeria once colonialism has ended, fearing revenge.³⁵⁴ The French government has rarely punished generals responsible for the torture of Algerians and in 1968 it issued a blank amnesty absolving all French nationals, who have served in Algeria, of possible crimes that they might have committed, which again violates the principles of Just War Theory that calls for brining those responsible for crimes during war to justice.³⁵⁵ The French response to OAS was less discriminate

³⁵¹ Abderahmen Moumen, "From Algeria to France: Repatriates, Pieds Noirs, and Harkis: Conditions of Departure and Arrival, 1962," **Materiaux pour l'histoire de notre temps**, (3), (2010), pp.60-61.

³⁵² Shapiro, pp. 255-257.

³⁵³ Shapiro, p. 284.

³⁵⁴ Fiona Barclay, Charlotte Ann Chopin and Martin Evans, "Introduction: settler colonialism and French Algeria," **Settler Colonial Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 2, (2018), p. 124.

³⁵⁵ Daniel Moran, "The Battle of the Casbah: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Algeria, 1955-1957," **Journal of Cold War Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 2, (2006), p. 172.

compared to the FLN, which reveals that the French government was selective when it came to the Algerian victims, giving preference to the French and European ones. The French army's use of violence against the Algerian population aimed at pushing them to abandon the FLN and revolt against it. It also aimed at deterring Algerians from joining the FLN in the future, which was not a successful strategy.³⁵⁶ It was this French brutal violence that made the FLN "mobilize the rest" of the population to fight France.³⁵⁷ The involvement of some French settlers in violence against the Algerian people makes applying justice in post-war settings more challenging, including revenge attacks, as the post-war phase of the just war requires.

2.2.2. The FLN and The Cold War

This section addresses the impact of the Cold War on the FLN and its designation. The researcher argues that the Cold War had a positive impact on the designation of the FLN, which explains why it was more willing to use terrorism to describe its actions. The success of the FLN in mobilizing regional and international support, as part of its balancing approach against global powers, to garner support for the Algerian people was deeply rooted in the politics of the Cold War. Although the FLN officially subscribed to the Non-Aligned Movement and counted on the regional support of Egypt and Tunisia, it kept the door open for collaboration with the socialist camp, by focusing on common grounds and at the same time outlining differences they had with the French Communist Party. The FLN founded in 1958 the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA) in exile headed by Ferhat Abbas, which aimed at internationalizing the FLN struggle and gave it needed legitimacy. The FLN won the support and the recognition of the socialist camp and later it started a process of engagement with the communist bloc through their diplomatic missions in Egypt and Tunisia.³⁵⁸ Thanks to support from Egypt and Tunisia, which by extension brought the USSR in, the Algerian War of Independence was a success, although at a very high price.

³⁵⁶ C. Melnik, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria," Washington DC: **RAND Institute**, (1964), p. 243.

³⁵⁷ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 180.

³⁵⁸ Asselin, "The Algerian Revolution and the Communist Bloc," (29 September 2022).

The main supporter of the FLN at the outset of the revolution in 1954 was Egypt under Nasser's rule. Nasser turned to the Soviets for arms, so most weapons from Egypt to Algeria by 1956-57 were of Soviet origin. A very small number of Algerians went to the Soviet Union for diplomatic work and military training. But there were also major efforts made by the FLN to recruit other third-world countries and even to win the Western public opinion. For the FLN, Nasser and his model of one-party rule was more important than the Soviet model per se. Some argue that Boumediene, Algeria's second president, was something of a convinced socialist, but he mostly saw the advantage of state control over oil and other industrial production, as well as a far-reaching effort to collectivize land that had mostly been under French control prior to 1962. The fact that Kennedy was president when Algeria won independence meant that US-Algeria relations got off to a good start – full recognition right away.³⁵⁹

When Boumediene came to power, he maintained a channel of communication to the United States – he even made a visit to the White House and met with Nixon in 1972. During his shuttle diplomacy after the 1973 War, Kissinger would regularly stop in Algiers to brief Boumediene. It was the Algerians who helped to free the American hostages in Iran in 1981. Thus, Algeria managed to play a successful game of balancing ties with the US and the Western camp by maintaining good relations with both the Soviets and Americans. The military relationship with Russia is still strong today, but Europe is the market for Algerian oil and gas. As for the US, it has been involved in hydrocarbons in Algeria. Meanwhile, China has recently been making a play for a share of the large construction market in Algeria. There is some remaining importance of the Cold War alignments on Algeria's international relations today, but mostly in the military area. In other areas such as intelligence cooperation, the Algerians work discreetly with the French and the Americans on anti-ISIS operations in Africa. Algerians remain quite adamant that they will not allow any foreign country to establish military bases on their soil and they pride themselves on remaining strongly non-aligned on anything resembling NATO-Russia conflicts.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ Personal communications via email with Algeria scholar and expert William R. Quandt on 23 January 2022.

³⁶⁰ Personal communications with William R. Quandt.

Internal documents of the FLN reveal how the group effectively sought to seek the help of the socialist camp where an FLN representative visited world capitals such as Moscow, Prague, Budapest, and Sofia to seek help following a UN meeting on Algeria, after which the USSR pledged to train Algerian pilots. FLN internal documents show that Czechoslovakia, which was “hesitant,” decided to extend the recognition of the FLN government and gave military aid and training to the group. The FLN literature reveals that the group stressed the necessity to commit to “anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle,” for this international support from the socialist camp to continue.³⁶¹ The FLN said in one of its internal documents that the interest of China in supporting peoples fighting colonialism especially in light of its UN admissions requires a close follow-up of its foreign policy. The document draws the attention to the possibility of Chinese disengagement from the Algerian question if France normalizes relations with the country and recognizes it, calling for the need to establish stronger ties with China so that the Sino-Algerian relations become irreversible.³⁶²

A third internal FLN document refers to the importance of establishing ties with China, which will allow its representatives to stop in Moscow, and for China to act on behalf of the Front before the USSR, by stressing Algerians’ right to self-determination. The document urges the need to explain to the USSR that “the fluidity” of their positions allowed enemies to mix the positions of workers on Europe and France vis-à-vis “the nature of the Algerian resistance and the revolutionary meaning of our quest for independence.” The document also noted to the need to “ask that the Chinese and Russian governments intercede on our behalf with the governments of popular democracies, especially with the German Democratic Republic and Albania, to recognize the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA).

³⁶¹ Annex #2 to “Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961,” **History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive**, Fond: GPRA, 1958-62; Archives Nationales d’Algérie, Alger, Translated from French and transcribed by Pierre Asselin, with Paulina Kostrzewski, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121586> (12 February 2022).

³⁶² “Annex #1 to “Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961”, March 19, 1961, **History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive**, Dossier 08/13/07; Fond: GPRA, 1958-62; Archives Nationales d’Algérie, Alger, translated from French and transcribed by Pierre Asselin, with Paulina Kostrzewski, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121587> (February 12 2022).

Success on that front will not be without rewards on the positions of Federal Germany and the countries of the Mediterranean basin (Greece, Türkiye, Yugoslavia, Egypt, etc...).”³⁶³

A fourth Internal document of the FLN reveals its position on the Algerian and French Communist Party, noting that they have been directed by opportunists, who only offered to recognize the existence of a problem in Algeria, but refused its use of arms, in line with the teachings of Lenin. The document directed to the USSR read, “the failure of the Algeria Communist Party (French: PCA) to integrate itself into the revolution as an autonomous entity, the development of the armed struggle of our people for the cause of independence, [and] the anti-imperialist momentum in the Arab countries following the Suez aggression all constituted new elements that the USSR could not ignore.”³⁶⁴ The FLN noted in its document its caution vis-à-vis the USSR, which acted in line with its interests, adding, “The fear of seeing a stronger imperialism replace France in Algeria (yesterday, Germany, today, the United States) has for a long time prompted the USSR to have a prudent attitude on the Algerian question and to limit the principle of unconditional aid, by prioritizing the necessity of a union with France and not the right to a separation, that is, to independence. The profound changes that have taken place in the Arab world have made it reconsider its Algerian policy.”³⁶⁵

The FLN used balancing between global powers during the Cold War before and after Algeria’s independence to win some leverage for the Algerian people. The United States had disagreements with France over Algeria, as American decision-makers were convinced that the French strategy in Algeria will eventually collapse, and that France will have to eventually withdraw. The Americans refused to let France use NATO as a coverage for its military presence in Algeria. Realizing this, the FLN tried to balance its relations with the US on one hand and the USSR on the other hand. This balancing continued even after the end of the Cold War when, thanks to Algerian mediation, American hostages in Iran were

³⁶³ Annex #2 to “Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961.”

³⁶⁴ Report attached to “Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961,” **History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive**, Dossier 08/13/07; Fond: GPRA, 1958-62; Archives Nationales d’Algérie, Alger, translated from French and transcribed by Pierre Asselin, with Paulina Kostrzewski, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121589> (February 22 2022).

³⁶⁵ “Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961.”

released after 444 days. The US rarely recognizes this Algerian role because of the nature of American exceptionalism.³⁶⁶

Despite the alleged support of John F. Kennedy of Algerian independence, the FLN did not rush to establish diplomatic ties with the US, and preferred to establish ties with China and Russia, because of the support the FLN received from them. The US chose to maintain its strategic interests by supporting France against the FLN because both Eisenhower & Kennedy feared that an FLN victory might translate into “a fertile ground for Soviet penetration of the Maghreb from which the USSR had hitherto been barred.”³⁶⁷ This explains why Algeria had cold ties with the US for almost three decades after Algerian independence up until the collapse of the Soviet Union. The strong ties Algeria had with Cuba under Ahmed Ben Bella and viewing “Algeria’s socialist struggle as Castro-style socialism,”³⁶⁸ all contributed to this uneasiness. Additionally, Algeria’s anti-Israel attitude resulted in severing its ties with the US for seven years after 1967. After Houari Boumediene, Algeria’s second president after independence, called for a new economic order, the ties between the two countries were restored. Algeria’s opposition to the war in Vietnam and the US’ support for Morocco’s position on Western Sahara have added fuel to fire in the US-Algeria relations.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁶ Berhail Wafa, “The Role of Algeria in the Iran Hostage Crisis, 1979-1981,” (**MA Thesis**): Larbi Ben M’hidi University-Oum El Bouaghi, Faculty of Letters and Languages, (2017), p. 20.

³⁶⁷ Wafa, p. 21.

³⁶⁸ Wafa, p. 22.

³⁶⁹ Wafa, p. 23.



Figure 5: How did the world view the FLN?

2.2.3. The FLN and Internal Divisions

This section looks into the impact of the FLN's designation as a terrorist organization or a liberation movement by specific state-actors and its relation to its engagement in civil war. Like divisions and assassinations have been part of the history of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine, the FLN too was not an exception. In 1958, the FLN assassinated Mohammed Bellounis, with its propaganda machine accusing France of standing behind the assassinations. The FLN and the Algerian National Movement (French: MNA) engaged in what seemed to be an Algerian civil war during the French rule of the country, coupled with France's violence against Algerians.³⁷⁰ This has created a deep fracture in the Algerian society but the FLN was eventually able to swiftly take over the discourse due to its strong presence and propaganda machine and France's limited success in promoting the MNA as a

³⁷⁰ James D. Le Sueur, **Representations of Difference. Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria**, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2001, p.165-167.

representative of the Algerian people, with the conflict extending over to the French territory in cities like Paris and Lyon.³⁷¹

During this conflict, and due to repression by French police and state bodies, some 4,000 Algerians lost their lives in France. Unlike the MNA fighters, the FLN fighters were treated with respect and dignity and memorials were held for them to mark their contribution to the war of independence.³⁷² The violence between the MNA and the FLN can't be viewed in isolation from the French state violence in Algeria as France has facilitated this infighting. Terrorist tactics such as torture and assassinations used by France against the FLN were also used in the fight between the MNA and the FLN, which reflects the internalization of violence used by France against Algerians by the FLN.³⁷³ The projection of colonial violence by colonial powers against the colonized people often lead to the spread of other forms of violence by these people against both colonial powers as well as against their own people. In the words of Thomas, "internalization of racial oppression...leads to a devalued self-worth among the oppressed."³⁷⁴

Division has been a defining feature of the FLN and the Algerian national movement. At the start of the Algerian revolution, there was another division within the ranks of the FLN itself, with a branch advocating for a political resolution with France and another advocating a military one through using guerrilla warfare and revolutionary terrorism, yet it did not turn as violent as was the conflict with the MNA. Another division between FLN members living in Algeria and those in exile also took place.³⁷⁵ Algeria scholar William Quandt speaks of divisions within the FLN,³⁷⁶ noting that the early generations of Algerian nationalists preferred assimilation with France such as Farhat Abbas, while the later generations of

³⁷¹ Marc André, "From the 'quarter of the executed' to the 'Martyrs' Quarter': political stakes and memorial implications of repatriating the bodies of Mujahidin from France to Algeria," **The Journal of North African Studies**, 25(5), (2019), p. 2.

³⁷² André, p. 2.

³⁷³ Paul A. Silverstein, "An excess of truth: Violence, conspiracy theorizing and the Algerian Civil War," **Anthropological Quarterly**, (2002), p. 666.

³⁷⁴ E J R David and Sumie Okazaki, "Colonial mentality: a review and recommendation for Filipino American psychology," **Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology**, 12(1), (2006), p.1.

³⁷⁵ Mott, p. 14.

³⁷⁶ The researcher met with William R. Quandt in October 2019 and had a conversation with him about Algeria and the FLN.

Algerian nationalists, dubbed as radical, preferred using arms and violence to gain independence. At the start of the Revolution, the Algerian Proclamation of Independence of 1954 called on France to have “an honorable platform of discussion” to reduce “the amount of blood spilled.”³⁷⁷ At the end of the Second World War, this group was weakened, following the mass killings of Algerians in 1945. The core of the FLN was formed then, with radical voices within the ranks of the FLN coming to the front of the Algerian scene.³⁷⁸ Terror and force were used against other groups to force them to join the FLN which paved the way for the outbreak of armed revolution against the French.³⁷⁹

The division among Algerians, just like the division among Palestinians and Lebanese (Hamas and Fatah and Hezbollah and other Lebanese factions) continued to persist over the years, even after the declaration of Algeria’s independence in 1962. The Algerian civil war of 1991-2002 cannot to be viewed separately from the French settler-colonial history of Algeria and the tactics used during the war of independence by both France and the FLN including kidnapping, torture and killing. The Algerian people’s supposed transition to democratization failed to materialize. State elites, army officers, Islamic elements and democrats drew the country to a civil war and a disaster whose impact is still present today. The Algerian army at the time failed to maintain order and the political system was unable to keep up with the calls for reforms by the impoverished population, thanks to the socialist economic model imported to the country from the USSR. The FLN felt it had the right to rule the country based on its liberation legacy, an issue both Hamas and Hezbollah still claim. The Algerian army heavily applied military tactics to answer social demands, thus pushing Islamists to use arms too, halting the democratic transition in December 1991. The country went into a civil war that claimed the lives of some 100,000 people.³⁸⁰

After 132 years of French colonialism in Algeria, Algerians were finally able to claim their independence in 1962. A number of factors led to the success of the FLN in winning Algeria’s

³⁷⁷ **National Liberation Front**, “Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation,” p. 1.

³⁷⁸ William B. Quandt, **Revolutionary Leadership**, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1969, p. 278

³⁷⁹ Mott, p. 13.

³⁸⁰ FMN Volpi, “Democratization and its enemies: The Algerian transition to authoritarianism, 1988–2001. Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and Security Establishments,” in Gavin Kawthara and Robin Luckham (Eds.), **Transitional Democracies**, 1, (2003), pp. 155-157.

independence from France; Algeria's national liberation war led by the FLN from 1954-1962; France's geographical location to Algeria and the lack of a land connection between both territories; differences within France itself as well as among its settler population in Algeria and its failure to create a French majority in Algeria; differences within the western bloc over how to deal with Algeria; the unity of large sectors of Algerians behind the FLN and the cruelty of France; waging the war of liberation at a time peoples in Asia and Africa were gaining their independence from colonial powers as well as having the support of international and regional forces such as the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War.³⁸¹ The politics of the Cold War did not serve Hezbollah and Hamas as much. In addition, some French voices, although limited, supported the independence of Algeria such Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which further strengthened the position of the FLN.³⁸²

Because of the legacy of liberation, which too plagued Hezbollah and Hamas, Algeria has slowly fallen into a country that lacks democratic practices after independence. The FLN's refusal of local elections in the early 1990s, which led the country into a civil war for a decade, was only a manifestation of this deterioration. The revolutionary (liberation) legitimacy of the FLN and its elites were used as a cover-up for these practices. The Algerian military's intervention in municipal elections to prevent the winning of the Islamic Salvation Front (French: FSI) in 1991 led to the emergence of terrorism in the country, this time by and against the FLN government itself. Hopes of reforms and a democratic transition faded away as Bouteflika remained in power up until 2019. The late ailing president only left power under huge popular protests calling for his departure, in which young people, who felt excluded from the decision-making process, and were worried about their future, participated in large numbers.³⁸³

³⁸¹ Matthew Connelly, "Rethinking the Cold War and decolonization: the grand strategy of the Algerian war for independence," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33(2), (2001), p.231.

³⁸² Mireille Fanon-Mendès France and Donato Fhunsu, "The Contribution of Frantz Fanon to the Process of the Liberation of the People," *The Black Scholar*, 42, (3-4), (2012), pp.8-12.

³⁸³ Mihaela Alexandra Tudor and Farid Ladjouzi, "Information literacy practices of young Internet users related to the production of religious content: 2019 Algerian protests case," *Journal of African Media Studies*, 12(2), (2020), p. 110.

2.3. Transition to Governance Under The FLN and French History

Examining the post-liberation period in Algeria, especially in the early years after the end of French colonization in 1962 can hardly be done without looking at the liberation discourse of the FLN during and after the end of French rule. The FLN post-liberation discourse, which propagates and encourages rebellion, made it the duty of each Algerian to rebel and refuse any unjust government, which explains why groups such as FSI emerged.³⁸⁴ The FLN introduced itself as the sole and legitimate party in Algeria that have the right to form a government. This liberation discourse of the FLN, could be viewed through the Theories of Just War (having a legitimate authority) and the Theory of National Liberation's advocacy of introducing national education during and after the end of colonization. The FLN, having become the state's party (state-actor) stopped Revolutionary Terrorism terminology to refer to its actions, but rather saw itself as a leading state-actor in the region with multiple relations with regional and global powers. These relations have impacted the Algerian state both positively and negatively at the same time due to the politics of the Cold War as will be outlined in this section. This section aims to address how the FLN's view of its liberation discourse has impacted post-independence Algeria in light of its Cold War ties.

When Algeria won its independence from France in 1962, the new state was under clear French influence represented by a French legacy and institutions inherited by the FLN. This meant that the FLN has gone through a massive process of 'Algerization,' through national education as the Theory of National liberation calls for and as outlined in chapter one, which included reshaping governance at different levels including increasing the number of governorates in the country. While the French military preferred to have indirect rule in Algeria, the civilian leadership preferred a direct control of the country through importing French institutions. For the French military, all they cared about was to impose order, which was translated into security, while the civilian leadership preferred the rule of law.³⁸⁵ Importing French institutions into Algeria meant introducing French as the official language

³⁸⁴ Alina Sajed, "Re-remembering Third Worldism: An affirmative critique of national liberation in Algeria," **Middle East Critique**, 28(3), (2019), p. 250.

³⁸⁵ Adria Lawrence, "Colonial approaches to governance in the periphery: Direct and indirect rule in French Algeria," **Comparative Politics Workshop**, Chicago: University of Chicago, (2019), pp. 22-28.

in the educational sector, which Algerians are still recovering from, and which Cabral urged should be replaced by national education. It is no exaggeration to say that French became “a syndrome” in the country even after independence, where the language is still widely used.³⁸⁶

In line with the Theory of National Liberation, the FLN has paid much attention to national education as a means of both awareness and mobilization. The FLN deemed it indispensable to educate the Algerian people to face the impact of French culture and education as was the case throughout the War of Independence (1954-1962) and in post-independence Algeria. The FLN engaged in a long-term program to teach Arabic at Algerian schools, bringing teachers from countries such as Egypt. Despite these ongoing efforts by Algeria, including the huge budgets allocated for education soon after the end of the French rule to mitigate the influence of France and French in the country, French is still widely spoken in Algeria today.³⁸⁷ This reality speaks of two facts: the strong influence of France in Algeria after 132 years of colonization and the failure of the Algerian government (reads FLN) to adopt effective programs to mitigate this influence.

The Algerian transition to governance after 1962 was barely democratic despite promises made in the API in 1954 to form a government based on democratic principles. The liberation legitimacy of the FLN was instead used to establish a one-party rule in Algeria after independence in light of its liberation legitimacy.³⁸⁸ Not only this, under calls of lacking democracy, a coup took place in 1965 against Ahmed Ben Bella, the first elected president of independent Algeria, ironically over accusations of dictatorship and the lack of democracy.³⁸⁹ Using a liberation discourse that directed accusations against Ben Bella, in 1965, Colonel Houari Boumedienne, who opposed some terms in the Evans Pact, became Algeria’s president and sought to upgrade the Algerian economy from 1965-1978 by adopting a socialist model similar to that of the USSR, which proved to catastrophic for

³⁸⁶ Malika Rebai Maamri, “The syndrome of the French Language in Algeria,” **International Journal of Arts and Sciences**, 3(3), (2009), pp. 80.

³⁸⁷ Ouarda Merrouche, “The long-term impact of French settlement on education in Algeria, Department of Economics,” Sweden: Uppsala University, CEMMAP working paper, No. CWP14/06, (2007), p.1.

³⁸⁸ Pradeep K. Chhibber, “State policy, rent seeking, and the electoral success of a religious party in Algeria,” **The Journal of Politics**, 58(1), (1996), p.130.

³⁸⁹ Peter St. John, “Independent Algeria from Ben Bella to Boumédiène: I. The Counter-Revolution and Its Consequences,” **The World Today**, 24(7), (1968), pp.290-292.

Algeria, which reveals the impact of the Cold War ties of the FLN on Algeria. Boumedienne's strategy included investing more in industrialization, centralization and state control and agricultural reforms. The politics of the Cold War has meant that Algeria would depend largely on the Soviet Union to build its own socialist model of economy which soon proved ineffective, as Algeria had different challenges than those of the Soviet Union.³⁹⁰

The economic reforms of Boumedienne did not sustain Algerians for too long especially when the global oil prices fell sharply. When Chadli Bendjedid assumed office in 1978, he had to deal with structural problems in the Algerian economy which resulted from importing the Soviet-like economic model to Algeria. Additionally, the sharp decline of oil prices in 1986 impacted Algeria's budget dramatically. Young Algerians, for the first time in the history of post-independent Algeria, took to the streets to protest economic conditions, as the Algerian economy plunged into recession following the sharp oil prices decline of 1986-1988.³⁹¹ Explanations behind the crisis ranged from attributing it to economic and social factors, including a housing and unemployment crisis, as well as the relative democratic opening of the country in 1988, especially among young people.³⁹²

The mass protests of 1988 in Algeria prompted the move towards greater political openness and participation, including easing restrictions imposed on freedom of expression and assembly, which was galvanized by the liberation discourse of the FLN to silence critics.³⁹³ These reforms were regarded as a right step in the direction of democracy. Yet, this experience was only short-lived and was followed by a civilian-military coup in January 1992, which resulted in the suspension of some constitutional rights and the start of brutal violence and terrorism that divided the country for a decade to come.³⁹⁴ The following section will address how Algeria plunged into violence for a decade and the impact of the 'Black Decade' on Algerians, who just recovered from French colonialism and economic recession,

³⁹⁰ Jeffrey James Byrne, pp. 427-428.

³⁹¹ Gonzalo Escribano, "The impact of low oil prices on Algeria," **Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy**, (2016). p. 3.

³⁹² Said Chikhi, "Algeria: from mass rebellion in October 1988 to workers' social protest," **Nordiska afrikainstitutet**, (1991), pp. 1-5.

³⁹³ Ahmed Aghrout and Yahia Zoubir, **Algeria: reforms without change? North African Politics (Eds.)**, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2015, p. 146.

³⁹⁴ Aghrout and Zoubir, p. 146.

which saw the Algerian government using terrorism charges used against the FLN by France against the Islamic Salvation Front (FSI). The section will also highlight how the one-party rule, in light of the FLN's viewed liberation legitimacy, which introduced itself as the only legitimate body after independence by using its liberation history, has contributed to this end.

The FLN used its post-liberation discourse to rule Algeria which brought the country to its knees and created a wave of terrorism and rift. The civil war of the 1990s in Algeria can't too be viewed in isolation from the Algerian infighting during the War of Independence as well as French violence against Algerians during the French colonial rule of the country, which the FLN internalized and later used against Algerians themselves under the claim it had the right to do so due to its liberation history. The FLN is not unique when it comes to civil war and internal rift, as both Hezbollah and Hamas have engaged in civil wars and internal violence, which provides yet another evidence to the connection between engaging in civil wars and the colonial experience and violence of the three non-state actors. Both Hamas and Hezbollah, just like the FLN, lacked democratic practices, even though both ran for elections and were democratically elected, as both groups grew impatient of critical voices.

The structural failures of the Algerian economy, which was largely dependent on oil revenues, and which was built on a soviet model in post-independence Algeria, still impact Algerians today. The Algerian economy recovered only for a while following the rise of oil prices after the end of the civil war in 2002, which improved the economic situation of Algerians, thus bringing about more political stability for a while. The improvement of the Algerian economy pushed the Algerian authorities to invest in more housing projects, subsidies, and handouts to the youths to gain social peace. This peace, however, did not last long as oil prices fell again, and the government started reducing its budget which impacted ordinary Algerians. In 2010, oil revenues accounted for 60% of Algeria's budget, which shows the extent the Algerian state has been dependent on oil revenues and how the fall of oil prices impacts its budget.³⁹⁵ The USSR provided the FLN with training and arms at some

³⁹⁵ Frederic Volpi, "Algeria versus the Arab spring," **Journal of Democracy**, 24(3), (2013), p.112.

point, and it inspired Algeria to adopt its economic model built by the workers. The FLN's strong interest in establishing ties with the USSR as revealed by its internal documents, explains why the Algerian government adopted a USSR-like economic model, which proved to be catastrophic to Algerians.³⁹⁶

The FLN's failure at governance draws similarities with that of Hezbollah (although the group has not officially assumed governance in Lebanon but still controls important junctions in the state) and that of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which was placed under siege in Gaza after winning the 2006 legislative elections. In the case of the FLN, it was its mismanagement, refusal of elections results, the misuse of its liberation discourse and its ties with the USSR, which made it import an economic model that does not meet the needs of the Algerian state and people that contributed to these undemocratic practices. In the cases of Hezbollah and Hamas, the two groups focused more on building arms than investing in the economy and the needs of their people although both emerged as social groups, which made the economic situation in both the Gaza Strip and Lebanon miserable, with unemployment and migration rates reaching high levels. This illustrates without doubt that building a non-state actor with a self-viewed liberation discourse is different than managing a country and building a strong economy and this is true to the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, and to many other non-state actors across the globe with varying degrees.

2.4 'The Black Decade' in Algeria and The Calls for Reform

The Black Decade in Algeria, from 1991-2002, was another manifestation of the post-independence liberation discourse of the FLN. Late 1991 saw the halting of transition towards a democratic system in Algeria after a civilian-military coup which cancelled the results of the local council and legislative elections. The Islamic Salvation Front (French: FSI) won the first round of parliamentary elections and defeated the FLN. Yet, the results of these elections were cancelled by the Algerian army, which saw in itself the legitimate authority that led the War of Independence against the French and thus had the right to rule.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁶ "Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961."

³⁹⁷ Yahia H. Zoubir and Gregory White, **Algeria: reforms without change** (Eds.), North African Politics: United Kingdom: Routledge, (2015), p. 77.

The FLN, by encouraging rebellion against France, has made a rebel out of many Algerians, which explains the coming to surface of groups such as the Social Forces Front (French: FFS), the Algerian Islamic Movement (French: MIA), and the Islamic Salvation Army (French: AIS).³⁹⁸ Following 27 years in exile, Muhammad Boudiaf was invited to return back to Algeria to head a military-backed council of state, but only for five months, as one of his bodyguards killed him while giving a speech despite the fact that his announced reforms won him popularity in Algeria.³⁹⁹

Lembarek Boumaarafi, who assassinated Boudiaf by shooting him in the head from a close range, later told the police that he was aware of the heroic past of Boudiaf, yet he assassinated him because “he did not do enough against the mafia,” noting that he (Boumaarafi) belongs to the Islamic movement. Some speculations suggest that the real reason behind the assassination of Boudiaf was his calls for reforms and ending military rule coupled with his fight against corruption. People of this opinion includes his wife, who was behind the scenes as he recorded his last speech. She suggested that some people in the military were behind the assassination and that Boumaarafi was used as a scapegoat to cover up the real perpetrators.⁴⁰⁰ Using its liberation history, the FLN cancelled the parliamentary elections in Algeria in January 1992 which resulted in a civil war that claimed the lives of over 100,000 Algerians, led by militants from the FIS, which won the first round of the elections. The cancelation of elections meant tightening the FLN’s grip on power, which was defeated in the first round of elections, making its political and military elites feel threatened.

The Algerian government has depended on a few tools to keep a tight grip on power using its liberation discourse, won during the FLN’s War of Independence against France by asserting its liberation role in the country including during the Black Decade of the 1990s. This FLN strategy included activating the role of the security apparatus to suppress dissidents, using patronage by making use of oil and gas revenues, and reducing restrictions of freedoms by allowing some political reforms; these reforms included introducing some

³⁹⁸ Sajed, p. 247.

³⁹⁹ Michael Newton, **Famous Assassinations in World History: An Encyclopedia** [2 volumes], Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, (2014), pp. 57-59.

⁴⁰⁰ Newton, pp. 57-59.

laws that allowed some Islamists to reintegrate in the political system, such as the 1999 Civil Concord Law and the termination of the state of emergency law in 2011, which has been in place since 1992.⁴⁰¹ These laws and policies have contributed to improving the security situation in Algeria, but the impact of the civil war is yet to be addressed and Algerians still keep a largely negative perception of this era in Algerian history. This explains why Algerians were reluctant to take to the streets during the Arab Spring of 2011 and why they acted more carefully when they did so in 2019.

The growth of a weak economy imported from the USSR due to the politics of the Cold War largely benefited the political elite of the FLN and the Algerian army and those close to people in power and has contributed to the outbreak of the civil war of 1991. Algerians have expressed their anger at the way the economy was managed even before the 1991 elections. The FLN's use of its revolutionary legitimacy, which was defeated in electoral polls, was another important factor in the outbreak of civil war and terrorism in Algeria in 1991. Algerian elites were able to maintain their interests even during the relative opening between 1988-1991.⁴⁰² To keep the anger of Algerians at a low level, the strategy of the Algerian government was to advance a pseudo-democratic system that allows for some reforms that do not threaten the existing political elite and the Algerian army.

Ali Kafi became the president of Algeria for nearly two years with the support of the FLN at a time the fight with Islamist insurgents heated. In 1994, he was replaced by Liamine Zéroual, who won a five-year-term and left power in 1999 after Bouteflika won the elections. Bouteflika was the only candidate in the elections who was supported by the army, winning the election following the drop-out of all other candidates.⁴⁰³ It could be argued that Bouteflika was the first Algerian president who did not emerge from the military establishment, who both neutralized the Algerian army as the sole broker in Algerian politics, and relatively maintained its professionalism, reclaiming control over the FLN.⁴⁰⁴ Realizing

⁴⁰¹ Frederic Volpi, "Algeria: When Elections Hurt Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, 31(2), (2020), p.155.

⁴⁰² Volpi, "Algeria: When Elections Hurt Democracy," p.155.

⁴⁰³ Robert Mortimer, "State and army in Algeria: the 'Bouteflika effect'," *Journal of North African Studies*, 11(2), (2006), p.159.

⁴⁰⁴ Mortimer, p.160.

the history of Algeria and the prominent role the Algerian army has played in Algerian politics over the years, Bouteflika tried to consolidate his power without making the military feel threatened.⁴⁰⁵ In the same context, he introduced the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which aimed at addressing the legacy of civil war in Algeria in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of Algerians at a time the country witnessed economic growth and a relative political opening.⁴⁰⁶ The accession of Bouteflika to power in Algeria lasted longer than most Algerians anticipated as he served four presidential terms, totaling 20 years. He only left office after another serious crisis of popular protests broke out in 2019 against his intention to run for a fifth term, which was about to bring the country to another period of turmoil and unrest.

The Algerian government's ability to pay salaries and buy the loyalty of the elites and the Algerian middle class at the start of the Arab Spring, thanks to the rise of oil prices, has saved Algeria the implications of the Arab Spring in 2011. The Algerian government was saved the 2014-drop-out in oil prices, unlike other governments in the MENA region. The sharp drop of oil prices in March 2019 due to COVID19 put an end to this gamble as the prices were historically low and hard to keep up with.⁴⁰⁷ Algerians grew impatient of the policies of the Algerian government and the speculations that Bouteflika was going to run for a fifth term despite his deteriorating health condition. In protest and keeping the horror of the civil war of the 1990s in mind, Algerians took to the streets to demand reforms on the top of which was preventing Bouteflika from running for a fifth term.

The FLN has failed at government, just like Hamas and Hezbollah, for different reasons, and using its liberation discourse became no longer an effective strategy that Algerians would buy into. Previously accused of waging terrorism by France, the FLN's government accusations of terrorism against members of the FIS who took to the mountains sounded baseless at least for some Algerians, especially that these accusations came after the

⁴⁰⁵ Rachid Tlemçani, "The purge of powerful Algerian generals: Civil-military reform or presidential power grab?", **Aljazeera Centre for Studies**, (2017), p. 2.

⁴⁰⁶ Rachid Tlemçani, **Algeria under Bouteflika: Civil strife and national reconciliation**, Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Vol. 7, (February 2008), p. 8.

⁴⁰⁷ Dalia Ghanem, "Algeria: Toward an economic collapse?", **Middle East Institute**, May 26, 2020, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/algeria-toward-economic-collapse> (24 May 2022).

cancelation of the results of the elections in 1991. Over the years, the FLN's government became unable to deal with the growing needs of Algerians, many of whom have had a great respect for its liberation role, but now want it to provide much needed jobs and services. Algerians took to the streets in mass numbers, but they kept in mind the experience of other Arab peoples who took to streets to demand reforms and spilled into civil wars. Algerians' own experience of civil war in the 1990s, which resulted in 100,000 Algerians dead and hundreds of others still missing, also impacted their decision to take to the streets in 2019 and how they did so.⁴⁰⁸

Coupled with the fact that Algerian President Bouteflika stayed in power for 20 years and was seeking a fifth term, Algerians felt frustrated and took to the streets.⁴⁰⁹ Despite serious challenges and rarely appearing in public since 2015 following suffering from a stroke, Bouteflika sought a fifth term, which enraged Algerians who protested the move as what became known as the Hirak Movement.⁴¹⁰ Saïd Bouteflika, who was seen as the real person behind the presidency in the country, was brought to trial along with some generals following the removal from power of President Bouteflika, in a move that served to put off the anger of Algerians. He was acquitted later by an Algerian court and released once the country became more stable and protests stopped due to COVID19. The following section covers the post-2019 period in Algeria, which saw the outbreak of the Hirak movement in the country and Algerians' call for political reforms, which too can't be viewed in isolation from the claimed liberation legitimacy of the FLN that still rules Algeria today. The section does not cover the 1991-2019 period as it is not connected to international politics (the Cold War) or the liberation-terrorism designation of the FLN.

2.5. The Hirak Movement of 2019

This section covers the post-liberation phase in Algeria starting from 2019, which was directly connected to the Arab Spring and saw the outbreak of the Hirak movement. The

⁴⁰⁸ Faouzia Zeraoulia, "The memory of the civil war in Algeria: Lessons from the past with reference to the Algerian Hirak," *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 7(1), (2020), p.34

⁴⁰⁹ Natalia A. Zherlitsyna, "The Succession Crisis in Algeria," *Asia and Africa Today*, (2019), (6), pp.19-23.

⁴¹⁰ Zeraoulia, pp. 25-28.

outbreak of the 2019 protests in Algeria speak of a change of a view Algerians held for long of the FLN. Algerians, who took to the streets, and who for long saw the FLN as a liberation group which ruled Algeria in the post-independence period, started increasingly viewing it as an increasingly authoritarian government which failed to provide a dignified life for them after independence.⁴¹¹ This is done by looking at the Theory of National liberation and the unit and international levels of analysis (the view of the FLN and the Arab Spring).

Following a decision by President Bouteflika to run for a fifth term in February 2019, millions of mostly young Algerians took to the streets of major cities to protest the move in what became known as the *Hirak* movement, a late wave of the Arab Spring. The movement had had huge political, social, and cultural implications for Algerians who reclaimed their voice in the streets of Algeria after decades of feeling marginalized and unable to speak against the FLN governments which used their liberation and revolutionary history as an excuse to remain in power. In February 2019, the streets of Algeria, including that of Algiers, were filled with Algerian protesters calling on Bouteflika to step down. Despite orders by the police to prohibit protesting in Algiers under ironically terrorism claims, the same accusations made by France against the FLN during the War of Independence, the protesters filled the streets, and the security forces were unable to stop the protesters.⁴¹² Several factors have contributed to the relative success of these protests in drawing the attention of the Algerian government and pushing it to change its approach, although slightly.

Algerian protesters adopted non-violent means and sang national songs such as *Min Djibalina* (Arabic: From our Mountains), which recalls the determination of Algerians to free their nation from French colonization, which they learnt at school and reminded them of their country's war against French colonialism and the role of the FLN which took arms against the French.⁴¹³ The *Hirak* movement drew its strength from the ongoing discourse of liberation that Algerians gained during the War of Independence (1954-1962). This liberation

⁴¹¹ Linda El-Naggar, "Algeria's Hirak Movement: A Second National Liberation?", **The Swedish Institute for International Affairs**, 1/2022, p. 6.

⁴¹² Thomas Serres, "Understanding Algeria's 2019 Revolutionary Movement," **Middle East Brief, Crown Center for Middle East Studies**, July 2019, No. 129, <https://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/middle-east-briefs/pdfs/101-200/meb129.pdf> (24 May 2022).

⁴¹³ Serres, p. 129.

discourse has portrayed the regime as an internal challenge that has confiscated Algeria's independence, won by the same FLN, which was originally established to gain Algeria's independence from France. The Hirak movement saw in non-violence an effective strategy that would not give the security forces the excuse to target protesters who called for political change. The Algerian Spring, albeit late, reached Algeria and it was much less violent than it was elsewhere in the Arab world for political, historical, and social reasons exclusive to Algeria.⁴¹⁴

The Hirak protests were able to unify different segments of the Algerian society who still vividly recall the tragedies of French colonialism and the Algerian civil war inflicted on them. Yet this unity initially did not apply to Algerian political parties, including both secular and Islamist parties, such as Al-Adala of Djaballah, Islah, New Generation and HAMS. The internal Algerian division in post-independence Algeria is a continuation of the political and social division created by the French during the War of Independence. When the Algerian people saw the political elites were not able to unify behind one program, people chose unity on the streets of Algeria, with protests on February 22, 2020, being organized by ordinary Algerians without intervention from political parties. After realizing that most Algerians no longer wanted Bouteflika to run for office for a fifth time, political parties started to work under a relatively united umbrella. Algerians' lack of unity reminds of Palestinian and Lebanese divisions too, where both Hamas and Hezbollah engaged in civil wars.

Algerian protesters called for sticking to the Algerian Constitution, which the FLN introduced where it called for establishing a socialist government "ensured by the workers."⁴¹⁵ In March 2020, the National Coordination for Change, the umbrella organization that included both Islamist and non-Islamist movements, which led the *Hirak* movement in Algeria, had one demand and slogan: "The constitution first,"⁴¹⁶ calling for the resignation of the ailing president. Notable figures, who fought during the War of

⁴¹⁴ Serres, p. 129.

⁴¹⁵ Go, p. 76.

⁴¹⁶ Muhammad Amasha and Ismail YaylaciI, "Islamist Movements and Parties in the Algerian Uprising: Political Islam Movements in the Second Wave of the Arab Spring," *Al Sharq Strategic Research*, 10 July 2020, pp. 17-19.

Independence alongside the FLN such Djamila Bouhired and Zohra Drif, have voiced their support for the protest movement. This gave the protests more legitimacy from the ranks of the FLN itself and made security forces less willing to suppress it, thus providing it with more protection and legitimacy.⁴¹⁷ The participation of FLN historical figures, who fought during Algeria's War of Independence, in these protests have weakened the position of the Algerian government and the FLN and gave a boost and legitimacy to the demands of the Algerian people in the streets.

Following pressure by protesters, the Algerian army announced holding elections twice, which were cancelled after being rejected by the protesters. In the third time, the elections took place, but the voting turnout was low as all candidates had links to the former Algerian government of the FLN, which hardly if not at all, motivated young Algerians to participate. Abdelmadjid Tebboune was elected as a new president in Algeria in December 2019.⁴¹⁸ After electing Tebboune, the protests continued throughout Algeria with the Hirak urging the newly elected president to meet their demands. Yet, with the spread of COVID19 in Algeria, the Algerian government decided to ban all protests throughout the country to stop the spread of the pandemic and the protests seemed to have come to a relative halt at least for the time being.⁴¹⁹ The protests would break out later but at a much smaller scale as an indication that the Algerian people are still not satisfied with the reforms of Tebboune, yet the COVID19 pandemic has discouraged many Algerians from taking part in these protests starting from 2020.

Whether the *Hirak* will return to the streets of Algeria is connected more to how the current Algerian government will act vis-à-vis the demands of the protesters in the future. Additionally, COVID19, which has impacted the world including Algeria, will determine, at least for the time being, if Algerians will take to the streets in large numbers again. The late

⁴¹⁷ Shai Feldman, "Understanding Algeria's 2019," **Middle East Brief**, Brandeis University, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, No. 119, (2019), p. 5.

⁴¹⁸ Jessica Ayesha Northey and Latefa Guemar, "The Algerian Hirak: Youth Mobilization, elections and prospects for reform," **ORIENT: Deutsche Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur des Orients German, Journal for Politics, Economics and Culture of the Middle East**, (II), (2020), pp.14-18.

⁴¹⁹ Stephanie Love and Liang Wu, "Are We in the Same Boat? Ethnographic Lessons of Sheltering in Place from International Seafarers and Algerian Harraga in the Age of Global Pandemic," **Anthropology Now**, 12(1), (2020), pp.55-56.

Algerian spring represented by the *Hirak* movement, despite the divisions and differences, have proved that despite the tragedies of colonialism and civil war, and using the legitimacy of liberation claim by the FLN government, Algerians would still reclaim the streets and their own legitimacy when they feel their government is not doing enough to make their living conditions better. The liberation history of the FLN did not matter much to many protesters. In fact, protesters reclaimed this legitimacy by their own chants and in light of the support they received from some FLN figures. Algerian politicians understand this fact and act according to it.

The FLN's government handling of protests were not ideal, but more tolerant than how Hezbollah and Hamas dealt with protests criticizing their governance, which were met with violence and force and accusations of treason. It is true that the politics of the civil war has initially played in favor of Algeria and the FLN, but the protests of the *Hirak* movement, which was mainly about political and economic reforms, show too that importing a USSR-like socialist economic model into Algeria was not an ideal decision. The shadow of the Cold War and the Arab Spring still haunts Algeria and the FLN today.

Conclusion

Applying the theoretical contributions of Walzer reveals that the FLN committed to some extent to the principles of just war, before, during and after the end of war. Despite this commitment, the FLN applies terrorist tactics against France on a large scale pushing Walzer to describe its actions as terrorism. Speaking of the FLN, Walzer notes that "a bomb planted on a streetcorner, hidden in a bus station, thrown into a café or pub, this is aimless killing."⁴²⁰ *Jus ad bellum* urges that war should (1) be waged by a legitimate authority. (2) have a just cause. (3) have a chance of success. (4) should be proportional and (5) a last resort. Viewing itself as the only legitimate authority and representative of the Algerian people, the FLN exhausted all other options for dialogue, which France refused. The FLN fought for the independence of their people and to end brutal and long French oppression and colonialism in line with the right to self-determination.

⁴²⁰ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 200.

In the case of the FLN vis-à-vis the right conduct during war or *jus in bello*, discrimination and proportionality were sometimes considered and other times violated. There are examples where the FLN made a distinction between civilians and combatants and other examples where it targeted both civilians and combatants without discrimination, thus violating the principle of discrimination of just war. The same applies to the French colonial authorities which used collective punishment and torture repeatedly against the Algerian people, burning entire villages and killing thousands of people. The force used by the FLN was largely proportional against military targets except for targeting urban centers and cafes, which violated the principles of proportionality of just war. The French authorities have also largely violated the principle of proportionality by killing hundreds of thousands of Algerians.

The FLN, which purported itself as the only representative of the Algerian people, as the theory of just war requires having a legitimate body to fight war, suffered the least impact because of its designation as a terrorist organization by France compared to Hezbollah and Hamas. To understand what this means, it is important to navigate the politics of the Cold War, namely its Non-Aligned Movement membership and playing on balancing global powers such as the Western bloc led by the US, and the Eastern Bloc led by the USSR to the benefit of the FLN. The world was divided into two blocs, the western bloc led by the US, and the eastern bloc led by the USSR. Siding with the Non-Aligned Movement meant receiving its political, economic, and military support in addition to benefiting from differences within the Western bloc itself, especially between France and the US. The FLN also invested in establishing ties with emerging China which was admitted to the US Security Council by using its existing ties with the USSR as its internal documents reveal.

Without a shadow of doubt, the politics of the Cold War in the 1950s and 1960s have played into the benefit of the FLN in the sense that it reduced the pressure it was placed under because of its designation as a terrorist organization by France. These politics meant less isolation for the FLN, which was able to build alliances and play on global balances of power enough to secure its needs of political support and arms to fight the French such as its ties with Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, which allowed it to obtain arms from Czechoslovakia. The world was divided into two blocs and the FLN knew that it was in the best interests of

the Algerian people to be on the Non-Aligned Movement's side to win the support of the USSR, China, and the Arab League, which neutralize US support for France. This allowed the FLN to exploit differences among the western bloc itself on one hand and differences between the USSR and western bloc on the other hand.

The FLN's ties with China and the USSR were stronger than that of the United States because the US was still much supportive of France, although behind the scenes it had reservations about the French strategy in Algeria. The USSR and China, on the other hand, provided the FLN with political, economic, and military support. The US feared that a French withdrawal from Algeria would create a vacuum that could be filled by the USSR. The FLN getting closer to Cuba had raised alarms in the US in addition to its support for the Vietnamese resistance against the American occupation. Algeria had also viewed the US request from Spain to withdraw from Western Sahara as a message of support to Morocco. Algeria has had strong ties with the PLO and the Palestinians and maintained a strong anti-Israel attitude which made its ties with the US cold. The Algerian government had broken ties with the US following the 1967 war for seven years and relations between the two countries only were re-established in 1974 after, according to the Algerian president, 'a new economic order' was established. The Jimmy Carter administration contributed to cooling down ties between Algeria and the US, which feared that the country could become a threat to the US. The resumption of diplomatic ties between Algeria and the US in 1974 allowed Algeria to successfully mediate the Algiers Agreement between Iraq and Iran in 1975 and the release of American hostages in Iran in 1981.⁴²¹

⁴²¹ Shireen K. Burki, "The United States involvement in the Iran-Iraq war," **(Master Thesis)**: Virginia: Department of Government and Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia, (1992), p. 8.

CHAPTER 3: HEZBOLLAH'S IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES: RE-VISITING ITS LIBERATION DISCOURSE AND TERRORIST DESIGNATION IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

This chapter aims to explore how and why specific state-actors view Hezbollah as a liberation or terrorist organization and the impact of the Cold War and the Arab Spring on this designation, and how the group views itself theoretically and empirically. The chapter reveals that the Cold War and the Arab Spring had an impact on Hezbollah in light of its Syria and Iran ties and the sectarian tensions in the Middle East region, in which the group was involved. This chapter shows how their different military, political, religious, and social wings, enforces Hezbollah's view of itself as a liberation group. The researcher applies a theory-oriented case-study comparative approach throughout the chapter. Two levels of analysis are included in this chapter, the units (state and non-state actors level) and international. The theories applied in this chapter include the National Liberation Theory, the Just War Theory and Revolutionary Terrorism. The sub-question of this chapter aims to connect with the main question of this research: How and why specific state-actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist or liberation groups and the impact of the Arab Spring and Cold war on this designation and how the three groups view themselves.

Theories of war and terrorism apply to the case of Hezbollah's fight against Israel and western interests in Lebanon and beyond, such as Revolutionary Terrorism (which includes Urban and Psychological Terrorism), Just War Theory, and Theory of National Liberation. Hezbollah applied psychological terrorism tactics against Israeli forces, which left an impact on the public both in Lebanon and Israel.⁴²² These psychological tactics became particularly significant in 2000 when Israel decided to withdraw its forces from Southern Lebanon, where the Shite-group threatened Israeli forces with facing a similar fate to American soldiers in Vietnam.⁴²³ Over the years, Hezbollah gave up its desire to create an Islamic republic in Lebanon and has engaged more in Lebanese politics starting from 1992, which allowed the

⁴²² Schleifer, pp.1-19.

⁴²³ Simon Haddad, "The origins of popular support for Lebanon's Hezbollah," **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, 29(1), (2006), p. 28.

group to transform its liberation discourse and theology into political agendas and expand its popular base especially in Lebanon in the following years.⁴²⁴

Compared to the FLN and Hamas, and due to its sectarian ties, Hezbollah has been affected the most by the politics of the Arab Spring specially after its intervention in Syria on the side of the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad, and its alleged intervention in Yemen, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Hezbollah has also trained Palestinian activists whom Israel deported to Lebanon in 1992, including Hamas activists, which made Israel even more suspicious of the group, viewing it as a threat to its national security, a relationship that is still going on as of now. From the very beginning, Hezbollah had an organic relationship with Iran and expressed a desire to create an Islamic Republic in Lebanon, influenced by the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979,⁴²⁵ which, along with Syria, provided the group with financial, political, and military aid. The two countries made use of their ties to Hezbollah to limit western influence in the Middle East as part of the politics of the Cold War.⁴²⁶

Hezbollah was dubbed as a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the European Union (although the EU lists the military wing of the group as terrorist only), the League of Arab Nations and the GCC. The organic ties Hezbollah had with Iran and Syria which was deeply influenced by sectarian politics, especially after the outbreak of the Arab Spring, have significantly influenced the way Hezbollah is viewed regionally, both on popular and official levels.⁴²⁷ Iran's support for Hezbollah and the group's targeting of American and French forces in Lebanon in addition to targeting Israel pushed the United States to classify the group as a terrorist organization in 1997.⁴²⁸ The Arab

⁴²⁴ Mona Harb, "Faith-based organizations as effective development partners? Hezbollah and post-war reconstruction in Lebanon," In **Development, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations**, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2008, p. 228.

⁴²⁵ Deandra Madeena Moerdaning, and T. Stevens, "Did Hezbollah achieve its objectives declared in the 1985 'Open Letter to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World?'," **University of Indonesia**, (2018), pp. 7-11.

⁴²⁶ Adrian Hänni and Thomas Riegler et. al., **Terrorism in the Cold War: State Support in the West, Middle East and Latin America**, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020, p. 192.

⁴²⁷ Joseph Alagha, "Hezbollah and the Arab spring," **Contemporary Review of the Middle East**, 1(2), (2014), p.204.

⁴²⁸ Michael T. Kindt, **Hezbollah: a state within a state: The World's Most Threatening Terrorist Networks and Criminal Gangs**, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 131.

Spring was the straw that broke the camel's back in relation to the Arab League and the GCC's view of Hezbollah as a terrorist group.

Despite its negative perception in much of the Middle East, Hezbollah's base of supporters along with some state and non-state actors in the Middle East, such as Hamas, view Hezbollah as a resistance movement and a political actor. This also includes Syria and Iran, Iraq, Russia, and other non-state actors such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and the Houthi group in Yemen. Other countries such as Türkiye and Algeria prefer not to take a position on how they perceive the group as part of their balancing strategy, yet Türkiye's role in Syria necessarily makes it at odds with Iran and Hezbollah.⁴²⁹ In the eyes of Hezbollah's supporters, and the Iranian axis or the so-called axis of resistance, Hezbollah's actions in Lebanon, especially those against Israeli forces and its allies, are "legitimate military response," to Israel's invasion and western interference in Lebanese affairs following the civil war.⁴³⁰

3.1 Hezbollah: Creation, Self-View, and Tactics

This section aims to examine the impact of the Cold War and the Arab Spring on Hezbollah's designation as a terrorist or liberation group as seen by relevant actors and how the group views itself in light of its Open Letter of 1985. It also connects the empirical part of the study with the theoretical one by applying theories of Just War, Revolutionary Terrorism and National Liberation Theory.

3.1.1. The Open Letter

On February 16, 1985, Hezbollah published its first political document titled *Open Letter to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World*, in which it outlined its ideology, perception of itself, objectives and general guidelines.⁴³¹ It is crucially important to look at the Open Letter of Hezbollah to better understand how the group views itself. The Hezbollah letter is divided into five sections: 'Our identity, our fight, to the Christians, the world scene, and Israel,' in

⁴²⁹ Mustafa Yetim and Bilal Hamade, "The Impact of the "New" Zero Problems Policy and the Arab Spring on the Relations between Turkey and Lebanese Factions," *Insight Turkey*, 16(2), (2014), p. 73.

⁴³⁰ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, "Terrorism in the Cold War," (2020), p. 194.

⁴³¹ Alagha, p. 4.

each of which the group detailed how it views these pillars of ideology in its own words.⁴³² The following sections will further explore this letter in which the group has provided some detail as to how it views itself and the world, which is in a drastic contrast with its view by many state actors, many of which view it as a terrorist organization, including Israel, the US, the EU, the GCC, and the League of Arab Nations.

Hezbollah sees itself as “sons of the Muslim (*Ummah*) Nation, the vanguard of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, that obeys the instruction of the leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran Khomeini.”⁴³³ Notably, Hezbollah did not consider itself in the early stages of its establishment a political party in Lebanon, linking itself to the Muslim nation and making itself an integral part of it. This perception of Hezbollah of the Muslim nation and its role is in line with the concept of solidarity of Amilcar Cabral among African nations, yet unlike that of Cabral, it is limited to the Muslim world and does not include non-Muslims, except those in Lebanon.⁴³⁴ Culturally, Hezbollah stressed that its culture is based on the imitation of the rules of the jurist in Iran based on the Holy Quran and Sunnah, calling it crystal and accessible. Theoretically, the Theory of National Liberation, the Theology of Liberation, which has deep connections with the Just War Theory, along with theory of Revolutionary Terrorism best explain Hezbollah. The use of religion as a base for ideology by Hezbollah to bring about political and social changes is best explained by the Theology of Liberation, which is central to Hezbollah’s discourse.⁴³⁵

Hezbollah calls every member of the group a fighting soldier under the command of the jurist in Iran in line with notions introduced by Cabral of taking arms to end foreign domination.⁴³⁶ In fact, Hezbollah, unlike the FLN and Hamas, was clear about its belief that only taking arms will force Israel and other western forces out of Lebanese soil from the start. Hamas and the FLN were partially convinced of taking arms as an approach and resorted to other means such as non-violence and dialogue before fully taking arms or combining both.

⁴³² ICT Staff, “The Hizballah Program.”

⁴³³ ICT Staff, “The Hizballah Program.”

⁴³⁴ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p. 121.

⁴³⁵ Dodson, p. 204.

⁴³⁶ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p. 121.

Ideologically, Hezbollah shares a similar ideology to Hamas based on Islam and taking arms, although there are some differences between the two groups in the sense that Hamas is a Sunni Islam movement and Hezbollah is a Shite Islam group.⁴³⁷ The FLN made Islam central to its discourse, but its approach was a mixture of Islam, secularism, and socialism.

Hezbollah refused claims made by the United States that it is a terrorist organization and a group of fanatics, noting that such claims made by the US will not “mislead” the Muslim nation and will not deviate the group from its objectives, calling the US “the root of abomination.”⁴³⁸ The group stressed that it will not stand oppression carried out by Israel, the US, and its Atlantic Pact allies (NATO). This discourse against Israel and the US is in line with that of Iran, Hezbollah’s main ally and supporter. The group accused the Lebanese Phalangists, Israel and the US of carrying out massacres against the Lebanese and the Palestinians, noting that it has no option but “to confront aggression by sacrifice.”⁴³⁹ Hezbollah added that people had no option but “to oppose infidelity— be it French, American or Israeli— by striking at their headquarters and launching a veritable war of resistance against the Occupation forces.”⁴⁴⁰ In this sense, Hezbollah adopts a similar discourse to Hamas based on sacrifice, but unlike Hezbollah, Hamas did not engage in fighting against regional or international actors. The FLN, on the other hand, made use of international differences among major powers, by using balancing as a strategy against China, the USSR, and the Western bloc, which benefited the group a great deal.

⁴³⁷ Sharon Lecocq, “Hamas and Hezbollah: hybrid actors between resistance and governance,” **International Affairs**, 96(4), (2020), p. 1073.

⁴³⁸ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p. 121.

⁴³⁹ Lecocq, p. 1073.

⁴⁴⁰ Lecocq, p. 1073.

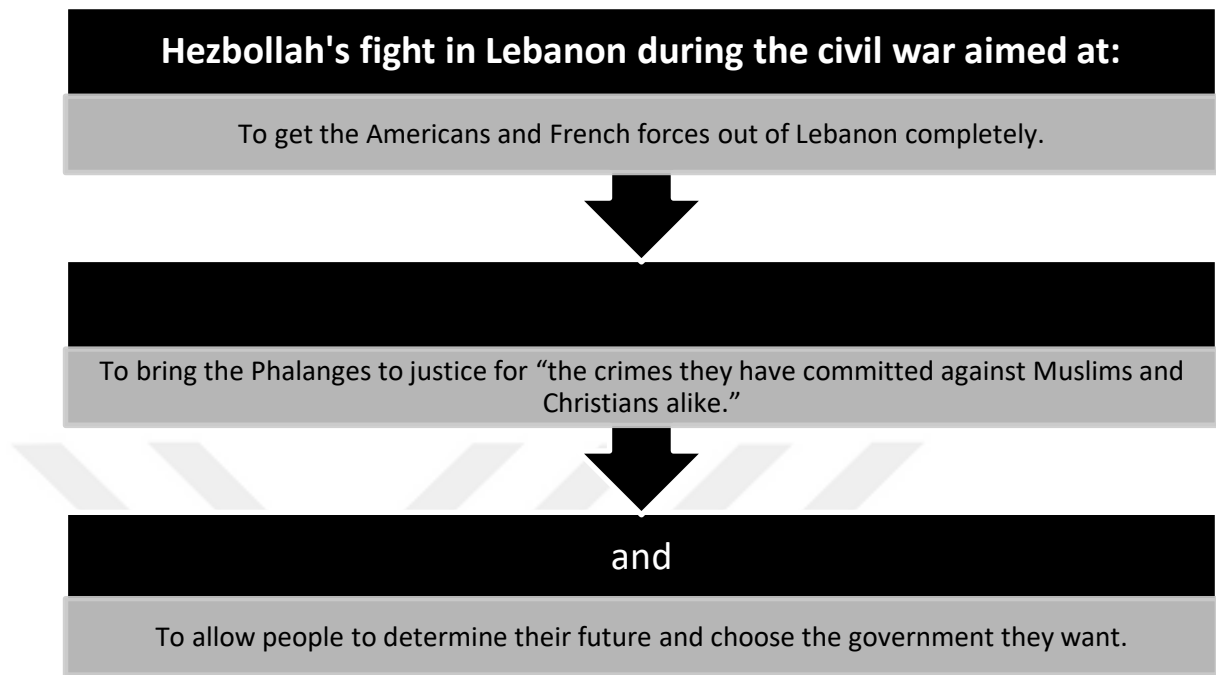


Figure 6: The aims of Hezbollah during the Lebanese civil war

Hezbollah, unlike Hamas and the FLN, had an international dimension of its enemies, making clear in its objectives that its enemies in the Middle East are the Phalanges, Israel, France, and the US, noting that the fight against them will continue until:

1. The Americans and French are kicked out of Lebanon completely.
2. The Phalanges are brought to justice for “the crimes they have committed against Muslims and Christians alike.”⁴⁴¹
3. To allow people to determine their future and choose the government they want.

The group concluded its letter by calling on the Christians of Lebanon to form a joint government, telling them that their fears are unjustified, calling on them to “embrace Islam.”⁴⁴² It explained to them that no one will be hostile to them if they are peaceful.⁴⁴³ The FLN, on the other hand, viewed Christian settlers in Algeria as settlers and part of the French

⁴⁴¹ Lecocq, p. 1073.

⁴⁴² ICT Staff, “The Hizballah Program.”

⁴⁴³ ICT Staff, “The Hizballah Program.”

colonial project.⁴⁴⁴ The letter reads, “To the torch that has increased in light and brightness, so that it lit the path to a free dignified life for the oppressed *mustadafin* in Lebanon and burned with its pure glittering blood (jihad and martyrdom) the power of the Zionist Entity (Israel) and its myth.”⁴⁴⁵ Hamas, despite adopting an Islamic ideology described Palestine in its 2017 document as the birthplace of Jesus Christ, condemning Israeli violations against Islamic and Christian sacred sites.⁴⁴⁶ The context in which the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have emerged and developed have impacted their view of different segments of the society, including Christians and in the case of Hamas, Jews too, where the group made a distinction in its 2017 document between Zionism and Judaism and rejected anti-Semitism, in an attempt to remove itself of terror lists in the US and the EU and further stress its liberation discourse.

3.1.2. Hezbollah: Theory and Practice and Israel’s View

Theoretically, The Just War Theory, namely *Jus ad bellum* and *Jus in bello*, apply to the Hezbollah’s case and its view by different state actors. From Hezbollah’s point of view, and large sectors of the Lebanese society, the presence of western forces in Lebanon, and the Israeli occupation of it up until 2000, are fair justifications for the guerrilla campaign the Shite group waged against them to force them out of Lebanon. The Hezbollah-Israel war meets the first principle of *Jus ad bellum* of having a just cause and the right intention of removing foreign forces from the point of view of Hezbollah.⁴⁴⁷ From Israeli point of view, attacks waged by the PLO and other Lebanese factions gave it the justification to wage a war on Lebanon. Hezbollah’s use of force against civilians puts some limitations on the conduct of the group during the war and creates further challenges to viewing its war against Israel as just.

⁴⁴⁴ Darcie Fontaine, “After the exodus: Catholics and the formation of postcolonial identity in Algeria,” **French Politics, Culture & Society**, 33(2), (2015), p.102.

⁴⁴⁵ Raffaele Mauriello and Seyed Mohammad Marandi, “Oppressors and oppressed reconsidered: A Shi’itologic perspective on the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hezbollah’s outlook on international relations,” In Deina Abdelkader and Nassef Manabilang Adiong et. Al., (Eds.), **Islam and International Relations: Contributions to Theory and Practice**, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 51.

⁴⁴⁶ Hamas, “A Document of General Principles and Policies.”

⁴⁴⁷ Carsten Stahn, “Jus ad bellum’, ‘jus in bello’ ... ‘jus post bellum’?—Rethinking the Conception of the Law of Armed Force,” **The European Journal of International Law**, 17(5), (2006), p.927.

Psychological terrorism has been an integral part of Hezbollah's overall strategy, where in one attack, the group aimed at flying a Hezbollah flag at military post of SLA and filming it.⁴⁴⁸ This includes Hezbollah's launching rocket warfare from 1993 to 1996 against Israel, to force Israeli forces and their proxies out of Lebanon. This Hezbollah campaign has also targeted civilians in violation of the principles of the Theory of Just War. The group's strategy also included launching intensified attacks against Israeli and South Lebanon Army (SLA) forces, amounting to dozens of attacks a month in 1994 to hundreds of attacks in 1995 and to 323 attacks during 25 days in May 2000, to imply that the Israeli forces and their allies withdrew under fire.⁴⁴⁹

The Hezbollah strategy proved to be effective over time, with 62% of Israelis supporting a withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, as seven out of eight supported the invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982.⁴⁵⁰ The FLN adopted a similar strategy of attacking multiple targets in a short period of time especially during the Battle of Algiers. While Hamas refrained from using this strategy because of the different nature of conflict in Palestine, where settler communities are separate from Palestinian communities, applying such a tactic is practically impossible. Both the FLN and Hamas, the same as Hezbollah, have used psychological warfare tactics.

To achieve its goal of ending Israel's occupation of Southern Lebanon, Hezbollah has waged a guerrilla warfare against Israel and its allies. This guerrilla warfare strategy has also targeted the South Lebanon Army (SLA) believing that targeting Israel's proxies in Lebanon will leave Israel in a very difficult position to defend itself. The experience Hezbollah militants had in the Lebanese civil war or that received in Iran enabled them to fight Israeli forces, including, Imad Mughniyah, who is believed to be the engineer of the group's war of attrition, who previously served as a member in the PLO's ranks and was assassinated in Syria in 2008.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁸ Gabrielsen, p. 259.

⁴⁴⁹ Gabrielsen, p. 262.

⁴⁵⁰ Gabrielsen, p. 263.

⁴⁵¹ Gabrielsen, p. 258.

This Hezbollah strategy involved many tactics, such as attack and withdraw, protecting fighters, making sure the attack is successful, using surprise, not to get into a pre-planned battle, continue moving, patience, keeping the enemy on alert, boosting the morale of the fighters, achieving many small victories, using media, nurturing population and hurting the enemy but leaving before it loses restraint.⁴⁵² The group applied guerrilla warfare as a strategy to kick the Israeli army out of Lebanon, while adopting a discourse of supporting the oppressed and crushed people, as noted by Thornton, “guerrilla warfare is the only method of expression of a crushed people.”⁴⁵³

Table 2: Israeli support for the invasion of Lebanon from 1982-2000

<u>Israeli support of invasions into Lebanon</u>	Percentage	Year
1.	7 out of 8 Israelis supported the invasion	1982
2.	62% of Israelis supported withdrawal from Southern Lebanon	2000

Source: Poll conducted on Israeli support for the war.

At the same time, Israel viewed its military intervention in Lebanon as an act of self-defense to stop attacks carried out by the PLO and other Lebanese factions against Israeli targets and to help its Christian allies in addition to reinforcing its presence in the region after the blow it received in 1973 at the hands of the Egyptian army. In the same vein, according to the Just War Theory, Israel had the right to go to war in Lebanon because its national sovereignty was challenged and since it is a recognized state, it was a legitimate authority to wage a war. Neither Israel nor the PLO were willing to resolve the issue peacefully. So, for Israel, the war

⁴⁵² Gabrielsen, p. 258.

⁴⁵³ Thornton, p. 73.

was a last resort, which was not the case in 2006, when Israel attacked Lebanon. Israel had also stated “a right intention,” which is the removal of the PLO 40-km away from the UN buffer zone. “Israel had an obligation to invade Lebanon, under the umbrella of just war theory based on a sovereign authority allowing cross-border activities from within its state and take whatever action was required to create peace in the region.”⁴⁵⁴

Additionally, the Israeli war in Lebanon was not discriminate or proportional, where thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians have lost their lives during the fighting. Israel was involved in massacres committed against Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Christian militias in which some 1,700 Palestinians were massacred under the watch of the Israeli army, which violates the principles of just war theory, namely *Jus in bello*.⁴⁵⁵ The 2006 war with Israel, which was launched after Hezbollah kidnapped Israeli soldiers to exchange them with Lebanese and Palestinian detainees, could be considered too an unjust war, as it was carried out without consultation with Lebanese parties and government, although it had the right intention of releasing prisoners.⁴⁵⁶

Israel’s Peace for the Galilee Operation against the PLO in Lebanon in 1982 raised many legal challenges for Tel Aviv. As Feinstein notes, however, Israel claimed that the operation aimed at removing threats posed by the PLO, it threatened the territorial integrity of Lebanon. Therefore, the Israeli invasion was contrary to international law and thus in violation of the just war theory, *Jus ad bellum*, as it lacks the principles of just cause and right intention to wage a war.⁴⁵⁷ Not only this, while in Lebanon, Israel carried out or facilitated dozens of massacres against Palestinian and Lebanese civilians, such as the infamous Sabra and Shatila Massacre in 1982, when Israel gave the Phalanges the green light to slaughter hundreds of Palestinian and Lebanese in the two refugee camps.⁴⁵⁸ Additionally, in the first three months

⁴⁵⁴ Dalia Gavriely-Nuri, “Talking Peace-Going to War: Peace in the service of the Israeli just war rhetoric,” **Critical Discourse Studies**, 11(1), (2014), p.13.

⁴⁵⁵ Raphael Cohen-Almagor, “Was the 1982 Lebanon war a just war?” **Studia Philosophiae Christianae**, 53(3), (2017), p. 161.

⁴⁵⁶ Aboultaif, pp.13-14.

⁴⁵⁷ Barry A. Feinstein, “The Legality of the use of Armed Force by Israel in Lebanon—June 1982,” **Israel Law Review**, 20(2-3), (1985), p.369.

⁴⁵⁸ Ellen Siegel and Lynne Barbee, “Inside and Outside the Hospital, People were Screaming: Haddad, Kataeb, Israel-Massacre,” **Journal of Palestine Studies**, 12(2), (1983), pp.61-71.

of Israel's invasion and bombing of Southern Lebanon, nearly 20,000 Lebanese and Palestinians were killed.⁴⁵⁹

Israel claims that its war in Lebanon, which started in 1978, was a defensive war against the PLO. At the same time, it threatened the territorial integrity of Lebanon, which violates the UN Charter too.⁴⁶⁰ Israel's occupation of Southern Lebanon contradicts the UN principle of self-determination as Israel constitutes a foreign occupying power.⁴⁶¹ Yet, Hezbollah has too targeted Israeli settlers (civilians) by launching rockets into northern Israel, which violates international law and could amount to war crimes.⁴⁶² The presence of international forces in Lebanon also adds to the reasoning why Hezbollah targeted international forces and tried to combat western influence in Lebanon. The group's waging of a guerrilla warfare which involves firing from among Lebanese civilians contributes to its designation as a terrorist group too, which also violates the principles of the Just War Theory, the principle of discrimination. In return, Israel's strong ties with the US has contributed to convincing the US early in time to list Hezbollah as a terrorist group. Hezbollah's long-established ties with the Palestinians, including the PLO and Hamas, has also contributed to the same end.⁴⁶³

Israel was also able to resolve the issues of abducted soldiers peacefully as it did after the end of the war by exchanging them with Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners. Israel's war against Lebanon was indiscriminate and not proportional too, where some 1,300 Lebanese and 165 Israelis were killed, which violates the principles of *Jus in bello*. According to the same principles of the Just War Theory, namely *Jus ad bellum*, the PLO's war against Israel, except for targeting civilian subjects, could also be considered a just war. In fact, a portion of the Israeli public, whose relatives served in the war against the PLO in Lebanon,

⁴⁵⁹ Leila Shahid, "The Sabra and Shatila massacres: Eye-witness reports," **Journal of Palestine Studies**, 32(1), (2002), p.50

⁴⁶⁰ Victor Kattan, "The use and abuse of self-defence in international law: the Israel-Hezbollah conflict as a case study," **Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law Online**, 12(1), (2005), pp.41.

⁴⁶¹ Martti Koskeniemi, "National self-determination today: problems of legal theory and practice," **International & Comparative Law Quarterly**, 43(2), (1994), p.257.

⁴⁶² Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth and Sarah Croco, "Covenants without the sword international law and the protection of civilians in times of war," **World Politics**, 58(3), (2006), p.355.

⁴⁶³ Rachel Brandenburg, **Iran and the Palestinians. The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and US Policy**, Analysis and Commentary, (2010), pp. 171-74.

considered the war as unjust because “the rate of casualties Israel had to suffer did not justify the ends.”⁴⁶⁴

3.2. Hezbollah and The Cold War

During the Cold War too, Hezbollah was heavily involved indirectly to serve Iran and Syria’s agendas. Urged by Iran, Hezbollah was known for kidnapping foreign nationals and using them for bargaining. Hezbollah’s kidnapping of foreign nationals damaged Syria’s image in Lebanon, being the most powerful force there, as per the mandate of the Arab League to end the civil war. These kidnappings, in addition to kidnapping American, French, Swiss and Western German nationals, have also targeted Soviet diplomats. With the Soviet Union being the strongest ally of Syria, and as Hezbollah targeted the offices of the Communist Party and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, Syria had to intervene and pressured Hezbollah to end these attacks targeting the USSR and its allies in Lebanon. Hezbollah started to expand from the Beqaa Valley to areas known to be under the control of the Amal party, Syria’s strongest ally in Lebanon at the time, which caused distress in Damascus.⁴⁶⁵

Table 3: The Cold War, the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas

SN	Non-state actor	Ties	Implications
1.	The FLN during the Cold War	The Non-Aligned Movement, balancing with global powers	Positive implications for the FLN and Algeria
2.	Hezbollah during and the after the Cold War	Iran, Syria	Negative view in the region, and global powers tended to be more suspicious. This brought about anti-Hezbollah moves by global and regional powers.

⁴⁶⁴ Gal Luft, “Israel’s security zone in Lebanon-A tragedy?”, **Middle East Quarterly**, Middle East Forum, (2000), pp. 18-20.

⁴⁶⁵ Luft, pp. 18-20.

3.	Hamas after the Cold War	Iran, some Arab and Muslim countries	Negative view especially after the Arab Spring. Good ties with Iran leaving the anti-Iran bloc annoyed and resulting in anti-Hamas statements and isolation. Isolation by Israel, the US, the EU, and Arab countries.
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Western countries claim that the Shite group stands behind a dozen of attacks against western and Arab targets, both in Lebanon and beyond in the 1980s. This includes the bombings of the US embassy in 1983, the Beirut barracks bombings in the same year, the Kuwait bombings, the bombings of the US embassy in Lebanon in 1984, hijackings of planes in 1983, 1984 and 1987, and the kidnapping of dozens of western nationals in Lebanon in the 1980s, dozens of whom were killed, mostly Americans.⁴⁶⁶ From Hezbollah's perspective, its attacks against western targets in Lebanon and beyond were a legitimate military action to reduce the influence of the West in the country and against Israel's invasion. The western intervention in Lebanon in 1982 under the flag of the UN was not perceived well in Iran and Syria, which saw in it another western attempt to intervene in the region. Thus, Hezbollah was used by these two countries to deter western influence in Lebanon, which supported Israel and the west's allies in Lebanon, a task that was facilitated by the existence of a Shite minority ready to be part of the Iran-Syria orbit.⁴⁶⁷

Hezbollah's attacks, mainly the bombings of the American, French, and Kuwaiti targets in the early 1980s were seen as an Iranian attempt to get rid of western influence in the region, which supported Iraq in its war against Iran. The bombings of the US embassy in 1983 and attacks against US marines and French forces in 1983 proved two facts: The ability of Hezbollah to inflict damage, and the strength of Hezbollah's intelligence, as high ranking American (CIA) officials along with hundreds of American and French forces were killed,

⁴⁶⁶ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, p. 194.

⁴⁶⁷ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, p. 196.

the largest death toll for the Americans and French since the Vietnam and the Algerian wars. By the end of March 1984, American, French, and Italian forces withdrew from Lebanon as a result. International forces responded by attacking Hezbollah, Syrian and Iranian targets, but the western presence in the country came to an end and policies by these countries vis-à-vis Lebanon were totally compromised. In 1984, Hezbollah carried out another bombing during which the American and British ambassadors were slightly injured.⁴⁶⁸

As a result of France's support for Iraq in the Iraq-Iran war between 1980-1988, Hezbollah carried out a series of attacks against French targets between 1986 and 1987 during which eleven French people were killed and 220 others were injured. The French authorities were able to dismantle the Hezbollah cells responsible for the attacks in 1987, arresting its members who were led by Fouad Ben Ali Saleh. Two more networks were dismantled in 1987 both in Germany and Italy, which also worked for the Lebanese group.⁴⁶⁹ As shown above, Hezbollah acted as an Iranian proxy to support Iran in its war against Iraq by targeting western capitals to force them to give up their support for Iraq. The attacks carried out by Hezbollah against western targets meant to prove to the west's Christian allies in Lebanon that they are unable to protect them.

Hezbollah, through these attacks, was able to influence US domestic politics on behalf of Iran, which resulted in the resignation of important US officials such as Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. Hezbollah's actions were also an important factor that pushed France to adopt more moderate policies towards the Middle East between 1986-1988, which was represented in striking a deal with the Syrian regime in 1986 to release French hostages in Lebanon, and provide economic aid and arms.⁴⁷⁰ Hezbollah was clear as to whom were its enemies, stating in its 1985 letter that: "Let us put it truthfully: the sons of Hezbollah know who are their major enemies in the Middle East-- the Phalanges, Israel, France and the US."⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, p. 197.

⁴⁶⁹ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, p. 198.

⁴⁷⁰ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, pp. 210-211.

⁴⁷¹ Hassan Fadlallah, "An Open Letter-The Hizballah Program," **The Institute for Counterterrorism**, 1988, p. 4.

Although Hezbollah did not view the USSR or the US and its allies with favor, it was still less impacted by the politics of the Cold War compared to the FLN. However, the emergence of the US as the only superpower after the end of the Cold War has impacted Hezbollah (and Hamas) negatively, with Washington listing them as terrorist groups in 1997.⁴⁷² Israel's strong ties with the US and Hezbollah's anti-US rhetoric, its relations with Hamas, Syria and Iran could also be viewed as contributing factors to its designation as a terrorist group by the US. Finally, Hezbollah relations with Iran and Syria have had the most impact on the group after the Arab Spring.

3.3. Hezbollah and The Arab Spring

3.3.1. Hezbollah's Ties to Iran

Hezbollah's relationship with Syria and Iran has always been distinctive and organic. The Hezbollah-Syria relationship was even further strengthened during the presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon up until 2005 after the outbreak of Lebanese Civil War as part of a decision issued by the Arab League in 1976 to send Arab forces to end the civil war. The Syrian intervention in Lebanon in 1976 has given the country the opportunity to have the final say over Lebanese politics, stop clashes and infighting and, most importantly to forge a special relationship with Hezbollah for many years to come based on mutual interests.⁴⁷³ In addition to its military presence in Lebanon, Syrian forces intervened in Lebanese politics, such as allying with the *Amal* Movement during the 2000 parliamentary elections, which allowed the bloc to gain two more seats.⁴⁷⁴ This special relationship between Hezbollah and Syria continued afterwards even when Syria's civil war broke out in 2011, with Hezbollah siding with the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad, providing it with both fighters and weapons. The Hezbollah intervention in Syria in 2013 brought the group to the heart of regional politics

⁴⁷² Casey L. Addis, "Hezbollah: Background and Issues for Congress," Hezbollah: Background and Issues for Congress, **Congressional Research Service**, (2011), pp. 22-23.

⁴⁷³ Fred H. Lawson, "Syria's intervention in the Lebanese civil war, 1976: a domestic conflict explanation," **International Organization**, 38(3), (1984), p.457.

⁴⁷⁴ Gary C. Gambill and Ziad K. Abdelnour, 4, p. 2.

in the Middle East and strengthened state actors' view of it as a terrorist group throughout the region with the Arab League and GCC dubbing it as a terrorist in 2016.⁴⁷⁵

Iran's influence over Hezbollah is undeniable, and is deeply rooted in ideology, theology, and geopolitics, although the nature of ties the group has with Tehran is still unclear. Without external support from Iran and Syria, Hezbollah would not have the influence it has today in Lebanon and the region. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, providing the group with cash, training, weapons, know-how, political and diplomatic cover, and intelligence and logistical support.⁴⁷⁶ The Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) is the main responsible body for contacting Hezbollah in line with Iran's agenda of exporting the Iranian revolution to other countries in the region, especially those that have a Shiite population such as Lebanon, Yemen, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.⁴⁷⁷ It comes as no surprise that Hezbollah fighters killed during infighting, during the first years of the establishment of the group, would be covered by Iranian rather than Lebanese flags. When discussing Hezbollah's actions, it is important to draw a line between the period in which Southern Lebanon was occupied by Israel and when Israel withdrew from the country in 2000, which could be viewed as the start of a new wave of sectarian politics in Lebanon.

The ideology of Iran's Islamic Republic Revolution of 1979 was the basis on which Hezbollah was founded. Iran's support for Hezbollah went beyond shared ideology and extended to forge a strategic relationship that includes giving the Lebanese group financial aid, weapons, sanctuary, and political support, which allowed Iran to have arguably unlimited influence over the Shiite group.⁴⁷⁸ The Iranian financial aid allowed Hezbollah to implement its social activities and operate its programs on the ground which contributed to increasing its popularity up until the outbreak of the Arab Spring. At the same time, Hezbollah sought

⁴⁷⁵ Benedetta Berti and Yoram Schweitzer, "Hezbollah in Syria: Losing the Balance between "National Resistance" and Sectarian Interests?", **Strategic Assessment**, 16(2), (2013), pp.57-59.

⁴⁷⁶ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, p. 193.

⁴⁷⁷ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, p. 194.

⁴⁷⁸ Marc R. DeVore, "Exploring the Iran-Hezbollah relationship: a case study of how state sponsorship affects terrorist group decision-making," **Perspectives on Terrorism**, 6(4/5), (2012), pp.86-88.

to establish its network of finance especially after sanctions imposed on Iran which reduced Iran's support to the group.

Hezbollah did not shy out from declaring its commitment to the Iranian clergy and theology on repeated occasions, seeing itself an extension of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and expressing its commitment to spread this theology in Lebanon by establishing an Islamic Republic, a notion it gave up later.⁴⁷⁹ Besides its ideology based on theology, Hezbollah has advocated the use of arms and highlighted the importance of spreading the Iranian Revolution through education and considered itself a pillar in this Iranian strategy of exporting the Revolution to other countries in line with the theology of liberation. Spreading the Iranian Revolution through education and based on a specific ideology in addition to taking arms are important concepts in the Theory of National Liberation Theory by Amilcar Cabral. Subscribing to the teachings of the Iranian jurist also explains the religious and sectarian dimensions of the organic relationship Hezbollah has with Iran, which also reveals why the group has been affected the most by the Arab Spring compared to Hamas and the FLN.

3.3.2. Hezbollah's Relationship with Syria

Hezbollah's relationship with Syria's Hafiz Al-Assad started decades before the outbreak of the Arab Spring, as it has always viewed Hezbollah with favor, although there were ups and downs in this relationship, forging ties that go back to the Syrian military presence in the country, which started in 1976. This relationship was strengthened in 1989 when the Syrian regime used Hezbollah to attack Israeli targets in order to keep Israel busy in Southern Lebanon especially after the vacuum created by the departure of the PLO from Lebanon. With the help of Syria, Hezbollah was able to exclude all other Lebanese parties from the scene, including those who were leading resistance against Israel. Syria and Iran wanted to keep control of the monopoly of attacks against Israel to use them to achieve some leverage from regional and international powers.

⁴⁷⁹ Patrick Donovan Higgins, "Divine victory: uses of the 2006 war in Hezbollah Muqawama rhetoric," (**PhD Dissertation**): Texas: The University of Texas at Austin, (2015), pp. 11-13.

Syria, along with Iran, urged Hezbollah in 1992 to implement the Taif Agreement of 1989 by running for parliamentary elections in an attempt to give the group the political legitimacy it needed to protect its discourse in Lebanon as a resistance group and translate it politically.⁴⁸⁰ Syria's support for Hezbollah from 1989-2000 was described as "a loveless marriage."⁴⁸¹ In other words, it was based on mutual interests and necessity. Syria was fine with Hezbollah attacking Israel as long as the latter occupies the Golan Heights, based on the notion that Iran will support Syria in the event a war breaks out with Israel. This relationship has gone beyond interests to mere existence over the years, which increased the dependency of both Syria and Hezbollah on each other. Yet, this relationship was not without challenges.

In 2013, Hezbollah announced publicly its intervention in the Syrian war, a major change in the role the group played in the region following the outbreak of the Arab Spring. Initially, the group voiced support for other Arab revolutions including in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. Yet, when it came to Syria, the group behaved as if the demands for social justice and democracy in its neighboring country will threaten its existence. Therefore, it had a different position on Syria and by default a very different involvement. This involvement, which was viewed by Hezbollah as crucial and critical to its very own existence, resulted in gains and losses for the group, mostly in relation to changing the way it is viewed by both Arab peoples and governments, from being a resistance group to being a terrorist and sectarian group. As the fighting between the Syrian government forces and that of the opposition surged in the town of Al-Qusair near the Lebanese border in 2013, Hezbollah officially announced its military intervention in Syria, which costed the group an arm and leg. In 2013, according to estimates, Hezbollah suffered some 1,000 losses in Syria.⁴⁸²

Hezbollah's involvement in Syria not only did cost the group fighters on a different front than it has traditionally fought, but also dealt a blow to much of its popularity in the Arab and Muslim world, especially in Sunni-majority countries. People, who have previously

⁴⁸⁰ Marius Deeb, **Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah: The unholy alliance and its war on Lebanon**, Sandford: Hoover Press, 2013, p. 27.

⁴⁸¹ G.C. Gambill, and Z.K., Abdelnour, p. 2.

⁴⁸² Chafic Choucair, "Hezbollah in Syria: Gains, losses and changes," Qatar: **Al Jazeera Centre for Studies**, (2016), p. 2.

viewed the group as a resistance movement against Israel, started seeing it as part of an ongoing sectarian battle in the Middle East between two blocs, one led by Iran, which Hezbollah is part of, and the other is led by Saudi Arabia. Hezbollah sided with Iran in words and deeds, proving once more their organic relationship, thus asserting its very commitment in its *Open Letter to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World*.⁴⁸³ Hezbollah decided to sacrifice its popularity in the Arab World by choosing its strategic partnership with Iran and Syria over this popularity, built over years of fighting Israel.⁴⁸⁴ Today, many peoples across the Middle East, let alone governments, view Hezbollah as yet another sectarian and terrorist group. This view ignores the nature and agency of Hezbollah, which operates a complex network of services and bodies ranging from the military, politics to social services. Although this view has contributed to Hezbollah's isolation. The group has not shown any signs of changing its alliance and discourse and still subscribes to its unshakable alliance with Iran and Syria.

Most recently, due to the politics of the Arab Spring, Hezbollah paid the price of its alliance with Iran and Syria after being put on the terror lists of the GCC and the Arab League in 2016 after being listed as such by Israel in 1996, the US in 1997, and the EU in 2013.⁴⁸⁵ Following the Arab Spring, Hezbollah became ever isolated and viewed as a terrorist group by most governments in the Middle East region.⁴⁸⁶ Viewing Hezbollah as a terrorist group by relevant state actors has lightly impacted the group's discourse, pushing it in 2009 to issue a new manifesto, which urged the EU to adopt a different approach than that of the US, abandoned the idea of an Islamic state in Lebanon and showed commitment to give up sectarian politics in an attempt to win international legitimacy.⁴⁸⁷

The Syrian civil war of 2011 saw the heavy involvement of regional powers in the country such as Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The GCC

⁴⁸³ Alagha, pp.189-206.

⁴⁸⁴ Choucair, p. 3.

⁴⁸⁵ Mfanya Donald Tryman, "Middle East Terrorism and TWA 847: Myth and Reality," *Griot*, 5(1), (1986), p. 27.

⁴⁸⁶ Ali, p. 70.

⁴⁸⁷ Hanna Pfeifer, "Recognition dynamics and Lebanese Hezbollah's role in regional conflicts," In **Armed non-state actors and the politics of recognition** (Eds.), Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021, p. 152.

involvement in Syria, led by Saudi Arabia, was a translation of this competition that is taking place between Iran and Saudi Arabia following the outbreak of popular uprisings in Syria and Bahrain. In Syria, Saudi Arabia and its GCC allies turned the protests into an opportunity to limit the influence of Iran in the region, especially in Syria, by calling for the departure of Al-Assad.⁴⁸⁸ In Bahrain, Iran has invested much time, energy, and money to support protests which broke out in the Shiite-majority country, ruled by a Sunni-minority monarchy loyal to Saudi Arabia. The GCC, urged by the Saudis and feeling threatened by these protests, which might have spread to other Gulf countries as well, especially to Saudi Arabia, which has a Shiite minority in the east, decided to send the GCC's Peninsula Shield Force to suppress the protests. This GCC move has turned this Iranian-seen opportunity into a Saudi victory over Iran.⁴⁸⁹ Hezbollah has voiced support for the protests while opposing protests that broke out against its ally in Syria, which contributed to its terrorist view by the GCC in 2016.

3.3.3. Hezbollah's Role in Bahrain, Yemen and at Home

Hezbollah was at the heart of this sectarian competition in Bahrain and Syria, amounting to a new cold war in the Middle East, where it actively participated in the fighting in Syria starting from 2013 and voiced support, repeatedly, to protests in Bahrain, accusing Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies of suppressing people in Bahrain who call for reforms and more representation. The Bahraini government has explicitly accused Hezbollah and other Iran-supported groups in Iraq of providing training for Bahrainis arrested by the government and accused of terrorism.⁴⁹⁰ Hezbollah's support for protests in Bahrain and elsewhere in the Middle East and its refusal of protests in Syria has revealed to many people and governments alike in the Middle East that the group aligns itself with sectarian and regional politics, which made the group lose much of its popularity in Sunni-majority countries in the region. This paved the way in many Arab countries, that did not have a relationship with Hezbollah in the first place, to list it as a terrorist organization in 2016.

⁴⁸⁸ Benedetta Berti and Yoel Guzansky, "Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy on Iran and the Proxy War in Syria: Toward a New Chapter?", **Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs**, 8(3), (2014), p. 25.

⁴⁸⁹ Yoel Guzansky, "Defence cooperation in the Arabian Gulf: The Peninsula Shield Force put to the test," **Middle Eastern Studies**, 50(4), (2014), p. 644.

⁴⁹⁰ Michael Knights and Matthew Levitt, "The Evolution of Shia Insurgency in Bahrain," **Combatting Terrorism Center**, (11) 1, (2018), p. 9.

Hezbollah's involvement in regional politics in the Middle East on the side of Iran was not limited to Syria alone, but extended to Bahrain and Yemen, which shares long-geographic borders with Saudi Arabia. Hezbollah has expressed support for the Houthis group in Yemen, which, starting from 2015, has been at war with the Arab Coalition led by Saudi Arabia and supported by the UAE. Hezbollah and Iran have been accused of providing funding and military training to the Houthis in Yemen.⁴⁹¹ In other words, the Lebanese group chose to be at the heart of the 'cold war' between Saudi Arabia and Iran in the region, which pushed many to change their view of it, unlike in the past, where they only attached it to resisting Israel.⁴⁹² It is also important to note that the Saudi war in Yemen is of crucial importance from a geostrategic point of view, where Saudi interests, including oil facilities and airports, have been targeted by the Houthis repeatedly, allegedly by support from Iran and Hezbollah. Hezbollah siding with Iran and the alleged support to the Houthis eventually resulted in a diplomatic standoff between Lebanon and Saudi Arabia end of 2021.

Protests broke out in Lebanon in 2019 against the deteriorating economic situation, which only worsened due to the recent Arab boycott of Lebanon. Hezbollah, through its participation in the Lebanese government and its weight on the ground, has a great influence over Lebanese politics. Not surprisingly, chants were directed against Lebanese leaders from all political backgrounds, including Hezbollah's. Lebanese protesters took to the streets chanting the slogan '*killon ya'ane killon*' (all of them means all of them), expressing their desire to topple down all political leaders in Lebanon, including that of Hezbollah.⁴⁹³ The group was no longer seen as an exclusively resistance movement in the Arab world but rather a party to the post-Arab Spring cold war and sectarian competition in the Middle East between Iran and its allies on one hand and Saudi Arabia and its allies on the other hand. In Lebanon, Hezbollah was also viewed as part and parcel of corruption and power competition,

⁴⁹¹ Matthew Levitt, "Waking Up the Neighbors: How Regional Intervention Is Transforming Hezbollah," **Foreign Affairs**, 23 July 2015, https://static.rewardsforjustice.net/uploads/Lebanese-Poster8_5x11ENG_508.pdf (August 29 2021).

⁴⁹² Peter Salisbury, "Yemen and the Saudi-Iranian 'Cold War'," February 2015, Research Paper, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House, **the Royal Institute of International Affairs**, p. 8.

⁴⁹³ Jinan S. Al-Habbal, "Lebanon needs the rule of law, not the rule of sect," The London School of Economics and Social Science, **Conflict Research Programme**, (2019), p. 2.

something that was hard to imagine a few years ago. Hezbollah that supported protests outside Lebanon in line with the interests of the Iranian axis now criticized protests at home.

Along with Amal, Hezbollah supporters attacked protesters, accusing them of chanting against the group and its leader Hassan Nasrallah. Hezbollah, which in December 2006 led a two-year-long sit-ins and protests in downtown Beirut against the Saudi and American-backed government of Fouad Siniora now rejected popular demands and protests in Lebanon.⁴⁹⁴ By doing so, the group added yet another paradox to its continually changing positions towards protests in the region and at home, further distancing itself from some of its supporters, who for long viewed it as a resistance movement. The response of Hezbollah to these protests was not different from how both the FLN and Hamas governments handled unrests against their rule, which reveals that many self-described liberation groups fail at governments and view protests against worsening economic conditions from a security point of view. The way Hezbollah handled the protests contributed to its further isolation in Lebanon and the region at large. So did the Algerian government (reads the FLN) and Hamas when protests broke out in Algeria and Palestine challenging their own liberation legitimacy, as the three actors stuck to power and rejected calls for reform and democracy.

3.4. State Actors' View of Hezbollah

State actors have different designations of Hezbollah, both, those who see it as a terrorist organization or a liberation movement, which again proves the controversial nature of the group and the concepts of terrorism and liberation in general. "Since its founding in the early 1980s, Hezbollah has had many labels, some self-imposed, others provided by outsiders: militia, terrorist group, Islamic resistance organization, social services organization, and political party."⁴⁹⁵ The United States has a different view of Hezbollah than that of the European Union, with the latter being late to label Hezbollah's political wing only as a terrorist group in 2013. This could be partially explained by the well-known saying, "One's terrorist is another's freedom fighter,"⁴⁹⁶ which explains how states view non-state actors but

⁴⁹⁴ Norton, p. 490.

⁴⁹⁵ Wiegand, p. 669.

⁴⁹⁶ Ganor, p. 292.

should not be used to equate terrorism with liberation, which are two different concepts. It only speaks to how states drastically differ on terrorism and liberation.

The United States Department of State listed Hezbollah on the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in 1997 because its “animosity toward the United States has not abated,”⁴⁹⁷ in addition its denouncing of the US policies in the Middle East and its objection to the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process, which the US brokers, as detailed in Hezbollah’s 1985 Letter. Hezbollah has been accused of training Palestinian groups designated as terrorist, another reason why the group was listed as terrorist by the US.⁴⁹⁸ Aside from its attack against the US marines in Lebanon in 1983, which claimed the lives of hundreds of American soldiers, Hezbollah has largely focused on targeting Israeli forces in Lebanon and in Israel, in addition to targeting Israel’s proxies in the country, the SLA.

In line with the US foreign policy in Lebanon and its strong alliance with Israel, the US is not likely going to take Hezbollah off its terrorism list, especially that the relations between the US and Iran, Hezbollah’s main supporter, has only worsened over the recent years, with the US still not reaching a nuclear deal with Iran over differences between the two parties, including the removal of the IRCG from the US terror list. Hezbollah and Hamas maintain strong solidarity ties with each other which goes beyond political support to Hezbollah’s providing Hamas with military support and know-how.⁴⁹⁹ This relationship has placed Hezbollah and Hamas under pressure following the Arab Spring. Today’s Algeria, which is the inherent of the FLN, distances itself from having formal ties with Hezbollah too and still maintains ties with Hamas as the Palestinian cause is still very popular in the country.

It could be surprising to some that the European Union listed the military wing of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization only in 2013 following an attack that was allegedly carried out by the group in Bulgaria against Israeli tourists in 2012.⁵⁰⁰ Not only this, but the EU still

⁴⁹⁷ Hala Jaber, “Consequences of Imperialism: Hezbollah and the West,” **The Brown Journal of World Affairs**, 6(1), (1999), p.171.

⁴⁹⁸ Wiegand, p. 672.

⁴⁹⁹ Eran Zohar, “The arming of non-state actors in the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula,” **Australian Journal of International Affairs**, 69(4), (2015), p.444.

⁵⁰⁰ **Peter Margulies**, “Terrorist Sanctions: The Clash in US and EU Approaches,” February 17, 2016, United States: Roger Williams University School of Law.

considers the political wing of the group as legitimate and deals with it. This reflects the different approaches the EU and the US have towards Hezbollah and the way both parties view it. In the same context, Britain, which was in the EU until the early 2020, views and lists Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, considering the strong economic and political ties it has with Israel in addition to historical connections it has with the Zionist movement and Israel.

Britain opposes Hezbollah for its strong ties to Iran and its ideology based on the teachings of the jurist in Iran, which calls for the elimination of Israel. So does Germany, a prominent actor in the EU, to this day.⁵⁰¹ The history of Jews and the Holocaust play an important role in how the EU views Israel and its rival non-state actors, including Hezbollah and Hamas, especially in Germany, where anti-Semitism is weaponized against critics of Israel too, including those who seek non-violent means to reject Israeli policies. These different views on Hezbollah by EU countries reflect the lack of a unified position on Hezbollah, unlike the US. This US lack of a unified position on Hezbollah also applies to the League of Arab Nations too.

In 2016, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), not to the surprise of many, designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization due to its intervention in the affairs of some GCC countries and its alliance with Iran and Syria, represented in its military intervention in the country after 2013. The GCC cited “hostile actions of the militia who recruit the young people (of the Gulf) for terrorist acts.”⁵⁰² The Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Conference followed suit shortly after due to Saudi pressure to list the Lebanese group as terrorist.⁵⁰³ This can’t be examined in isolation from regional politics as this decision came a year after Saudi Arabia, and other Arab allies, have launched a military operation against the Houthis in Yemen following mounting tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. This came after President Trump signed a decree withdrawing US support for the Iran Nuclear Deal following a visit to Saudi Arabia in 2015 during which a \$400-billion deal was signed

⁵⁰¹ Levitt, “Could Hamas Target the West?”, p.139.

⁵⁰² Matthew Levitt, “Hezbollah’s Pivot toward the Gulf,” *CTC Sentinel*, 9(8), (2016), pp. 11-15.

⁵⁰³ Levitt, “Hezbollah’s Pivot toward the Gulf,” pp. 11-15.

between the two countries to purchase American weapons and products. Hezbollah has also voiced support for the Houthis who have been attacking Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which will likely push the GCC to adopt more hawkish positions against Hezbollah and push countries such as Türkiye and Malaysia to take harsher stances against the group.

A major reason why the decision to list Hezbollah as terrorist by the OIC, the Arab League and the GCC is more acceptable among Arab masses today is Hezbollah's involvement and support for the Bashar Al-Assad government in Syria. The war against Syrian rebels, which resulted in the killing of nearly half a million Syrians and the displacement of millions of them have also contributed to the terrorist designation of Hezbollah.⁵⁰⁴ In addition, Hezbollah has publicly expressed support for the Houthis in Yemen, Hamas in Palestine and protesters in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain, which was perceived as a threat to the unity of the GCC, with its member states such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain accusing Hezbollah of plotting to carry out attacks on their soil. This is especially true considering that the GCC countries have Shite minorities, and their mobilization could potentially threaten the unity of these countries.

Hezbollah has been accused in the past of carrying out attacks in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which touched old wounds of the GCC. An increasing number of Arab governments and peoples alike started viewing Hezbollah after the Arab Spring, its involvement in Syria, and suppression of Lebanese protesters, as a sectarian group rather than a liberation movement as it was largely perceived by some Arab peoples and governments before 2011. This in a way has facilitated the task for many Arab governments to list Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.⁵⁰⁵ In fact, with the assassination of Rafic Hariri in 2005, which Hezbollah was accused of standing behind, Hezbollah has started a phase of its political engagement in Lebanon at the request of Syria and Iran and began playing a new role in Lebanese and regional politics, gradually moving towards Iran after the death of Hafiz Al-Assad in Syria.

⁵⁰⁴ Randa Slim, "Hezbollah and Syria: From regime proxy to regime saviour," **Insight Turkey**, 16(2), (2014), p. 61.

⁵⁰⁵ Armenak Tokmajyan, "Hezbollah's Military Intervention in Syria: political choice or religious obligation?", **Approaching religion**, 4(2), (2014), p.108.

The nature of Hezbollah, which in addition to being seen as an Iranian proxy by some state-actors, have a military, political, religious, and educational wings. The group ran for elections and have ministers in the Lebanese government. It also runs a network of social services, including educational, medical and religious, which pushes some state-actors to view it as a legitimate political party. The following section sheds light on the controversial nature of Hezbollah through its complex structures.

3.5 Hezbollah as Social and Political Movement

The aim of this section is to show the complex structure of Hezbollah which further adds to its controversial designation as either a terrorist or liberation group by relevant state-actors. Hezbollah has first emerged in 1982 in Lebanon, a critical year in the history of the country, where Lebanese parties were actively engaged in a civil war and the 'Shite house' was divided over how to deal with domestic politics, Israel and other international forces (including American and French) in Lebanon.⁵⁰⁶ The year 1982 also saw Israel's invasion of Southern Lebanon following long years of hostility between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was operating from Lebanon, which is a home for a large Palestinian refugee population, to target Israel.⁵⁰⁷ Starting from 1982-2000, Hezbollah engaged in an insurgency campaign against the Israeli army in Lebanon, developing its tactics and weapons over the years. In the late 1990s, Hezbollah managed to drastically improve its performance and weapons, targeting Israeli forces in Southern Lebanon, which resulted in Israel's withdrawal from the region in 2000. This insurgency was interrupted by a brief infighting with its rival Shite group Amal in which Iran supported the group.⁵⁰⁸

Shiites in Lebanon, especially those who migrated to the outskirts of cities in the 1970s, led a poor life. The Lebanese state was in turmoil and civil war and was unable to provide services to the needy and poor, a gap that was largely filled by Hezbollah in the 1980s, thanks to Iran's financial support, despite its belief in armed struggle, and the notion of "war to end

⁵⁰⁶ Camille Habib, "The consequences of Israel's invasion of Lebanon, 1982: Failure of a success," (**PhD Dessertation**): Dalhousie University, Canada, The National Library of Canada, (1993), pp. 229-231.

⁵⁰⁷ Avner Yaniv and Robert J. Lieber, "Personal whim or strategic imperative? The Israeli invasion of Lebanon," **International Security**, 8(2), (1983), pp.139-142.

⁵⁰⁸ Gabrielsen, p. 257.

war,” as presented by Walzer.⁵⁰⁹ The group made use of the provision of various services, be them educational, religious, or social, as a means to recruit more members and spread its ideology, based on the theology of liberation of the Iranian jurist. Hezbollah’s desire to challenge the *Amal* movement and address injustices against the Shiite population pushed it to invest more in its social structures and services, which further complicates its view by state actors.⁵¹⁰ The psychology of terrorism explains the role social connections make in making/unmaking of a terrorist, which the group has made use of in a comprehensive manner by establishing clinics and educational institutions in addition to NGOs to help the needy and build a popular base in Lebanon and beyond, using it to its political and military benefit later on.⁵¹¹

To achieve its reach out goals, Hezbollah employed four strategies: 1. Provide aid to families in need, including the families of its own fighters killed during the civil war or in battlefield against Israeli, international or Lebanese forces loyal to Israel. This included all types of services be them educational, cultural, or vocational. 2. Provide medical services through two hospitals and 17 clinics scattered across Shiite-majority areas. 3. Provide education, in line with the Theory of National Liberation, and indoctrination at both secular and Islamic institutions. 4. Implement a media strategy aimed at recruiting more people through mosques and religious centers as well as through its *Alahed* Newspaper, published weekly starting from 1984, its radio station *Sawt Al-Musta’adafin*, *Sawt Al-Islam*, *Radio Nur*; and *Al-Manar* TV.⁵¹² This strategy has proved to be effective, helping Hezbollah reach out to its potential supporters among the Shiite community in Lebanon, especially in poor areas, and beyond.

Hezbollah gave importance to national education too by establishing educational institutions to spread its ideology where educational institutions served as a platform to recruit students, including providing them with religious studies and military training.⁵¹³ The Hezbollah teachings of Islamic theology was based on and inspired by the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

⁵⁰⁹ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 47.

⁵¹⁰ Azani, p. 904.

⁵¹¹ Webber and Kruglanski, p. 131.

⁵¹² Webber and Kruglanski, p. 131.

⁵¹³ Azani, p. 905.

From Israel's point of view, these educational activities implemented by Hezbollah, aimed at "indoctrinating" its members as part of its battle for the hearts and minds of the Shiite of Lebanon and the Lebanese at large.⁵¹⁴ Hezbollah has spread its ideology and educational programs through both secular and religious institutions to reach out to more people. These educational programs and ideological initiatives have always revealed the impact Iran had on the group throughout the years, even before the outbreak of the Arab Spring. Hezbollah was able to reach out to more Lebanese people through these educational programs, gradually becoming the most popular Shiite group in Lebanon, replacing the traditional Amal movement as the leader of the Shiites of Lebanon.

Formally, Hezbollah organized itself politically in 1992 when the group ran for parliamentary elections in Lebanon for the first time at the request of Syria and Iran following the Taif Agreement of 1989. The political wing of Hezbollah was supposed to act under the umbrella of the Lebanese political system and in accordance with its rules. If necessary, it would act outside the political system by, for example, creating crises to achieve its interests. Lastly, it would use political violence to achieve its goals such as assassinations.⁵¹⁵ Walzer notes that assassinations, unlike random killing, is what distinguishes terrorism from revolutionary violence.⁵¹⁶ Hezbollah's increasing influence could be seen through its mounting ability to mobilize and organize rallies and call for conferences using their liberation and resistance rhetoric, supported by their regional allies, Syria, and Iran. With hundreds of supporters in the early 1980s, the group was able to assemble some 20,000 to each of its political events by 1989, thanks to its resistance discourse.⁵¹⁷ In the same context, Hamas was equally successful in gathering the masses by using its liberation and resistance discourse in Palestine, where Hezbollah flags could even be spotted at its rallies up until the outbreak of the Arab Spring.

⁵¹⁴ Reuven Erlich and Yoram Kahati, "Hezbollah as a Case Study of the Battle for Hearts and Minds," Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center (IICC), June 2007, p. 3, https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/Data/pdf/PDF_07_030_2.pdf (30 January 2023).

⁵¹⁵ Azani, p. 909.

⁵¹⁶ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, pp. 197-198.

⁵¹⁷ Azani, pp. 197-198.

Hezbollah's involvement in the Lebanese political system revealed its need for recognition because, even though it was more powerful than the Lebanese government militarily, it still needed political legitimacy and recognition within Lebanon. Syria, which had much influence on Lebanon's weak government due to its military presence in the country from 1976-2005, brokered negotiations between the group and the Lebanese government, according to which Hezbollah became part of the political process.⁵¹⁸ Before this, the group viewed the Lebanese political system as "corrupt and nonreformable."⁵¹⁹ It also called for establishing an Islamic State in Lebanon in line with the teachings of the jurist in Iran, a demand the group gave up later on after it felt the need to integrate into the Lebanese political system by promoting itself as a Lebanese resistance movement, which was further stressed in the 2009 Manifesto.

Lebanon's Shiites were, too, in favor of running for elections. They saw in this initiative a good start to have more representation and access to resources, thus more legitimacy. Hezbollah, in the same context, believed that being in government will allow it to have a say over Lebanese politics. That is why 10 out of eleven of Hezbollah's *Shura* Council voted in favor of running for elections. The result of the 1992 elections meant that Hezbollah would win 12 seats along with its other non-Shiite allies, 8 of which were Shiite seats, in addition to two major municipalities.⁵²⁰ In addition to employing religion, theology and revolutionary discourse in its electoral campaigns, the group spoke of exploitation and underdevelopment, two issues that grasped the ears of many Shiite Lebanese who for long felt excluded and marginalized.⁵²¹ They saw in Hezbollah their access card to Lebanese politics and to the outside world. This electoral base would later serve as the core for Hezbollah's guerrilla warfare against Israeli, international and SLA forces in Lebanon. Hezbollah would have struggled to wage such a war from population centers without enjoying its popular support, a tactic that violates the principles of just war.

⁵¹⁸ Wiegand, p. 674.

⁵¹⁹ Norton, pp. 480.

⁵²⁰ Norton, pp. 480-481.

⁵²¹ Norton, pp. 480-481.

Yet, because Hezbollah initially did not view itself as an independent Lebanese political party, but rather an extension of the Iranian Revolution and jurist, it faced some challenges within Lebanon and beyond. In fact, the name Hezbollah, which means the Party of God, was the name given to a small police force formed in Iran following the Islamic Revolution in 1979.⁵²² According to Hezbollah's leaders and its declared objectives, it seeks, just like Iran, to stand with the downtrodden of the world. However, Hezbollah started to get involved in Lebanese politics in the early 1990s with its eyes fixed on Israel and the region. And just like Iran, its enemies were Israel, the US, France, Britain, and the Lebanese Phalanges Party.⁵²³ This Iranian influence over Hezbollah never faded away over the years and it has only got stronger, impacting the group in many ways especially after the Arab Spring.

When the Lebanese civil war came to an end in 1989, Hezbollah refused to dismantle its militia, named *the Islamic Resistance*, claiming that the existence of its forces is legitimate as long as Israel occupies Lebanese territory by claiming that Shiba farms are Lebanese territories that are still occupied by Israel. The terms of the Taif Agreement of 1989 has, as May put it, "both tamed aspects of Hezbollah within Lebanon and simultaneously presented an opportunity for Hezbollah to influence events beyond its own boundaries."⁵²⁴ In 1989, Iran strengthened its organizational influence over Hezbollah by appointing a seven-member-Iranian-backed *Shura* Council, taking responsibility of legal, political, social and military affairs, extending as far as Southern Lebanon, Bekaa Valley, and Beirut.⁵²⁵ The group continued its training activities and obtained more weapons from Iran and Syria, which it used against western and Israeli forces from 1982-1989, and against Israeli or Israeli-supported Lebanese forces from 1989-2000. In 2000, Israel decided to leave Southern Lebanon, allowing Hezbollah to announce victory on May 25, 2000.⁵²⁶ The group expanded

⁵²² Hussain Abdul-Hussain, "Hezbollah: a state within a state," **Current Trends in Islamist Ideology**, 8, (2009), p. 69.

⁵²³ Abdul-Hussain, pp. 69-70.

⁵²⁴ Samantha May, "The Rise of the "Resistance Axis": Hezbollah and the Legacy of the Taif Agreement," **Nationalism and Ethnic Politics**, 25(1), (2019), p.115.

⁵²⁵ Azani, 2013, p. 903.

⁵²⁶ Zahera Harb, "Aiming at liberation: Al-Manar media campaigns against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon (1998–2000)," **Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication**, 2(1), (2009), pp.66.

its structures from military, to politics, to aid and services, maintaining what Azani described as “hybrid terrorist organization.”⁵²⁷

It also contributed to the role Hezbollah played after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, including during the 2006 war with Israel, which some observers view as a just war from a Lebanese perspective, and following the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011, especially in Syria. Therefore, the organizational approach of terrorism explains the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah partially,⁵²⁸ where Iran had a very strong influence on the group over the years since its establishment as noted by DeVore, M. R.⁵²⁹ This relationship with Iran would negatively impact Hezbollah after the Arab Spring and with sectarian politics reaching high levels of intensity which eventually resulted in the League of Arab Nations and the GCC listing Hezbollah as a terrorist group in 2016.

3.6. Implications for Hezbollah’s Designation as a Terrorist or Liberation Organization

Listing Hezbollah as a terrorist organization has had many implications on the group and the Lebanese people at large; political, economic, and legal. The consequences of Hezbollah’s terrorist designation varied based on how each state-actor or intergovernmental organization perceived Hezbollah. As explained above, the EU and the US adopt different views on the designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization or a legitimate political movement, with the EU considering the political wing of the group as legitimate.⁵³⁰ Being listed as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the United States in 1997, Hezbollah suffered from various implications. With Lebanon having one of the largest diasporas in the world, the US designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization spread fear of naming and shaming among the Lebanese diaspora communities of supporting the group financially or politically. This designation, too, encouraged other US allies to follow suit, albeit late, designating the

⁵²⁷ Azani, p. 903.

⁵²⁸ Özgür Özdamar, “Theorizing terrorist behavior: Major approaches and their characteristics,” **Defence Against Terrorism Review**, 1(2), (2008), p. 91.

⁵²⁹ DeVore, pp.86-88.

⁵³⁰ Margulies, “Terrorist Sanctions: The Clash in US and EU Approaches.”

group as terrorist as the GCC and the League of Arab Nations did in 2016.⁵³¹ Iran, Syria, and non-state actors such as Hamas and the Houthis view Hezbollah as a legitimate resistance group, but the impact of their view remains limited due to regional and global politics.

Financially, Hezbollah receives much of its funds from Iran. With the heavy US sanctions on Iran and its allies, Hezbollah has been impacted in Lebanon. “We have taken more actions recently against Hezbollah than in the history of our counterterrorism program,” said Sigal P. Mandelker, undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the U.S. Treasury.⁵³² For the first time ever, the new US sanctions against Hezbollah targeted lawmakers and banks to dry up the financial resources of the group.⁵³³ Yet, its FTO designation pushed governments of the world, especially US allies, such as Paraguay, to investigate money sent by the Lebanese diaspora to Hezbollah, with estimates suggesting that dozens of millions of dollars have been sent to the group from Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil, known as the Triple Frontier.⁵³⁴

As noted by Matthew Levitt, a senior fellow and Director of Terrorism Studies at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy before the United States Senate in 2005, “cracking down on Hezbollah’s proactive involvement in criminal enterprises in the United States has been and should continue to be a focus of US law enforcement authorities’ strategy for combating the group’s presence in this country and its effectiveness abroad.”⁵³⁵ Hezbollah has acknowledged the impact of the sanctions but it claimed that it was able to cope with them.⁵³⁶ The group has created its own financial safety network by establishing businesses in Lebanon such as malls, but the US sanctions on its leaders and Syria by the Trump

⁵³¹ Hyeran Jo, Brian J. Phillips and Joshua Alley (Eds), **Can Blacklisting Reduce Terrorist Attacks?** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, p.272.

⁵³² Bassem Mrou, “US sanctions squeezing Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon,” **AP News**, 4 October 2019, <https://apnews.com/a37836f1f39f40028710c2ad226a7760> (31 March 2020).

⁵³³ Richard Hanania, “Ineffective, Immoral, Politically Convenience: America’s Overreliance on Economic Sanctions and What to Do about It,” February 18, 2020, **Cato Institute Policy Analysis**, (884), No., 884.

⁵³⁴ Blanca Madani, “Hezbollah’s global finance network: The triple frontier,” **Middle East Intelligence Bulletin**, 4(1), (2002), pp.3-4.

⁵³⁵ Levitt, “Hezbollah Finances: Funding the Party of God,” p. 11.

⁵³⁶ Hanania, 2020.

administration has weakened its ability to maneuver. This has been clearly proved true with the falling Lebanese economy and the endless crises in the country in the last few years.

There is no doubt that the US designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization has impacted the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) decision to list it as a terrorist group in 2016. Apart from Qatar's financial support to the reconstruction of Lebanon following the Israeli war in 2006, the GCC has always distanced itself from Hezbollah. The strong alliance the GCC has with the US, Hezbollah's links to Iran, accusations made against the group of intervening in the affairs of the GCC states and carrying hostile activities against them, and the group's intervention in Syria have altogether contributed to this end.⁵³⁷ The GCC move to designate Hezbollah as terrorist in 2016, which was followed by a similar Arab League move, has further strengthened the political and financial isolation of Hezbollah in the region. Now Hezbollah is left with no friends or allies, except for Iran, Syria, and some non-state actors in the Arab world such as the Houthis in Yemen, which is an Iranian-backed group and Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, both receive funds from Iran to fight Israel. The popular base Hezbollah has enjoyed over the years is no longer the same and it has been negatively impacted because of the group's involvement in sectarian politics of the region after the outbreak of the Arab Spring. Following its intervention in Syria and elsewhere in the Arab world, Hezbollah has lost much popular support, and governments in the Middle East were able to list it as a terrorist organization without much popular uproar.⁵³⁸

The EU, on the other hand, has adopted a different policy towards Hezbollah than that of the United States, Israel and later the Arab League, listing the group's armed wing, the Islamic Resistance, as a terrorist organization in 2013, and viewing its political wing as a legitimate political party following an alleged Hezbollah attack on Israeli tourists in Sofia in 2012.⁵³⁹ This EU perception of Hezbollah was particularly difficult for the US and Israel to understand.⁵⁴⁰ It allowed Hezbollah's ministers and political officials to have access to the

⁵³⁷ Levitt, "Hezbollah's Criminal Networks: Useful Idiots, Henchmen, and Organized Criminal Facilitators," pp.11-15.

⁵³⁸ Eric Lob, "Is Hezbollah confronting a crisis of popular legitimacy?" **Middle East Brief**, 78, (2014).

⁵³⁹ Margulies, 2016.

⁵⁴⁰ Sally McNamara, "EU-US Counterterrorism Relationship: An Agenda for Cooperation," **Heritage Foundation**, (2011), p. 8.

EU, lessening the isolation of the group even after the military involvement of Hezbollah in Syria in 2013, which resulted in a mass influx of refugees from Syria to the EU. In light of this EU view of Hezbollah, the EU is most likely going to continue to consider the political wing of Hezbollah in Lebanon a legitimate force in line with the European Neighborhood Policy. This policy aims at the promotion of democracy to the dissatisfaction of the United States and Israel and even some Arab countries, especially in the GCC.⁵⁴¹ EU countries are not united on the designation of Hezbollah. European countries such Germany, keeping in mind their ties with the US and Israel and their own history, will likely continue to adopt harsher policies towards Hezbollah.

Conclusion

Hezbollah's emergence came at a time when a considerable portion of Shiites in Lebanon felt marginalized in the country due to sectarian politics and the civil war. Hezbollah's discourse was largely based on this narrative of standing with the oppressed and resisting oppression, the *Downtrodden* as the group named them in its letter of 1985. Hezbollah's focus on education resonates with the National Liberation Theory and its call for adopting national education.⁵⁴² From 1982-1991, Hezbollah fought Israeli and international forces in Lebanon as part of reducing western influence in Lebanon in light of the politics of the Cold War supported by Syria and Iran. From 1991-2000, Hezbollah focused on targeting Israeli forces in Lebanon and targeting Israel itself, which prompted the United States, that emerged as the only super-power after the end of the Cold War, to list it as a terrorist organization in 1997, the same as it did with Hamas.

The "animosity toward the United States,"⁵⁴³ and opposing US policies in the Middle East, and Hezbollah's denouncing of the role of US in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, including in the peace process, as stated in the group's 1985 Letter are the main reasons why the US listed the group as terrorist. Additionally, Hezbollah has provided training and know-how to Palestinian groups, listed as terrorist by the US and Israel, such as Hamas. Hezbollah has

⁵⁴¹ Seeberg, pp.81-83.

⁵⁴² Hubbard, p. 71.

⁵⁴³ Jaber, 163-166.

repeatedly targeted American forces in Lebanon and beyond, killing hundreds of American forces. The group has too targeted French and Italian forces in Lebanon, both have strong ties to the US, which added to the negative terrorist view in the US of Hezbollah. In the 1980s, Hezbollah was behind the hostage crisis in which hundreds of western nationals were kidnapped, including many Americans, with dozens of them tortured to death.

Unlike the FLN and Hamas, Hezbollah targeted international forces in Lebanon as part of limiting western influence. Although most of these attacks happened on Lebanese soil, this pattern reveals that Hezbollah was more willing to target other countries than Israel. The organic relationship Hezbollah has with Syria and Iran, especially its intervention in Syria in 2013, and its support for protests against Arab monarchies in the Gulf that are critical of Iran, where Shiites live in considerable numbers such as in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Yemen, have pushed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the League of Arab Nations to list the group as a terrorist organization in 2016. As long as regional politics in the Middle East take sectarian nature, the group is likely to stay on the terror lists of the GCC and the League of Arab Nations.

Hezbollah, which emerged at a time the Islamic Revolution in Iran broke out in 1979, has maintained an organic relationship with Iran and Syria since day one, which explains the role the group played in favor of Iran and Syria during the Cold War and later after the outbreak of the Arab Spring. The Islamic Revolution of Iran and jurist are the main sources of inspiration for Hezbollah. This relationship is deeply rooted in the teachings of the leader of the Islamic Revolution. Hezbollah still tightly holds to the Iranian axis which has to do with its very own existence and line of support as well as its theology and ideology. For this reason, Hezbollah saw in the war in Syria and the possibility of removing Bashar Al-Assad an existential threat that required direct military intervention in the country even if this move came at the expense of its popularity in the Arab world.

Israel, the EU, the US, the GCC, and the Arab League are unlikely to change their view of Hezbollah as a terrorist group as long as balances of power in the Middle East remain the same. They will continue to view Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in principle with the

EU adopting a less tough approach (listing the military wing of Hezbollah as terrorist only) compared to Israel, the US, the GCC and the League of the Arab Nations. The EU will maintain this policy as long as Hezbollah does not engage in a civil war in Lebanon or attack Israeli targets on EU soil as it did in 2012. On the other hand, Iran and Syria will likely continue to view Hezbollah as a resistance group.

Israel's growing relations with some Arab countries will likely impact Hezbollah negatively. Hezbollah will unlikely adopt a new approach or discourse vis-à-vis its relationship with the region or the world. This will most probably translate into more isolation for the group in Lebanon and the region, thus harming the institutions of the Lebanese state by default. Israel is unlikely to give up the Shiba farms especially after the US recognized its sovereignty over the Golan Heights and Israel's control of the territory will continue to provide Hezbollah with the pretext to keep its arms in Lebanon, allowing Hezbollah to use its liberation discourse, which was largely shattered after the Arab Spring.

CHAPTER 4: HAMAS: A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION OR A LIBERATION MOVEMENT?

Hamas, or the Islamic Resistance Movement (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya), was founded in 1987 by a number of Palestinian figures with Islamic backgrounds led by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. Over time, Hamas became one of the most popular Palestinian groups influencing the course of both Palestinian domestic politics and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the last three decades.⁵⁴⁴ For nearly two years following its establishment, the movement largely acted non-violently, yet this commitment to non-violence did not last long as Hamas has engaged in a series of attacks, known as “knives war,”⁵⁴⁵ which targeted individual Israelis and armed forces and urban centers. Hamas’ shift to violence was accompanied by Israel’s excessive use of violence against the Palestinians where thousands of them were arrested, tortured, lost their lives, or injured. The Israeli authorities responded to Hamas’ attacks by deporting 415 of Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders and members to Southern Lebanon in 1992, in an attempt to minimize the impact of the movement and the Intifada by extension. For Israel, Hamas’ attacks were merely terrorism, and for Hamas and the rest of the Palestinians, they were legitimate actions against an occupying force. In other words, Hamas viewed its attacks against Israelis as part of its war against Israel’s military occupation and aggression, which represents the view of some state-actors of Hamas and answers Walzer’s question, “Has an act of aggression occurred?”⁵⁴⁶

Theoretically, the Just War Theory applies in the context of Israel-Hamas. Advocates of Israel note that Hamas’ alleged use of civilians in combat zones exempts the Israeli army from the responsibility of abiding by the principle of proportionality of Walzer, namely *Jus in bello*.⁵⁴⁷ This in fact violates the principles of just war theory itself which maintains people’s right to self-determination and self-defense, especially that the UN considers Israel

⁵⁴⁴ A. Dolnik and A. Bhattacharjee, “Hamas: Suicide bombings, rockets, or WMD?” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 14(3), (2002), p.109.

⁵⁴⁵ Dolnik and Bhattacharjee, p. 110.

⁵⁴⁶ Cam Caldwell and Mayra Canuto-Carranco, p. 313.

⁵⁴⁷ Lazar, p. 51.

the occupying power in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.⁵⁴⁸ Hence, the just war theory cannot be fully applied to Hamas and Israel as a number of contradictions arise between the theory's commitment to peoples' right to self-determination and the prohibition of targeting civilians, where large sectors of Israeli settlers are armed especially in the West Bank where a distinction between combatants and non-combatants can hardly be made.

In the same vein, targeting urban centers in Israel has always shaped Hamas' attacks against Israel, which is also the case for the FLN, where "urban terrorism became the only method of expression of a crushed people."⁵⁴⁹ Hamas has focused on targeting urban centers and Israeli city centers to maximize the impact of its attacks, which prompted Israel to list it as a terrorist organization in 1996 following a series of attacks in retaliation for the assassination of Hamas' commander Yehia Ayyash, who Israel accuses of standing behind a number of suicide bombings that claimed the lives of dozens of Israelis.⁵⁵⁰ Hamas' theology of liberation centered around how to mobilize Islam to serve its agenda by calling for the unity of the Muslim nation against Israel, which occupies both Muslim and Christian sites in Palestine. According to Hamas, this should be done through the "cultural liberation of Muslims" around the world who should be part of the fight against Israel, which should be eventually "eliminated," and a Palestinian-Islamic state should be established.⁵⁵¹

The feeling of being oppressed and crushed, a discourse Hamas still tries to promote, is explained by José Simeón Cañas. Based on Cañas' explanation, people who see themselves oppressed get together to gain liberation and they become the center of this theory which focuses on their needs.⁵⁵² Israel's acceptance of Hamas' existence, which was linked to weakening the PLO at the time, came to an end with the non-state actor trying to have an

⁵⁴⁸ Jacob Blair, "Tensions in a certain conception of just war as law enforcement," **Res Publica**, 14(4), (2008), p. 303.

⁵⁴⁹ Thornton, p. 73.

⁵⁵⁰ Aljamal, pp. 39-58.

⁵⁵¹ Meir Litvak, "Martyrdom is Life": Jihad and Martyrdom in the Ideology of Hamas," **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, 33(8), (2010), pp.716-719.

⁵⁵² Maritza Montero, "The political psychology of liberation: From politics to ethics and back," **Political Psychology**, 28(5), (2007), p.522.

upper hand through the use of violence as Waciorski put it.⁵⁵³ Hamas' sense of being oppressed is shared by both the FLN and Hezbollah too. In its internal documents, the FLN noted that the French colonization of Algeria has inflicted much damage on the Algerian people where its role served as unifying to these oppressed people where the FLN's ability to "unify Muslim Algerians," in addition to the mounting French opposition to the war as a result of French torture of Algerians, eventually led to the French withdrawal from the country.⁵⁵⁴

The following section aims to explore Hamas' classification as a terrorist organization/liberation movement as seen by Israel, the United States, the European Union, Britain, Australia, the League of Arab Nations, Iran, Malaysia, and Türkiye by highlighting various relevant international relations perspectives on the issue by applying a theory-oriented approach. As long as Hamas is concerned, this chapter will shed light on the view of Hamas by these state actors and intergovernmental bodies to explore this issue from states' perspective as well as from the point of view of Hamas itself. Before discussing the varying views of Hamas, the researcher will highlight Hamas's perception of itself, and finally draw a conclusion. This will be done through reviewing the available literature on Hamas as well as by looking at Hamas' own literature including its 1988 Charter, its 2017 political document, and its actions, by connecting the empirical part with theory, namely the theories of terrorism and war/liberation.

4.1. Hamas' Internal Documents, Mixed Approach and Violence and Non-Violence

Looking at Hamas' history, the movement has a mixed approach which combines both the use of violence and non-violence, having political and armed wings, playing social, religious, and educational roles in the Palestinian society, and viewing Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim unity as three pillars to achieve its goal of liberating Palestine. Amilcar Cabral notes "detailed knowledge of it (our struggle)" would lead to victory,⁵⁵⁵ where national education plays a

⁵⁵³ Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 383.

⁵⁵⁴ Grace I. Graham, "A War of Implicit Forces: The Algerian Revolution. Young Historians Conference," St. Mary's Academy, Portland: Portland State University, (2020), p. 14.

⁵⁵⁵ Fletcher Jr, and Manji, pp. 143,144, 171, 173.

role in this realization. So does Hamas' literature, including its 1988 Charter, which stresses the importance of national and religious education. Cabral adds: "National liberation must put an end not only to suffering but also to backwardness."⁵⁵⁶ Hamas' Charter calls for using 'armed resistance' against Israel as the only way to liberate Palestine, asserting the importance of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim solidarity to achieve this goal, which reveals that armed struggle has been central to Hamas' thought since its foundation.⁵⁵⁷

Hamas' nature is complex; it runs a network of NGOs that provide educational, health, social and economic services to tens of thousands of Palestinians. When Hamas started operating in the 1970s through the Islamic Complex (al-Mujam' al-Islami) in the Gaza Strip, established by its late supreme leader Yassin, Israel had facilitated the work of the extended network of the Hamas charities, in an attempt to curb the influence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).⁵⁵⁸ Israel might have seen in Hamas a potential competitor to the PLO in the Palestinian Territories, thus giving the group all needed logistical support to start its work in the hope that Palestinians would move to support Hamas instead of the PLO. It is also important to point out that at the time, Hamas was only engaged in running charities to help the needy as well as establishing kindergartens all over the coastal enclave. The emergence of Hamas, first with its network of charities and the subsequent political rise of the movement in 1987, which led the protests marking the outbreak of a seven-year long uprising, known as the First Intifada, was the spark of the continuing rivalry between Hamas and the PLO that we see today.⁵⁵⁹

Hamas's Charter was a major reason why the movement was dubbed as terrorist by Israel, the US and the EU and other bodies, as it advocated the use of violence as the only way to end the conflict.⁵⁶⁰ Yet, with Hamas' increasing engagement in politics and following pressure from countries such as Qatar and Egypt, the movement published in 2017 a new political document, where it differentiated between Judaism as a religion and Zionism as a

⁵⁵⁶ Fletcher Jr, and Manji, pp. 143.

⁵⁵⁷ Maqdsi, pp.124-125.

⁵⁵⁸ Robinson, p.117.

⁵⁵⁹ Abu-Amr, p. 6.

⁵⁶⁰ Cody Brown, "The new terrorism debate. Alternatives," **Turkish Journal of International Relations**, 6(3&4), (2007), p. 33.

political movement. Hamas has also stressed non-violence, along with violence, as a tactic to liberate Palestine, offering a ceasefire in return for establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 boundaries for ten years but without recognizing Israel, a proposal that did not materialize due to the refusal of the Quartet.⁵⁶¹

Hamas, as well, paid much attention in its programs and internal statements to the importance of religious and national education based on Islamic principles and Palestinian nationalism. Hamas' religious and national education was influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood's school of thought. Hamas saw education as a means to reignite faith and promote social activism. Article 16 of the movement's Charter highlights the importance of religious education, including understanding religious commands such as memorizing verses from the Holy Quran, and the history and heritage of the Muslim faith.

Article 16 of Hamas's Charter notes:⁵⁶²

“It is necessary to follow Islamic orientation in educating the Islamic generations in our region by teaching the religious duties, comprehensive study of the Quran, the study of the Prophet's Sunna (his sayings and doings) and learning about Islamic history and heritage from their authentic sources. This should be done by specialized and learned people, using a curriculum that would healthily form the thoughts and faith of the Muslim student. Side by side with this, a comprehensive study of the enemy, his human and financial capabilities, learning about his points of weakness and strength, and getting to know the forces supporting and helping him, should also be included.”

Hamas also urged experts to work on materials that would provide a real understanding of ideology and faith. When the PLO would call for a strike during the first Palestinian Intifada, Hamas would instruct educational institutions under its control to continue despite the strike as part of its belief of the importance of education.⁵⁶³

This approach of Hamas can't be explained without examining its network of NGOs across the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), where the movement has invested much money, energy, and efforts to win the hearts of the Palestinians. Giving a helping hand to the needy

⁵⁶¹ Hroub, pp. 100-104.

⁵⁶² Maqdsi, p.127.

⁵⁶³ Burton, p. 533.

and poor largely explains why Hamas won the 2005 local and the 2006 legislative elections.⁵⁶⁴ Hamas' promotion of social services to win legitimacy is similar to Hezbollah's strategy to increase its popularity among the Shiites of Lebanon, who were largely marginalized, through the provision of social services at clinics and schools. Scholars of social psychology of terrorism stress "the need to the social connections that justify such actions."⁵⁶⁵ In fact, Hamas made its way to the local council election in 2004/2005, winning the majority of municipal councils, through its records of helping the poor, which the movement built starting from the 1970s.

When the first Palestinian *Intifada* broke out in 1987, Hamas played a major role in organizing the protests that broke out following the killing of four Palestinian workers from Jabalyia refugee camp in Israel by an Israeli truck driver.⁵⁶⁶ Yet this commitment to non-violence and the use of stones against the Israeli army which used live ammunitions did not last long. Hamas' resort to violence after two years of commitment to non-violence and exhausting all other means before using violence is in agreement with the Just War Theory, *jus ad bellum*, which stipulates that all other means such as dialogue should be tried before going to war, making it a last resort.⁵⁶⁷

Two years into the First Intifada, a new war broke out between Israel and Hamas, known as the 'knives war,' where Palestinians engaged in stabbing attacks against Israeli settlers and soldiers.⁵⁶⁸ Following the 'knives war,' the movement started to organize attacks against Israeli targets using more sophisticated tactics and weapons, including suicide bombings which prompted countries such as the US to list Hamas on its terror list in 1997, a year after Israel did so.⁵⁶⁹ These Israeli and US designations of Hamas as a terrorist group and the

⁵⁶⁴ Robinson, pp. 112-13.

⁵⁶⁵ Webber and Kruglanski, 19, p. 131.

⁵⁶⁶ Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin (Eds), **Intifada: The Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation**. Boston: South End Press, 1989, p. 350.

⁵⁶⁷ James Pattison, "The ethics of diplomatic criticism: The Responsibility to Protect, just war theory and presumptive last resort," **European Journal of International Relations**, 21(4), (2015), p.938.

⁵⁶⁸ Richard Davis (Ed.), "Foundation era (December 1987 to September 1993): The First Intifada, capturing Palestinian sentiment and the hunt for weapons" in Hamas, Popular Support and War in the Middle East, London: Routledge, 2016, p. 109.

⁵⁶⁹ Dipak K. Gupta, "Suicide bombing as a strategic weapon: An empirical investigation of Hamas and Islamic Jihad," **Terrorism and Political Violence**, 17(4), (2005), p.580.

regional isolation it created pushed Hamas to publish a new document in 2017 which adopted a more pragmatic discourse, which reveals the tolls of sanctions on the group. In this document, the movement stressed the importance of non-violence along with violence. Hamas' commitment to non-violence, along with violence, could be best seen in its participation in the Great March of Return at the Gaza fence which started in March 2018 and stopped due to COVID19.⁵⁷⁰ At the same time, Hamas' adoption of non-violent resistance was a tactic to win legitimacy and it did not reflect a wide belief in its effectiveness as it continued to build its military arsenal in the Gaza Strip with the help of Iran and Hezbollah.

At the same time, the principle of *jus ad bellum*, namely the just cause of war, could be applied to the situation in Palestine given Israel's ongoing occupation of the territory, which all peace talks failed to end. Hamas too claimed a legitimate authority as Walzer calls for. At the same time, Hamas violated the principles of proportionality and discrimination in its attacks against Israeli targets during the war known as *Jus in Bello*. At the same time, while the Just War Theory maintains the right to self-determination, it prohibits fighting from within populated areas, which is the backbone of Hamas' strategy of guerrilla warfare.⁵⁷¹

From theoretical lenses of just war and national liberation, Hamas' use of violence could not be seen in isolation from Israel's occupation of Palestine and the impact of its settler colonial project on the Palestinians at large. Primoratz argues that Israel might have used state terrorism in its counterterrorism campaign against Hamas,⁵⁷² which, according to Kennedy and Sherley, has been unsuccessful.⁵⁷³ Yet, when it comes to state-terrorism, it becomes hard to identify it or accuse a state of committing it, as politics and interests play a role in doing so, taking dominance over the view of non-state actors and their actions. The same as most non-state actors do not call themselves terrorist groups (such as Hamas, Hezbollah and to a

⁵⁷⁰ Jihad Abusalim, "The Great March of Return: An Organizer's Perspective," **Journal of Palestine Studies**, 47(4), (2018), pp. 90-93.

⁵⁷¹ David Luban, "Just War Theory and the Laws of War as Nonidentical Twins," **Ethics & International Affairs**, 31(4), (2017), p.433-436.

⁵⁷² Igor Primoratz, "State terrorism and counterterrorism," In Georg Meggle and Andreas Kemmerling et. al., **Ethics of Terrorism & Counterterrorism** (Eds.), London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 119.

⁵⁷³ Lum, Kennedy, and Sherley, p.1.

large extent the FLN), no state actor would dub itself as such. Scholars, such as Mia M. Bloom, have shed doubt on the ability of counterterrorism (which often results in state-terrorism) in combating terrorism as it results in tit-for-tat attacks that only cause more destruction and violence and violates the principles of proportionality and discrimination, as Israel did both in Palestine and Lebanon and as France did in Algeria.⁵⁷⁴ At the same time, scholars who suggest an Israeli success in combating terrorism assert the importance of reaching a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which is less costly than targeted assassinations and killings outside the frame of law.⁵⁷⁵

Table 4: Hamas’ attacks against Israel by 2010

SN	Type	Casualties
1.	Hamas armed members killed by Israel	1808
2.	Military operations	1015
3.	Kidnappings	24
4.	Rockets fired at Israel	3506
5.	Israeli casualties	1306 (killed) and 6378 (injured)

Source: Hamas’s armed wing internet website. Available at <https://buff.ly/3qurOiQ> (10 September 2022).

Thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians, and dozens of Israelis, the majority of whom were soldiers, were killed in these attacks by both state and non-state actors.

⁵⁷⁴ Mia M. Bloom, “Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding,” **Political Science Quarterly**, 119/1, (Spring 2004), p. 80.

⁵⁷⁵ Nadav Morag, “Measuring success in coping with terrorism: the Israeli case,” **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, 28(4), (2005), p.311.

Table 5: Number of Lebanese/Palestinians and Israelis Killed in the First Israel-Lebanon War

First Israeli war in Lebanon 1978-1982	Lebanese/Palestinian casualties	Israeli casualties in Lebanon
Killed	17,825 killed	675 Israelis killed
Injured	30,203 injured	No specific information
Second Israeli War in Lebanon	Lebanese casualties	Israeli casualties
Killed	1181 killed	157 killed
Injured	845 injured	860 injured

Source: Washington Post, Wafa and Aljamal, (2014)

The complex nature of Hamas, which believes in both violence and non-violence, runs a network of charities, has political and educational wings, runs for election, and has a considerable base in the Palestinian territories, which makes it difficult to classify Hamas from an international relations perspective, including changing the view of state actors such as Israel and the US of the group. At the same time, Israel's continuing occupation of the Palestinian Territories challenges Israel's designation of the group. Meanwhile, regional politics in the Middle East, considering Hamas' siding with Iran, will be the strongest determinant in the future of listing (or at least treating) the movement as a terrorist organization by countries such as Egypt, UAE, and Saudi Arabia, which we see unfolding now.

The 'extranormality' of violence, and who decides what acceptable violence is, remains open to state-actors to decide.⁵⁷⁶ The term terrorist, being complex and ambiguous, has always been used to describe legitimate armed resistance too as Hutchinson put it.⁵⁷⁷ In today's politics, armed resistance could have "a neighborly" relationship with terrorism.⁵⁷⁸ Christopher J. Finlay argues that the first step to address the theory of war is "by offering a

⁵⁷⁶ Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 384.

⁵⁷⁷ Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 384.

⁵⁷⁸ Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 384.

theory of legitimate, armed, non-terrorist resistance to oppression,”⁵⁷⁹ which still needs structural development. Since resistance to foreign occupation has in most cases been violent, the issue is if the use of violence as a political weapon is permissible or not as seen by state-actors.⁵⁸⁰

Theories of war and terrorism explain some aspects of the nature of political violence in the case of Hamas-Israel, but no single theory fully explains the nature of Hamas’ fight against Israel as these theories are mostly state-centric. This also applies to the FLN in Algeria and Hezbollah in Lebanon. The assumption that there should be a new theory that combines both war and terrorism, that provides justice and equal rights to peoples under colonial rule, in line with international politics and law and self-determination, rather than only international politics, interests, regional alliances and state-based interpretations, is the call of time. Such a theory should also give the agency to state and non-state actors alike, unlike the existing theories of liberation/war and terrorism which focus on state actors and the privilege they have to designate non-state actors as terrorist or not. It should also suggest a code of conduct to non-state actors to abide by to avoid harming civilians and abide by principles such as such as discrimination and proportionality.

Such a theory should also focus on the use of violence and non-violence alike. The reason this theory should also consider international law and not only international politics is because it makes it more restrictive to interpret the behavior of state and non-state actors before, during and after the end of war in a more objective manner. It will also allow colonized people and non-state actors to have their own say in this debate. For this reason, the following section examines Hamas’ view of itself in light of its 1988 Charter and its 2017 Document.

4.2. The Liberation Discourse of Hamas

Most state-actors with influence on global politics view Hamas as a terrorist organization. Despite this, a look at Hamas’ own internal documents such as the 1988 Charter and the 2017

⁵⁷⁹ Hutchinson, “The concept of revolutionary terrorism,” p. 7.

⁵⁸⁰ Robert A. Friedlander, “Terrorism and National Liberation Movements: Can Rights Derive from Wrongs,” *Case W. Res. J. Int’l L.*, 13, (1981), p.281.

Document reveal that the group views itself as a liberation movement. This section aims to explore how Hamas views itself and how this view contradicts the general view of state-actors of it as terrorist and goes in line with the view of some state-actors of the group as liberatory. Theories of Just War and National Liberation are applied to examine Hamas' own view and discourse of itself as a liberation group. At the same time, two levels of analysis are applied in this section, units and international levels, where the view of Hamas in light of units and international levels (politics) are discussed too.

The 1988 Hamas Charter has adopted an undeniable religious discourse, based on Hamas' theology of liberation and religious nature, which described the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as an issue of the Muslim nation. It attributed the failure to resolve the conflict to adopting secularism, noting that the only solution to the conflict is by sticking to Islam.⁵⁸¹ The Hamas 1988 Charter noted that the "liberation of Palestine,"⁵⁸² is an individual duty that brings all Muslims, regardless of their differences, together. "The liberation of Palestine," the Charter noted, will be realized if three solidarity circles meet: the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim.⁵⁸³ This notion of solidarity in Hamas' Charter corresponds with that of the National Liberation Theory and the writings of Amilcar Cabral, which called for intersectional solidarity of colonized people. In this theory, Cabral also stressed the importance of "looking at the history of the [liberation] movement in relation to its social structure."⁵⁸⁴ In the same vein, the Hamas Charter noted that the "war for liberation," which men and women should take part in equally, should be based on the principle of individual duty of Jihad (fighting).⁵⁸⁵ The Hamas Charter added that it is important "to mobilize the Muslim peoples ideologically, educationally and culturally in order to fulfil their role in the crucial war of liberation."⁵⁸⁶ Ideology, too, is central to theorists such as Cabral, Finlay, Braungart, Webber and Kruglanski. In the 1988

⁵⁸¹ Maqdsi, pp.123.

⁵⁸² Maqdsi, 129.

⁵⁸³ Maqdsi, pp.133.

⁵⁸⁴ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p. 121.

⁵⁸⁵ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p. 121.

⁵⁸⁶ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p.121.

Charter, Hamas stressed that only armed resistance can lead to liberation and that “only iron can blunt iron.”⁵⁸⁷

Hamas’ Charter of 1988 and internal documents explain its self-view as a liberation group, in addition to outlining its ideology and goals based on its interpretation of Islam. The establishment of Hamas was announced through its founding Charter of 1988, in which the movement stated its ideology, goals, vision for the settlement of the conflict with Israel as well as its liberation discourse and theology.⁵⁸⁸ In the Charter, Hamas outlines its theology of liberation, by claiming that the Palestinian plight was a result of the “absence of Islam” from the realities of life, and therefore the failure to reclaim Palestine, the Charter noted, was caused by fighting under other banners and flags, stressing its theology of liberation, as explained by Dodson.⁵⁸⁹ For Palestine to be reclaimed, the Charter added, Islam should be the reference.⁵⁹⁰ In Article 11, the movement explains that Palestine is an Islamic *Waqf*, an endowment, which means no one has the authority to give it up.⁵⁹¹ The movement noted that in order to liberate Palestine, the only means is fighting, *Jihad*, and that secularism, support for two-state solution and peace talks with Israel are “a waste of time.”⁵⁹² Hamas’ belief in the use of armed resistance as the only means for liberation rings a bell with Amilcar Cabral’s contributions to the National Liberation Theory, which stresses the importance of “taking arms,”⁵⁹³ to end foreign domination. Hamas’ support for armed resistance could also be understood through instrumental approaches to terrorism, which suggests that violence is intentional.⁵⁹⁴

Yet, the Hamas Charter has gone through multiple changes with the publication of the Hamas 2017 Document of Principles and General Policies in which the movement outlined its new

⁵⁸⁷ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p.121.

⁵⁸⁸ Maqdsi, pp.129.

⁵⁸⁹ Dodson, pp.207.

⁵⁹⁰ Meir Litvak, “The Islamization of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: the case of Hamas,” **Middle Eastern Studies**, 34(1), (1998), p.149.

⁵⁹¹ Knudsen, p.1377.

⁵⁹² Emy Matesan, “What makes negative frames resonant? Hamas and the appeal of opposition to the peace process,” **Terrorism and Political Violence**, 24(5), (2012), pp.670.

⁵⁹³ Cabral, “Return to the Source,” p. 9.

⁵⁹⁴ Özgür Özdamar, “Theorizing terrorist behavior: Major approaches and their characteristics,” **Defence Against Terrorism Review**, 1, No. 2, (2008), p. 91.

approach and vision to the conflict with Israel, policies and view of armed resistance.⁵⁹⁵ The Document was characterized by two principles: applying non-violence as a tactic to liberate Palestine along with violence, asserting that the conflict in Palestine is not religious, and that it is with Zionism as a political movement and not with Jews as a religious group.⁵⁹⁶ Hamas has adopted a more practical discourse, introducing itself as an Palestinian Islamic-national liberation movement, centering the liberation discourse on its top agenda, and refuting accusations of anti-Semitism. It noted that the fight against Israel is because it is an occupying force in Palestine and not because it represents a religious group.⁵⁹⁷ The primary goal of Hamas' 2017 document was to market itself globally in an attempt to refute accusations of terrorism and assert its liberation nature and to remove itself off terror lists of Israel (to a lesser degree) and the US and Europe (to a larger degree). Despite this tactical change in discourse by Hamas, the group remained on the terror lists of Israel, the US, and the EU, and more Arab countries started viewing it as terrorist too following the Arab Spring in light of its ties with Iran and Hezbollah and its connection to political Islam. The increasing number of countries viewing Hamas as terrorist will necessarily increase in light of more state-actors normalizing ties with Israel.

Although Hamas has repeatedly resorted to violence since its foundation, its targeting of Israel only, and Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestine challenges its designation as terrorist, although it uses its terrorist tactics in its struggle. According to Levitt, unlike other organizations classified as terrorist, such as Al-Qaeda, Hamas "holds resistance" to Israel as its highest goal.⁵⁹⁸ Politically, following its electoral victory in 2006, the movement has shown signs of readiness to engage in the political process, but this was cut short because of its refusal to accept the Quartet conditions including recognizing Israel. Hamas accepted the two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but refused to recognize Israel, adopted non-violent tactics besides violence and ran a network of social services, which again stresses

⁵⁹⁵ Hroub, p. 100.

⁵⁹⁶ Issam M.A. Adwan, "Hamas Charter: Changes and Principles," *Journal of Politics and Religion*, 13(1), (2019), p. 22.

⁵⁹⁷ Adwan, p.19.

⁵⁹⁸ Levitt, "Could Hamas Target the West?", p.934.

its complex nature, thus its different view by different state-actors.⁵⁹⁹ The movement has participated in the local as well as legislative Palestinian elections, which makes it exceptional compared to other non-state actors in the region listed as terrorist by various state-actors.⁶⁰⁰

Despite its changing discourse, Hamas' anti-Israel discourse, relations with Iran and Hezbollah and its Islamic background and ideology have contributed to its isolation even in the Arab world, albeit to a lesser degree than Hezbollah, following the outbreak of the Arab Spring and the rise of political Islam. Hamas has too been impacted by the politics of the Cold War at a later stage with the rise of the US as the only superpower in the world, especially keeping in mind the strong alliance the US has with Israel, which further contributed to its political and financial isolation. Hamas' ties with some Arab, African, and Muslim countries provided it with the life vest to survive sanctions for now, although at a high cost. This includes its ties with countries such as Algeria, Türkiye, Malaysia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Russia, which contributed to the group's balancing of international and regional politics, although at a much lesser degree than the FLN in Algeria. This limited balancing of regional and global politics by Hamas has to do with the end of the Cold War and the outbreak of the Arab Spring and its continuing ties to Iran/Hezbollah as well as the anti-political Islam sentiments in the region in the post-Arab Spring era. The 1988 Hamas Charter noted that Islam is a reference that all Muslims should unite behind to "liberate Palestine" and the Muslim Brotherhood as its umbrella organization, which explains why anti-political Islam in the post-Arab Spring settings had its toll on Hamas.⁶⁰¹

State interests, including economic, security and political, impact why some state-actors such as Israel, the US and the EU view Hamas as a terrorist group and why they have differences over the way they view the group as terrorist. Additionally, regional politics such as the Arab Spring has greatly contributed to how some state-actors view Hamas as a terrorist group. In

⁵⁹⁹ Ibrahim Natil, "Hamas: Between militarism and governance," **Peacebuilding and reconciliation contemporary themes and challenges**, 2012, p.171.

⁶⁰⁰ Riad Malki, "The Palestinian Elections: Beyond Hamas and Fatah," **Journal of Democracy**, 17(3), (2006), p.132.

⁶⁰¹ Mohamed Nimer, "Charting the Hamas Charter Changes," **Insight Turkey**, 11(4), (2009), pp. 115-116.

the same vein, the Cold War had an impact on how Hamas is viewed by state-actors, although this impact was limited as Hamas emerged towards the end of the Cold War. International law, historical and language ties, political and economic factors, the most important of which is Israel's occupation of Palestine, impact why some state actors view Hamas as a liberation group. The following section examines how and why some state actors view Hamas as a terrorism or liberation movement by applying a theory-oriented approach.

4.3. State actors' View of Hamas

Different state-actors have a different designation of Hamas, which is unlikely to change anytime soon. At the same time, Hamas itself, despite limited changes in discourse, still views itself as a liberation group. The Arab Spring had the most visible impact on Hamas and had increased its terrorist designation due to its Iran ties and connections. The recent wave of normalization with Israel and some Arab countries will likely increase this view of Hamas in the near future. Hamas is also unlikely to change its discourse as previous attempts to do so have proved to be less effective than what Hamas aspired to achieve. The following section draws attention to how and why state actors view Hamas and the impact this designation has on the group and the Palestinians at large.

4.3.1. State Actors' View of Hamas as A Terrorist Movement

The Middle East Quartet, made of Russia, the United Nations, the European Union and the United States, to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, refused to cooperate with Hamas,⁶⁰² despite its electoral victory in 2006, setting three conditions to deal with the movement: Revoking violence, recognizing Israel, and recognizing previous agreements signed between the PLO and Israel.⁶⁰³ Hamas has refused the Quartet's conditions, expressing willingness to "respect" deals signed by the PLO and Israel, and going as far as to giving the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas the mandate to negotiate with Israel to establish a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders.⁶⁰⁴ This created a debate within Hamas itself with one wing calling for adopting a radical position on the issue while the other urging for adopting a more moderate stance. Those closer to the political circles of Hamas preferred a more pragmatic approach compared to those with stronger ties to the military wing, Izzideen Al-Qassam, but the approach of the military wing has eventually prevailed. Taking arms, as suggested by Cabral, was the approach Hamas opted for.⁶⁰⁵ States and intergovernmental bodies concerned with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have viewed Hamas differently for reasons related to economic and political interests, and regional and international politics.

Feeling threatened by the groups' attacks, Israel put Hamas on the List of Terrorist Organizations and Individuals in 1996, which is issued by the Ministry of Justice in Israel after the latter intensified its attacks which included using urban and psychological terrorism tactics such as suicide bombings that claimed the lives of dozens of Israelis.⁶⁰⁶ Hamas' use of violence and targeting Israel, its refusal to recognize Israel and its 1988 Charter that calls

⁶⁰² **Natalie Tocci**, "The Impact of Western Policies Towards Hamas and Hezbollah: What Went Wrong?" *Political Islam and European Foreign Policy: Perspectives from Muslim Democrats of the Mediterranean*, (2007), p. 139.

⁶⁰³ Anne Le More, "The Dilemma of Aid to the PA after the Victory of Hamas," **The International Spectator** 2/2006, p. 87.

⁶⁰⁴ Are Hovdenak, "Hamas in transition: the failure of sanctions," **Democratization**, 16(1), (2009), p. 60.

⁶⁰⁵ Hubbard, p. 71.

⁶⁰⁶ **Ministry of Justice in Israel**, "List of Terrorist Organizations and Individuals," The Designated Non-Financial Business and Profession Supervisor, 25 February 1996, <https://www.justice.gov.il/En/-Units/FBPS/DNFBPDuties/Pages/List-of-Terrorist-Organizations-and-Individuals.aspx> (24 May 2022).

for the destruction of Israel explains why Israel considers the movement a terrorist one.⁶⁰⁷ In its many statements, the movement stressed the importance of “planting fear”⁶⁰⁸ to defeat Israel, which is best understood by Psychological Terrorism that calls for using violence to achieve psychological goals. Hamas has carried out dozens of attacks, including suicide bombings, firing rockets, stabbings, shootings, and kidnappings against Israeli targets since its founding in 1987.⁶⁰⁹ To respond to international pressure, the movement resorted to maneuver by refusing to recognize Israel, and instead offered a ceasefire for 10 years, providing that Israel agrees to establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 boundaries.⁶¹⁰

The United States designated Hamas as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) on October 8, 1997.⁶¹¹ According to the US, the use of psychological and urban terrorism tactics has played a role in this designation, “Hamas has conducted anti-Israeli attacks, including suicide bombings against civilian targets inside Israel including suicide bombings, rocket launches, Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks, and shootings. U.S. citizens have died and been injured in the group’s attacks.”⁶¹² The US view of Hamas and the justification it uses for listing it as terrorist could be explained too by political, military, and economic ties to Israel. According to the US, the assumption of a peaceful foreign policy cannot include Hamas as it is committed to destroying Israel.⁶¹³ US leaders have always shown disinterest in talking to Hamas and were upset at former President Jimmy Carter when he talked to Hamas’ former leader Khaled Mishal in Syria prior to the outbreak of the Arab Spring.⁶¹⁴ Therefore, it is fair to say the US’ position on Hamas would not change as long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

⁶⁰⁷ Clara Marina O'Donnell, “The EU, Israel and Hamas,” 2 April 2008, **Centre for European Reform Working Paper**, <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/working-paper/2008/eu-israel-and-hamas> (30 January 2023).

⁶⁰⁸ Abbasi, Khatwani, and Soomro, pp. 320-322.

⁶⁰⁹ Levitt, “Hamas from cradle to grave,” pp. 14-15

⁶¹⁰ Beverley Milton-Edwards, “The ‘Warriors Break’: Hamas and the Limits of Ceasefire Beyond Tactical Pause,” **International Peacekeeping**, 24(2), (2017), p. 217.

⁶¹¹ **United States Department of State Publication**, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2018,” Bureau of Counterterrorism, October 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Country-Reports-on-Terrorism-2018-FINAL.pdf> (24 May 2022).

⁶¹² **United States Department of State Publication**, p. 280.

⁶¹³ Shahram Akbarzadeh, “Does the Hamas victory advance peace in the Middle East?,” **Australian Journal of International Affairs**, 60(2), (2006), p.201.

⁶¹⁴ Kim Cragin, “Al Qaeda Confronts Hamas: Divisions in the Sunni Jihadist Movement and its Implications for US Policy,” **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, 32(7), (2009), p.587.

is not resolved and without Hamas' recognition of Israel and renouncing violence, given the strong Israeli-American alliance in the region and the strength of Israel-US ties, where Israel has become increasingly a domestic issue in US politics. Hamas is unlikely to take such steps now.

The EU included "the terrorist wing of Hamas" (the military wing) in its terror list in 2001 as a means of pressuring the movement to adopt a more moderate position.⁶¹⁵ Hamas, as part of its outreach strategy, sought to engage with the EU, which was not possible while the movement was on its terror list. One way to do so was to offer concessions by Hamas in line with the EU policy based on accepting a two-state solution, a move that also did not succeed in taking Hamas off the EU terror list, due to Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel. The EU, being part of the Quartet, went further by calling on Hamas to abandon violence, recognize Israel and commit to previous agreements signed between Israel and the PLO.⁶¹⁶ There have been several attempts to remove Hamas off the EU terror list the latest of which was in September 2019, all of which have failed to materialize, including a 2014 court ruling which was revoked in 2017.⁶¹⁷ Despite this, the EU has engaged in talks with Hamas indirectly over the years in an attempt to bridge the gap between the movement and the PLO on one hand and Hamas and Israel on the other hand.⁶¹⁸ Despite being part of the Quartet, Russia and China have adopted softer policies towards Hamas compared to the US, and they have been critical of Israeli policies, especially settlement construction, as part of Russia and China's competition with the US over global hegemony. China has put Hamas on its terror list in 2004 and removed the group off the list after it won the PLC election in 2006, which reveals that Hamas' electoral victory pushed some countries to deal with it as legitimate, but ties between the group and Beijing have not seen a significant engagement and improvement over the years. This has to do with China's growing ties with Israel in the fields of agriculture, water, Information Technology, shipment, and the military. China also has domestic

⁶¹⁵ Nathalie Tocci, "Firm in rhetoric, compromising in reality: The EU in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," *Ethnopolitics*, 8(3-4), (2009), p. 394.

⁶¹⁶ Tocci, p. 394.

⁶¹⁷ Ján Kapušňak, "Keep the PFLP on the EU Terror List," **Middle East Quarterly**, Summer 2019, 3, (2019), p. 2.

⁶¹⁸ Michelle Pace, "Paradoxes and contradictions in EU democracy promotion in the Mediterranean: the limits of EU normative power," **Democratization**, 16(1), (2009), p. 54.

concerns vis-à-vis its Muslim population and engaging with an Islamic group internationally would give legitimacy and a sense of recognition to those at home.

Members of the Arab League such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia have criticized Hamas following its violent takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007. They called on Palestinian factions, including Hamas, to halt all forms of internal fighting.⁶¹⁹ Hamas' engagement in civil war is no exception as the FLN and Hezbollah too engaged in civil wars. Hamas' engagement in civil war has caused its regional isolation the most compared to the FLN and Hezbollah. Most Arab countries, except for Qatar, Kuwait, Algeria, and Syria (up until 2011), have adopted an isolationist approach towards Hamas, while opening to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, due to its approach on taking arms.⁶²⁰ Yet, with the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011 and what it brought of regional changes and sectarian politics, some Arab states such as Egypt have adopted a more open policy towards Hamas. This came to an end in 2013, when Muhammad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was toppled down, adopting an ever-strict policy towards Hamas with Egyptian courts accusing Morsi of spying for Hamas, which was declared illegal in Egypt.⁶²¹ Despite these accusations, Hamas continues to have ties with Egypt, mostly through Egypt's Intelligence, which hosts meetings with its rival Fatah to end the Palestinian division as well as talks to keep calmness with Israel in Gaza. Despite these Egyptian efforts, the Egyptian state continues to view Hamas from security lenses, assigning the Palestinian profile to its intelligence apparatus, where the liberation discourse of Hamas hardly counts.

Although Saudi Arabia has not listed Hamas as a terrorist organization officially, it did so to its umbrella organization, the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013. Riyadh has adopted a stricter policy towards Hamas, which has strong relations with Iran, the shared enemy of both Saudi Arabia and Israel, arresting some of its members in 2018.⁶²² Saudi Arabia, following the appointment of Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS) as a crown prince in 2015, adopted a strict

⁶¹⁹ Samuel and C, p.847.

⁶²⁰ Ely Karmon, "Hamas in dire straits," **Perspectives on Terrorism**, 7(5), (2013), pp.125-126.

⁶²¹ Fazzur Rahman Siddiqui, "Changing Contours of Egypt's Foreign Policy in the Aftermath of Uprising," **Indian Council of World Affairs**, Issue Brief, (2016), p.7.

⁶²² Yoel Guzansky and Sigurd Neubauer, "Israel and Saudi Arabia: A Changing Region, a Possible Partnership," **The National Interest**, 24 July 2004, (29 January 2023).

policy towards Hamas driven by the Iran-Saudi competition, which saw Iran and its allies, including Hamas, and their intervention in the Gulf, including in Saudi Arabia, as acts of terrorism. This included banning donations to the movement collected by Palestinians and Jordanians residing in the Kingdom, the arrest of dozens of Palestinians and charging them with providing material support for a banned organization by a terrorism court in Riyadh.⁶²³ The remarkable change in the Saudi policy towards Hamas reflects the view of the Saudi government of the movement and its links to its umbrella organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, and its Iran links, as terrorist. The Saudi changing view of Hamas came after the Saudi war against the Houthis in Yemen in 2015. It also reflects a Saudi interest in establishing closer ties with Israel as part of a larger strategy to confront Iran in the region following the emergence of the new cold war in the Middle East following the Arab Spring, with Saudi Arabia and Iran being at the heart of it. Hezbollah too has suffered greater restrictions and isolation by the GCC due to regional politics and its Iran ties, which greatly impacted its terrorist designation.

The Saudi move of banning and designating the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization was preceded by a similar UAE move, yet without designating Hamas as a terrorist organization. In the pre-Arab Spring era, the UAE has rarely hosted Hamas leaders or engaged with Hamas officials.⁶²⁴ The UAE has always banned Hamas' activities on its soil, and the assassination of Mahmoud Al-Mabhouh, a Hamas leader in Dubai in 2010, allegedly by the Israeli Mossad, revealed that Hamas operates, though in secret, in the UAE, which made the UAE act with more caution towards the group.⁶²⁵ The UAE hosts Mohammad Dahlan, a well-known Palestinian leader and a former Fatah official, who had

⁶²³ Ali Younes, "Dozens of Palestinians face 'terrorism court' in Saudi Arabia," Aljazeera English, Qatar, 15 March 2020. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/dozens-palestinians-face-terrorism-court-saudi-arabia-200309162620286.html> (24 May 2022).

⁶²⁴ Kristin Smith Diwan, "The future of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Gulf," *The Washington Post*, 10 February 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/02/10/the-future-of-the-muslim-brotherhood-in-the-gulf/> (23 January 2023).

⁶²⁵ Noora Lori, "National security and the management of migrant labor: a case study of the United Arab Emirates," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 20(3-4), (2011), p.322.

been very critical of Hamas and was part of the Palestinian infighting, which led to Hamas' takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007.

Dahlan's presence in the UAE has without doubt impacted the way the UAE views Hamas as a terrorist group and this has only strengthened after the UAE signed the Abraham Accords to normalize ties with Israel. The UAE, along with its Gulf allies, have called on Qatar to expel Hamas' leadership from Doha, including Khaled Mishal, who has been in self-exile in Doha since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011, accusing Doha of providing material support for terrorism.⁶²⁶ The demand to expel Hamas leaders from Doha was at the heart of the diplomatic crisis that broke out in 2017 between Qatar on one hand and Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt. The Gulf diplomatic crisis came to an end in 2021 without kicking Hamas out of Qatar, which reduced pressure on the group in the region for the time being.

4.3.2. State-Actors' View of Hamas as A Liberation Movement

At the same time, other state-actors for historical, economic, cultural, political, and interest-driven reasons, have considered Hamas a legitimate group, including Türkiye, Iran, Algeria, Russia, and Malaysia. These countries have established political economic, diplomatic, and cultural ties with the group. In the case of Iran, Hamas' ties with the country translated into political isolation after the Arab Spring, and even in some cases, the group was designated as a terrorist group after the Saudi-led bloc felt threatened by Iran's expansion in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen. Hamas became part of the Iranian axis but following the outbreak of the Arab Spring, the group would exist Syria, a main ally of Iran and Hezbollah in the region.

After the anti-Iran axis forces in the Middle East faced more isolation and restrictions, Hamas felt more isolated coupled with the setback of political Islam following the Arab Spring especially in Egypt, Gaza's immediate neighbor. Hamas felt the toll of its political, economic, and military isolation in the Gaza Strip and as of today, the group is still isolated in the coastal

⁶²⁶ James M. Dorsey. "Gulf Proxy War: UAE Seeks to Further Damage Qatar's Already Tarnished Image," **The Huffington Post**, 29 September 2014, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/gulf-proxy-war-uae-seeks_b_5898246 (29 January 2023).

enclave.⁶²⁷ This isolation paved the way for some Arab officials and courts such as in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE to designate Hamas as a terrorist group too considering their anti-political Islam approach. The increasing normalization with Israel by Arab countries will contribute to the same end of viewing Hamas as a terrorist group in the long run by these Arab countries, except for countries such as Algeria (reads the FLN) for historical and anti-colonial reasons.

Iran has provided Hamas with extensive political and military aid publicly. Throughout the years, Iran with the help of Hezbollah in Lebanon, has provided Hamas in the Gaza Strip with arms and technology/know-how in line with an approach based on supporting some groups with Islamic ideology that is supportive of its regional policies. Hamas announced that they shared “identical view in the strategic outlook toward the Palestinian cause in its Islamic dimension.”⁶²⁸ Iran has reportedly trained hundreds of Hamas men who returned back to the Gaza Strip, which reveals the nature of the military collaboration and ties between the two parties.⁶²⁹ The relationship between Hamas and Iran has been negatively impacted by Hamas’ withdrawal from Syria, but Iran, unlike Syria, has continued to maintain a relationship with Hamas, although this relationship has gone through ups and downs.⁶³⁰ In a statement delivered by the military spokesperson of Hamas’ military wing Izzideen Al-Qassam following the Arab Spring, he saluted Iran for its support for Palestinian factions, on the top of them Hamas. The statement was seen as a thank-you letter to Iran following the cracks in the wall in the relationship between the two parties. This public love affair between Iran and Hamas, among other statements, have paved the way for some Arab countries to adopt a stricter policy towards Hamas, with some Arab governments, officials and courts calling Hamas a terror group after the Arab Spring, which saw unprecedented competition between the Iranian and Saudi blocs.

⁶²⁷ Aiko Nishikida, “Hamas and the Gaza war of 2014: developments since the Arab Spring in Palestine,” **Institute of Developing Economies**, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), 2018, No. 732, <https://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/Reports/Dp/732.html> (29 January 2023).

⁶²⁸ Brandenburg, pp. 171-74.

⁶²⁹ Yiftah S. Shapir, “Hamas’ Weapons,” **Strategic Assessment**, 11(4), (2009), pp. 53-7.

⁶³⁰ Erik Mohns and André Bank, “Syrian revolt fallout: End of the resistance axis,” **Middle East Policy**, 19(3), (2012), pp.25-27.

Along with Iran, Qatar has provided Hamas with political and financial support, which allowed the Gulf country to play the role of a broker between Hamas, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, to the dissatisfaction of both Saudi Arabia and Egypt.⁶³¹ Qatar has provided the Gaza Strip, which is run by Hamas, with hundreds of millions of dollars in aid, in an attempt to have influence over Hamas as part of the competition with its other Gulf neighbors, and to bring about calmness in the coastal enclave, with Israeli and US approval.⁶³² This has resulted in criticisms for Qatar by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE and Bahrain, accusing it of providing support for terrorism, an accusation Qatar has always refused, stressing that the role it plays in the Gaza Strip is part of its approach to have a more active diplomatic role in the region as part of its soft-power approach.⁶³³

Qatar, by having ties to Hamas, wanted to play a more proactive role in Palestinian politics in line with its approach of supporting establishing a Palestinian state, by playing the role of a mediator between Hamas and Fatah on one hand and Hamas and Israel on the other hand. In addition to historical reasons and connections of language and history, Qatar wants to apply its soft-power strategies by gaining popularity in the Arab world and Palestine by helping the Palestinians under siege, all done through Israeli approval, which also reduces the burden on Israel itself.

Israel's ongoing occupation of OPTs and its refusal to grant the Palestinians a state of their own is another factor that pushes Doha to play such a role. In addition, Qatar, as part of its ongoing competition with its Gulf neighbors, is using the Gaza card to expand its influence and limit that of other Gulf countries in the region, such as the UAE. As part of this competition, the UAE has also sent medical aid to Gaza during COVID19. Saudi Arabia did the same through the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). As for Türkiye, as part of

⁶³¹ Kenneth Katzman, "Qatar: Governance, security, and US policy," Congressional Research Service Washington United States, 2016, R44533, No. CRS-7-5700, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product-details?prodcode=R44533> (January 29 2023).

⁶³² Andrew Fenton Cooper, and Bessma Momani, "Qatar and expanded contours of small state diplomacy," *The International Spectator*, 46(3), (2011), pp.127-128.

⁶³³ Osman Antwi-Boateng, "The rise of Qatar as a soft power and the challenges," *European Scientific Journal*, 2, (2013), p. 30.

the new regional order forming after the Arab Spring, which also included Qatar, it wanted to play an active political role in Palestine for economic, political, and historic reasons.

Sudan had a stronger relationship with Hamas during the era of Omar Al-Bashir, the ousted president that included sending arms from Iran to Hamas through Sudanese ports, yet this relationship came to a halt following the take-over of power in Sudan by the Military Council. The Council had closer ties to Saudi Arabia and the UAE and normalized the country's ties with Israel in 2020 in an attempt to end its international isolation.⁶³⁴ Sudan has frozen Hamas' assets in September 2021, which reflects the impact of the Arab Spring on the movement and the growing ties between some Arab countries and Israel. Yemen, Lebanon, and Algeria allowed Hamas to open a representative office on their soil, which has been viewed as a symbolic move. Algeria's support for the Palestinians and Hamas has to do with its own history and the FLN's discourse of liberation from the French, which saw a brutal war breaking out in which the FLN took arms against France from 1954-1962. Tunisia, Morocco, Iraq and maintain cold ties to Hamas, the same as, and they refrain from having a public position on Hamas to avoid regional and global implications, especially in light of the tensions between the GCC and Iran, and these countries ties with the US.

As for other Arab countries, many did not allow Hamas to officially operate on their soil, including Jordan, and Iraq. Following the failed assassination attempt of Khaled Mishal in Jordan in 1997, "a political divorce"⁶³⁵ took place between Hamas and the Jordanian government, except for some symbolic and humanitarian visits made by Mishal and other Hamas officials to Jordan to take part in family funerals. A rare political visit by Mishal to Jordan took place following the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011 and other visits followed including in 2022. Jordan's policy on Hamas has to do with its Israel ties and its role in the anti-terror war by the US of which it is an integral part. Many Arab countries support the Arab Peace Initiative and therefore oppose Hamas' approach of taking arms. Due to Hamas' position on the Syrian crisis in 2011, its relationship with Hezbollah has deteriorated and thus

⁶³⁴ Asteris Huliaras, "Evangelists, oil companies, and terrorists: The Bush administration's policy towards Sudan," *Orbis*, 50(4), (2006), pp. 709-724.

⁶³⁵ P.R. Kumaraswamy, "The Jordan-Hamas Divorce," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, August/September 2001, Vol. 3, No. 8, (29 January 2023).

the relative flexibility it was given in Lebanon met new challenges that limited its ability to operate.⁶³⁶ The outbreak of the Syrian civil war and the implications it brought has shaped the relationship between Hamas and the rest of the Arab world in many ways. All in all, the terrorist view of Hamas by some Arab governments has increased, but at a lesser degree than Hezbollah following the Arab Spring.

4.4. The Arab Spring and the Cold War and Their Impact on The Designation of Hamas

The Cold War had the least impact on Hamas (compared to the FLN and Hezbollah) as the group has emerged towards the end of the Cold War. However, the Israel-US alliance and the emergence of the US as the only superpower after the end of the Cold War meant that the US would sanction Hamas and view it as a terrorist group. The emergence of new global powers such as Russia and China may change the equation in favor of Hamas, but change has proven to be limited so far in light of the strong ties these two countries have with Israel. On the other hand, due to sectarian politics between the Saudi Arabia and the Iran blocs, the Arab Spring had a significant impact on Hamas. The following sections touch on how the Cold War and the Arab Spring have impacted the designation of Hamas in light of theories of liberation and terrorism.

4.4.1. Hamas and the Cold War

One can't understand the way Israel, the United States, the European Union, and the League of Arab Nations view Hamas without understanding the complex international and regional politics that govern each party's view of the movement. It is no surprise that the United States listed Hamas on its terror list in 1997 given its strong and well-established alliance with Israel. Not only this, but attacks carried out by Hamas' members have led to the killing of some American citizens.⁶³⁷ Title 22 of the U.S. Code has defined terrorism as the use of violence against non-combatants to achieve political goals,⁶³⁸ which explains why the US views Hamas as such, in addition to Hamas' opposition to the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, brokered by the US. Hamas also meets the US criteria set out in its

⁶³⁶ Karmon, p. 111.

⁶³⁷ Levitt, "Could Hamas Target the West?", p.928.

⁶³⁸ Ruby, pp.9-14.

definition of international terrorism, which takes place outside the US.⁶³⁹ The US maintains strong political and economic ties with Israel to the extent Tel Aviv became part and parcel of internal US debates, including during heated electoral campaigns, where American politicians publicly express their support for Israel, thanks to the strength of the Israeli lobby in the US.

The US has adopted a harsher approach towards Hamas following the assassination of Ahmad Yassin and Abdilaziiz Alrantisi in 2004 and the subsequent attacks the movement carried against Israel in revenge, as the movement engaged in excessive use of violence.⁶⁴⁰ The impact of 9/11 on the US thinking towards Islamist movements in the Middle East can't be underestimated in the context of the US' view of Hamas as a terrorist organization.⁶⁴¹ The United States has taken effective measures that included the arrest of Muslim Americans and shutting down foundations accused of funding NGOs in Palestine run by people close to Hamas such as the Holy Land Foundation, where three out of five of its members are still in US custody.⁶⁴² Former US envoy to the Middle East, Dennis Ross, reflected on the complex nature of Hamas by noting that it's hard to judge Hamas that both believes in violence and at the same time has a political party that runs a wide network of charitable organizations, noting it was brought to power by election in 2006.⁶⁴³ The US' position towards Hamas and its terrorist classification rings a bell with the way the US views Hezbollah too. The US has adopted a softer approach towards the FLN, because it knew that the French there would hit a deadlock and because the Israeli factor was not present.

Although Hamas was not impacted by the politics of the Cold War up until the fall of the USSR, because it was established just before the USSR had fallen in 1991 (this date is used as the date for the fall of the USSR throughout the thesis), the emergence of the US as the only superpower in the world has played into Israel's benefit in the post-Cold War era, thus

⁶³⁹ Bruce, p.26.

⁶⁴⁰ Hroub, p.24.

⁶⁴¹ Mohammed Ayoob, "Political Islam: image and reality," **World Policy Journal**, 21(3), (2004), pp.1-2.

⁶⁴² Laura B. Rowe, "Ending Terrorism with Civil Remedies: Boim v. Holy Land Foundation and the Proper Framework of Liability," **Seventh Circuit Review**, 4(2), (2009), p.372.

⁶⁴³ Matthew Levitt, **Hamas: politics, charity, and terrorism in the service of jihad**, New York: Yale University Press, 2008, p. 6.

negatively impacting Hamas, which was designated by the US as a terrorist group in 1997. The US' classification of Hamas as a terrorist organization has further contributed to the isolation of the group. The US' view of Hamas as a terrorist organization has also contributed, although indirectly, to some US allies in the Middle East region designating the Muslim Brotherhood, the umbrella organization of Hamas, as a terrorist organization in 2016, following the outbreak of the Arab Spring, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE.

Some Arab officials in these countries have practically named Hamas a terrorist organization and criminalized dealings with it. Hamas' strong ties with Iran and Hezbollah, which were negatively impacted by its withdrawal from Syria but were later resumed, have also contributed to the isolation of Hamas and thus its terrorist perception in the post-Arab Spring era, which saw the emergence of a new cold war between the Saudi and the Iranian blocs.⁶⁴⁴ At the same time, Hamas' economic, political and cultural ties with countries such as China and Russia are not as strong as Israel's relations with the US, or even Russia and China. Not only this, but the US also provides Israel with \$3.8 billion in military aid a year (at least), thus making the task for Hamas to market itself in multi-polar world politics extremely hard.⁶⁴⁵ Compared to the FLN and Hezbollah, Hamas has been impacted the least during the Cold War. But the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of the US as the only superpower has complicated the issue of designating Hamas as a terrorist organization and contributed to putting it on the terror lists by the US and the EU.

The emergence of new regional and global powers such as China, Russia and Türkiye will give Hamas more room to maneuver especially considering that it maintains relatively good ties with these powers. Although Hamas might not be able to have strong ties with Russia and China, the same as the FLN did with the Soviet Union and China, Hamas could make use of its ties with Türkiye, Russia, and China, to create more favorable conditions globally. At the same time, the more Israel normalizes its ties in the region, the more the conditions will not be in favor of the group and its terrorist view by some state actors.

⁶⁴⁴ Ali, p.73.

⁶⁴⁵ Murad Ali, "Aid and Human Rights: The Case of US aid to Israel," **Policy Perspectives**, 15(3), (2018), p.75.

The Cold War era competition between the USSR and the US created some balance in global politics which disappeared after the fall of the USSR. The US and its allies' adoption of a strategy of containment of what they saw as rouge states impacted Hamas' main supporter, Iran, and by extension included non-state actors too. In the case of Israel, the policy of containment seems to have been transferred to dealing with non-state actors as well, including Hamas and Hezbollah. When it comes to Hamas, Israel has applied two approaches of containment against the group: limited and comprehensive containment. In the first, Israel looked at the security challenges posed by Hamas and tried to contain and mitigate them. In the second approach, Israel aimed at turning security threats posed by Hamas into political achievements by placing the group under siege in the Gaza Strip in order to push it to provide concessions. This policy of containment goes back to the Cold War era, where the carrot and the stick tactic, diplomacy, sanctions, and limited interventions were employed by the US against the USSR. A similar strategy has been applied by Israel in Southern Lebanon through its withdrawal to deprive Hezbollah of any excuse to carry out cross-border attacks against Tel Aviv.⁶⁴⁶

The European Union has adopted a more flexible policy towards Hamas than the US, but without taking its military wing off its terrorism list. In fact, this proximity with the Palestinians including Hamas has to do with the EU's criticism of Israel rather than its acceptance of the movement in its current form. The EU is part of the Quartet after all, but most of its member states have adopted a softer policy towards Hamas (compared to the US) that aims to contain the movement and make it part of the Palestinian political process which has failed so far.⁶⁴⁷ The EU listed Hamas on its terror list in 2001 and all attempts made by Hamas to remove itself off the EU terror list has failed, including in 2014, 2017 and 2019, when the European Supreme Court decided to keep Hamas on the list.⁶⁴⁸ Hamas' acceptance of a two-state solution without recognizing Israel and the subsequent issuance of its 2017

⁶⁴⁶ Amnon Aran, pp. 9-11.

⁶⁴⁷ Clara Marina O'Donnell, "The EU, Israel and Hamas," **Centre for European Reform Working Paper**, (2008), p. 11.

⁶⁴⁸ Ardi Imseis, "Council v Hamas, Judgement of the Court," Grand Chamber: European Union, July 26, 2017, **The Palestine Yearbook of International Law Online**, 20(1), pp.489-503, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?num=C-79/15&language=EN> (29 January 2023).

document of general principles, all aimed at winning western recognition, mostly from the EU. In reality, this did not happen, despite statements made by the EU that is critical of Israel's policy in the OPT.⁶⁴⁹ The EU refusal of violence, its commitment to support Israel due to the Holocaust, its political and economic ties with Israel and the US, in addition to its refusal of violence, all contributed to viewing Hamas as terrorist. Hezbollah has suffered less than Hamas due to the EU view of its military wing as a terrorist group in 2013, and this EU view, which is drastically different from that of Israel and the US, allowed the group to have political ties with the EU.

4.4.2. Hamas and The Arab Spring

After the Arab Spring, more state-actors, especially in the anti-Iran bloc, started viewing Hamas as a terrorist organization due to its Iran ties. For instance, countries such as Egypt, the UAE and Saudi Arabia would refer to Hamas as a terrorist organization which was unlikely before the Arab Spring. The designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization has contributed to the same end of isolating Hamas in the post-Arab Spring era. At the same time, Hamas being part of specific blocs and orders in the region meant that other state-actors such as Iran, Türkiye, Qatar, Algeria, and Tunisia would treat it as a liberation group. The following section looks into how the Arab Spring has impacted the designation of Hamas.

The massive political changes the Arab world has gone through since the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011, which resulted in the rise of sectarian politics between Iran and its Arab neighbors, which Hamas was at its heart, have shaped the view of Hamas by different state actors in the Middle East.⁶⁵⁰ For the first time ever, courts in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain have publicly called Hamas an illegal terrorist organization, criminalizing any group or individuals dealing with it.⁶⁵¹ The political change in Egypt, which brought about the rise of Hamas' umbrella organization, the Muslim Brotherhood to power in 2012, meant that

⁶⁴⁹ Khaled Hroub, "A "New Hamas" through Its New Documents," **Journal of Palestine Studies**, 35(4), (2006), p. 8.

⁶⁵⁰ James Phillips, "The Arab Spring descends into Islamist winter: implications for US policy," 20 December 2012, **The Heritage Foundation**, <https://www.heritage.org/report/the-arab-spring-descends-islamist-winter-implications-us-policy> (January 29, 2023).

⁶⁵¹ Karmon, p. 111.

Hamas would further distance itself from its traditional allies, Iran and Syria. This came at a price where its new allies, Qatar, Türkiye, and the Muslim Brotherhood, only delivered financial and humanitarian aid to the group, unlike Iran which delivered military aid to it to fight Israel with the help of Hezbollah.⁶⁵² Sectarian politics in the Middle East and the tensions between the Iran and the Saudi-led blocs translated into a more negative designation of both Hamas and Hezbollah in the region.

The efforts led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE to put an end to political Islam in the Middle East region and the strong relationship Hamas maintains with Iran and its proxies, the traditional rival of the Saudi-led axis in the region, meant that regional politics would leave their toll on Hamas. Israel and most Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, had a shared enemy: Iran and political Islam, which meant that Hamas would be further isolated by Egypt, following toppling down Hamas' ally there, Mohammad Morsi in 2013.⁶⁵³ The UAE has further tightened its grip on Hamas' neck by stopping donations given to the movement through businesspeople and NGOs as did Saudi Arabia. In 2015, the UAE passed a law that listed 83 organizations, including NGOs that give aid to the Gaza Strip, as terrorist organizations.⁶⁵⁴

The Iranian factor was not the only one that shaped Hamas' relationship and perception by Arab governments; the 2017 diplomatic crisis in the Gulf, where dismissing Hamas leaders from Doha was one of the demands presented by Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt to end their boycott of Qatar, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism, only made the political landscape more challenging for Hamas.⁶⁵⁵ The movement has been headquartered in Doha since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011 and it could be argued that Qatar, a major financial supporter of the movement, and the UAE, through its hosting of the influential former Fatah leader Mohammad Dahlan, started to have influence over Palestinian politics. Regional politics have also influenced Hamas' relationship with Egypt, as the former

⁶⁵² Karmon, p. 112.

⁶⁵³ Azzurra Meringolo, "From Morsi to Al-Sisi: Foreign Policy at the Service of Domestic Policy," **Insight Egypt**, (8), (2015), p. 6.

⁶⁵⁴ Gerald M. Steinberg and Joshua Bacon, "NGO Links to Middle East Terror," **Middle East Quarterly**, 4 June 2017, <https://www.meforum.org/6728/ngo-links-to-middle-east-terror> (24 May 2022).

⁶⁵⁵ Al Madani, "Qatar Crisis and its Impact on the Palestinian Cause," pp. 58-60.

Egyptian president Mohammad Morsi was accused of espionage for Qatar and Hamas, even though Egypt maintained a contact line with Hamas through its intelligence services.⁶⁵⁶ In light of this reality, Hamas found itself at a crossroads where it had to make tough decisions, hence its 2017 document. The crisis came to an end in 2021 without Hamas leaving Doha, easing the mounting pressure on the group in the region in the post-Arab Spring era.

4.4.3. The Impact of Designation on Hamas

Hamas' refusal to accept the conditions of the Quartet placed its Gaza-based government under a tight siege starting from 2006. Over the years, Hamas has tried different tactics to engage with the international community and get out of this isolation such as offering to 'respect' agreements signed between Israel and the PLO, which the international community did not buy into.⁶⁵⁷ The movement exerted more efforts to assert its liberation discourse, by accepting non-violence as a means next to armed resistance to resolve the conflict and to establish a Palestinian state.⁶⁵⁸ It has accepted two-state solution without recognizing Israel.⁶⁵⁹ In 2017, and in an attempt to outline its new vision, the group issued a new political document,⁶⁶⁰ which stressed its liberation nature and discourse, highlighting liberation as its ultimate objective, and describing itself as an Islamic national liberation and resistance movement which aims to "liberate Palestine and face the Zionist project" by using all possible means, including arms.⁶⁶¹

Despite the movement's readiness to accept a two-state solution, its commitment to violence remained strong, stressing that it "rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the River to the Sea."⁶⁶² The movement's commitment to "the full

⁶⁵⁶ E. Dickstein, "A New Role for Egypt: Sisi's Government and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," **Harvard International Review**, 36(2), (2014), p.10.

⁶⁵⁷ Martin Beck, "Hamas, Israel and the July Gaza War 2014: War as the result of a policy of consecutive provocations," News Analysis of SDU's Resource Center on Middle East Studies, 14 July 2014, https://findresearcher.sdu.dk/ws/files/162541138/Beck_ResourceCenter_GazaWar2014_1_.pdf (29 January 2023).

⁶⁵⁸ Ibrahim Natil, "Hamas: Between militarism and governance" in Marwan Darweish and Carol Rank **Peacebuilding and reconciliation contemporary themes and challenges (Eds.)**, London: CESRAN International, (2012), pp.168.

⁶⁵⁹ Baudouin Long, "The Hamas agenda: how has it changed?" **Middle East Policy**, 17(4), 2010, p.131.

⁶⁶⁰ Adwan, p.18.

⁶⁶¹ Hroub, "A Newer Hamas? The Revised Charter," p.101.

⁶⁶² **Hamas**, "A Document of General Principles and Policies."

liberation of Palestine,”⁶⁶³ is best explained by Cabral, who advocated the importance for non-state actors in the context of foreign occupation to be aware of the goals they want to achieve. For Hamas, establishing an Islamic State in Palestine, following the destruction of Israel, is the end goal of the group. By applying Cabral’s deliberations to theory, the researcher concludes that Hamas has a sense of shared consensus, goals, vision, and identity.⁶⁶⁴

Hamas’ participation in and winning of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections in 2006 put the movement on the track of a new era in which it had to combine violence with governance, which is dubbed by the movement’s well-known saying “A hand that builds and another that resists.”⁶⁶⁵ This strategy did not go well with international and regional powers that sought from Hamas’ participation in the Palestinian election to curb the movement and make it commit to peace rather than arms.⁶⁶⁶ This strategy of combining arms with governance has faced many challenges as Hamas found itself under mounting pressures to give up violence and so did the efforts made to tame the movement by placing it under a tight siege in the Gaza Strip. After 16 years of siege, the movement still refuses to recognize Israel and commit to non-violence alone.

At the same time, the movement could not materialize its strategy of being recognized or removed off the terror lists of the US and the EU, nor was it able to combine governance with resistance the way it envisioned.⁶⁶⁷ In fact, the Palestinian civil war of 2007, in which Hamas took part, contributed to its international isolation and made it possible for more Arab countries to view Hamas as a terrorist group after the Arab Spring. The role of regional and international forces, too, in this Palestinian civil war should be kept in consideration. Hamas, just like the FLN and Hezbollah, has engaged in civil war, and the role of colonial role in this process should not be overlooked.

⁶⁶³ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amílcar Cabral**, p. 121.

⁶⁶⁴ José Lingna Nafafé, “Flora Gomes’s Postcolonial Engagement and Redefinition of Amílcar Cabral’s Politics of National Culture in Nha Fala,” **Hispanic Research Journal**, 14(1), (2013), p. 34.

⁶⁶⁵ Somdeep Sen, “Bringing back the Palestinian state: Hamas between government and resistance,” **Middle East Critique**, 24(2), (2015), p.217.

⁶⁶⁶ Herzog, p.83.

⁶⁶⁷ Natil, p.180.

Today, Hamas is still struggling to end its isolation in the Gaza Strip.⁶⁶⁸ The group has faced many challenges, as a result, to promote its approach based on pairing between ‘resistance’ and ‘government,’ by advocating itself as a liberation group. As a result of this siege, the economic and political situation of Palestinians in the coastal enclave had deteriorated over the years and poverty rates reached unprecedented levels. Additionally, Israel launched five major military operations in the Gaza Strip, claiming the lives of thousands of Palestinians and dozens of Israelis.⁶⁶⁹ The Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007 and ousting Fatah, which most of the world deals with as the legitimate Palestinian government, has contributed to isolating Hamas and dealing with it as illegitimate.

All these events and developments have paved the way to listing Hamas as terrorist by some Arab countries, which would be unimaginable prior to 2011. Finally, regional politics and Hamas’ siding with Iran and being under the umbrella of the Muslim Brotherhood, have contributed to the same negative perception of Hamas by some Arab governments such as Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE.⁶⁷⁰ At the same time, countries such as Türkiye, Algeria, Qatar, Morocco, Lebanon, Malaysia and Russia continue to have ties with Hamas, which unlike Hezbollah and the FLN, has benefited less from balancing alliances in the region and the world due to the end of the Cold War and the rise of sectarian politics. The major factor that pushes the above-mentioned countries to view Hamas as a legitimate liberation group and political actor is ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Conclusion

Hamas has emerged under Israel’s military occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Understanding the circumstances surrounding its creation helps explain how the group is viewed by itself or by non-state actors. Hamas’ complex nature is equally crucial to this understanding as it believes in taking arms, but at the same time, runs a network of NGOs that provide educational, health, and social services to the Palestinians. Israel, at some point,

⁶⁶⁸ Nicolas Pelham, “Gaza’s tunnel phenomenon: the unintended dynamics of Israel’s siege,” **Journal of Palestine Studies**, 41(4), (2012), p.15.

⁶⁶⁹ Daphna Canetti, Julia Elad-Strenger, et. al., “Exposure to violence, ethos of conflict, and support for compromise: Surveys in Israel, East Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza,” **Journal of conflict resolution**, 61(1), (2017), p. 90.

⁶⁷⁰ Karmon, p.113.

facilitated the establishment of unions and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) hoping that they might reduce the growing influence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Chapter Four of the thesis examines Hamas' designation as a terrorist organization or a liberation movement as seen by different state-actors by applying a theory-oriented approach which includes Revolutionary Terrorism, the National Liberation Theory and Just War Theory.

Looking at the theories of terrorism and war, they apply to Hamas in the context of Israel's military occupation of Palestine. The Just War Theory, when applied to Hamas, especially its last resort principle, explains how Hamas moved from non-violence to violence with the outbreak of the First Palestinian Intifada in 1987, after all international efforts to reach a peaceful settlement to the question of Palestine have failed. Hamas was also elected as a legitimate authority to lead the Palestinians, as the principles of *jus ad bellum* calls for, but it has taken power in Gaza by the force of arms in 2007.⁶⁷¹ At the same time, calling for self-liberation of the Palestinians meets the conditions of Just War, *jus ad bellum*, that urges for the need to have a just cause and a right intention to wage this war. The proportionality of success and balancing between the evils of waging a war and the outcomes of this war against Israel by Hamas are minimal, considering Hamas' military capabilities and isolation in the Gaza Strip and Israel's military might. So, Hamas' repeated military confrontations with Israel in Gaza violate the principle of proportionality and success of the Just War Theory.

At the same time, Israel has repeatedly violated the principles of Just War, by making no distinction between Palestinian civilians and combatants during its repeated attacks on Gaza and the West Bank. Thousands of Palestinian civilians have lost their lives in violation of the just war, namely *Jus in bello*'s principles of distinction and proportionality. In these attacks, Israel targeted civilian in Palestine.⁶⁷² The Just War Theory stresses people's right to self-determination which gives Hamas the moral justification in this debate. Hamas' use of violence was a last resort after Israel crushed the First Palestinian Intifada in 1987 during

⁶⁷¹ David Kretzmer, "The inherent right to self-defence and proportionality in *jus ad bellum*," **European Journal of International Law**, 24(1), (2013), p.261.

⁶⁷² Jerome Slater, "Just War Moral Philosophy and the 2008–09 Israeli Campaign in Gaza," **International Security**, 37(2), 2012, p. 49.

which Hamas played a major role in mobilizing the Palestinian masses against Israel through mass popular protests. However, Hamas' lack of commitment to not target civilians deprives it of this benefit.

Hamas is a terrorist group in the eyes of Israel, the EU, the US, Japan, Britain, and Australia. In the eyes of Türkiye, Malaysia, Qatar, Algeria, Lebanon, Oman and Kuwait, it is a legitimate political group. Looking at Hamas' internal documents reveals too that the group perceives itself as a Palestinian national liberation movement that wages a liberation war against Israel and uses Islam as its source of inspiration. When Hamas was created in 1987, it published its Charter in 1988 outlining its vision and relationship with Israel. This Charter had a more religious discourse and approach than a nationalistic one compared to Hamas' 2017 Document of General Principles. It also reflects the interest of Hamas of being removed off the terror lists of the EU and the US, unlike the FLN and Hezbollah, two groups that exerted less efforts to be removed off international terror lists due to regional and global politics, which played into their benefit, unlike Hamas.

At the same time, a number of state-actors consider Hamas a legitimate political group such as Türkiye, Qatar, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Iran and Russia. The reasons why these state-actors view Hamas differently has to do with political and economic interests, historical factors, Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestine, the larger competition between Russia and the US, and sectarian politics in the Middle East. In the case of Iran, it views Hamas as a legitimate group for political and sectarian politics where the group is considered part of the Iran-axis in the region. The ongoing competition between Iran and Israel in the region has contributed to the same end. In the case of Qatar and Türkiye, Hamas' subscription to the Türkiye-Qatar axis after the Arab Spring (up until 2016), historical reasons such as the case of Türkiye and Palestine, the two countries' desire to play a broader regional role and the competition with other regional powers have all contributed to these countries' view of Hamas as legitimate.

The Cold War did not impact Hamas initially in the same manner it impacted both Hezbollah and the FLN, as Hamas has emerged towards its end. However, Israel's alliance with the

United States, which emerged as the only superpower in the world, greatly contributed to isolating the group regionally and globally, considering the US' influence on many state-actors. Most Arab countries maintain a careful approach when it comes to dealing with Hamas to avoid regional and global ramifications especially that the EU too followed the US' suit and listed Hamas as a terrorist group in 2001. At the same time, it is important to note that the EU still engages with Hamas through indirect channels in an attempt to push Hamas to change its discourse and meet the conditions of the Middle East Quartet. Considering Israel's ties with the US and the EU and the increasing ties with China and Russia (the latter is part of the Quartet), Hamas is likely to remain under regional and global isolation in the short run.

The Arab Spring was the straw that broke the camel's back in relation to how Hamas is viewed in some Arab countries as a terrorist group. The alliance Hamas had with Syria, and still has with Iran and Hezbollah, which provide the group with military, financial, political support, and know-how, have placed Hamas in a difficult position after the outbreak of a cold war between the Saudi-led bloc and the Irani-led bloc in 2011 and the emergence of a new regional order in the Middle East. Hamas' affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, which was rendered almost banned in the region, has contributed to the group's isolation and in some cases terrorist designation by some Arab countries. This terrorist designation and political isolation of Hamas became a reality after Sudan, Bahrain, the UAE, and Morocco signed the Abraham Accords to normalize ties with Israel, which views Hamas as a terrorist group. This explains why some Arab officials and courts in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt described Hamas as terrorist in the post-Arab Spring era.

CHAPTER 5: REFLECTIONS ON LIBERATION, TERRORISM: FLN, HEZBOLLAH AND HAMAS

One reason why some state-actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations is their commitment to violence. Friedlander noted that “national liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people...is always a violent phenomenon.”⁶⁷³ The question is whether violence used by groups as a political weapon is permissible or not.⁶⁷⁴ In the context of settler-colonialism, violence by both state-actors and non-state actors is arguably more present as the notion of settler-colonialism is built on the negation of the native people and their basic rights, and violence is used excessively to apply this; this is the case for the FLN, Hezbollah (to a lesser extent) and Hamas, where the use of violence has been a dominant feature of the confrontations between state and non-state actors.⁶⁷⁵ French and Israeli state violence resulted in more violence, and the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas seemed stuck in a cycle of violence and counter violence.

Some self-perceived liberation groups such as the FLN find it less problematic to use the term revolutionary terrorism to describe their actions. For the FLN, revolutionary terrorism is a common term in the available literature to describe their own actions against the colonial French authorities and Cold War politics and the accompanying global solidarity with colonized peoples, have made using the term revolutionary terrorism more acceptable and less negative. Among the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, the FLN seems more willing to accept the fact that it adopted terrorist tactics to liberate Algeria out of necessity.⁶⁷⁶ In the words of an FLN leader, “urban terrorism like guerrilla warfare is the only method of expression of a crushed people.”⁶⁷⁷ All the more reason why addressing state-actors’ perceptions of the differences and discrepancies between liberation and terrorism is necessary.

⁶⁷³ Frantz Fanon, **The wretched of the earth**, New York: Grove Press, (1963), p. 57.

⁶⁷⁴ Friedlander, p.281.

⁶⁷⁵ J.M. Bacon, “Settler colonialism as eco-social structure and the production of colonial ecological violence,” **Environmental Sociology**, 5(1), (2019), pp. 59-60.

⁶⁷⁶ Mosbacher, p.21.

⁶⁷⁷ Hutchinson, “The conceot of Revolutionary terrorism,” p. 387.

Alignment with the US or the USSR or the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War created a network of support to non-state actors, but with the fall of the USSR and emergence of the US as the only superpower in a polar world, the concept of terrorism has become more negative. Hezbollah and Hamas have viewed themselves as liberation groups and have not referred to their actions as terrorism except in very rare cases,⁶⁷⁸ while Israel, the US, the EU view Hezbollah, and Hamas actions as terrorist acts. History, national interests, economic ties, and regional and international politics, especially the fall of the USSR and the Arab Spring, and the negativity surrounding terrorism in more recent years, all contribute to designating their acts in this way. However, this was not the case for the FLN in relation to France's colonial rule in Algeria. Hamas has been affected the most by its terrorist designation and has made extensive efforts to remove itself off the terror lists of the EU and the US, unlike Hezbollah which the EU and some countries treat its political wing as a legitimate force while still condemning its military wing.

While engaging in revolutionary terrorism, non-state actors use guerrilla warfare as a tactic as the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have done. The FLN used many guerrilla warfare tactics such as shootings, kidnappings and planting bombs near public transportation and spaces to spread fear. Hezbollah has engaged in an intensified campaign of guerrilla warfare against Israeli forces pushing Israel out of Lebanon in 2000. This Hezbollah campaign included the use of car bombs, shootings, fighting from population centers (in violation of the principles of the just war theory), kidnappings, hit and run, and other tactics. This Hezbollah strategy of waging guerrilla warfare attacks have proven to be successful against Israel's conventional warfare which lacked the support of the local population, and which too saw indiscriminate use of force. Eventually, more casualties were reported on Israel's side pushing it to withdraw from Southern Lebanon in 2000, allowing Hezbollah to claim victory and to engage in Lebanese and regional politics more broadly.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁸ Bitton, p. 1029.

⁶⁷⁹ Lisa M. Brennen, "Hezbollah: psychological warfare against Israel," **Naval Postgraduate School, (MA Thesis)**: Monterey, CA, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA496916.pdf> (11 July 2021).

Most state-actors are likely to keep their perception of these non-state-actors as terrorist and the FLN, Hezbollah Hamas are likely to continue to perceive themselves as liberation groups. This is the nature of international politics based mostly on interests and the cost-benefit analysis of gains and losses in addition to ideology, history, and other factors. The FLN made use of the Cold War to gain more recognition and support by exploiting differences within the western bloc to its benefits. However, in the cases of Hezbollah and Hamas, the emergence of the US as the only superpower after the end of the Cold War has caused more harm than benefit to the two non-state actors vis-à-vis their terrorist designation. The politics of the Arab Spring has negatively impacted the FLN's government, Hezbollah, and Hamas. Hezbollah and Hamas have been negatively impacted the most by its outcomes, or the Saudi Iranian sectarian politics, which contributed to their further isolation and view as terrorist organizations in the region. The anti-government protests in Algeria have further impacted the legacy of the FLN as the party that liberated Algeria, creating further challenges to the Algerian government.

5.1. The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas Liberation and Just War

The theoretical debate on terrorism and liberation/war is not only mostly state-centric but also controversial. Terrorism and liberation have been the focus of academic discussions for decades now. Intra-state relations are complex and state and non-state actors formulate their views of each other based on their own histories, interests, ideologies, threat perceptions, shared values, individual motivations as well as regional and global politics. Liberation and terrorism, in the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, have different meanings depending on actors and their view considering the above-mentioned factors. State actors deem some non-state actors as terrorist when their interests are threatened, and they feel a loss of control. This chapter aims to reflect on how and why specific state-actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas by connecting the National Liberation Theory, the Just War Theory and Revolutionary Terrorism with the empirical part of the study and through using

a theory-oriented case-study comparative approach. Considering these theories, terrorism and liberation could be viewed as having neighborly ties sometimes.⁶⁸⁰

The theories of liberation have mostly emerged in the context of the Cold War between the western bloc led by the United States and the eastern bloc led by the USSR. The theories of liberation such the National Liberation Theory⁶⁸¹ and the Just War Theory provide a solid base for thinking about liberation/terrorism theoretically, including from the point of view of non-state actors, who are often deprived the agency and privilege of expressing themselves, rendering them to be defensive. Many aspects of global politics have changed since the 1960s and 1970s when the anti-colonial and pro-self-determination discourse gained momentum globally. Today, most countries have gained their independence from traditional, and settler-colonialism and the world's perception of revolutionary violence has changed drastically, making it less appealing, less acceptable, and more negative. Ironically enough, Michael Walzer, one of the main defenders of the Just War Theory, considers the Afghanistan war a just war. According to him, it was in self-defense of the interests of the United States,⁶⁸² an argument that poses a challenge to the Just War Theory itself, due to the injustices the war caused and the civilian losses it resulted in.

Of the theories of liberation this study detailed, the Just War Theory, advocated by Walzer, provides important theoretical grounds from the point of view of state-actors. Revolutionary Terrorism also explains the terrorism angle of the study, which is almost entirely state-centric. However, both theories do not provide a comprehensive picture of liberation and terrorism thought, for several reasons. Walzer discusses the importance of unarmed resistance in his 2005 foreword for *Just and Unjust Wars*, although his thoughts on non-violence are not part of the theory itself. Also, Walzer's notions on non-violence are limited to the cases of invasions, which does not apply to three non-state-actors of this study.⁶⁸³ More theoretical

⁶⁸⁰ Finlay, p. 3.

⁶⁸¹ Patrick Williams, Laura Chrisman, **Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory**, New York: Columbia University Press, (1993), pp. 63-65.

⁶⁸² **Michael Walzer**, "What Is Just War Theory," Youtube, 21 February 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f4XuOkMCSA> (28 January 2022).

⁶⁸³ Walzer, *Just and unjust wars*, p. 334.

expansion and elaborations are needed to include the agency of non-state actors. Finlay notes that this could be done through a theory of legitimate non-terrorist armed resistance as a third way debate.⁶⁸⁴ It should also include state-terrorism and what it entails as the liberation literature does not address whether state actor actions help determine whether a movement can be seen as terrorist or liberatory.

The Theory of Just War has also been prominent in providing an explanation to how state-actors view terrorism and liberation in the cases of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. The Just War Theory has roots in Christian Theology of the Middle Ages,⁶⁸⁵ and more recently in the writings of Kant, Walzer, and Buzan.⁶⁸⁶ It highlights how state actors are legitimate political players who have the right to wage war under certain conditions, including before, during and after the end of war. The Just War Theory calls for meeting specific conditions before waging a war such as having a legitimate authority to wage the war, making it a last resort, assuring that the probability of success and that its outcomes should outweigh its evils.⁶⁸⁷ These principles are known as *jus ad bellum*, or the conditions that lead to war. It also provides important principles such as protecting civilians during armed conflicts, through the principles of proportionality and discrimination, or the rules of conduct during war, *jus in bello*. It presents principles related to the treatment of civilians and combatants after the end of war, *jus post bellum*, which were introduced by Kant and others.⁶⁸⁸

Despite the important theoretical deliberations of the Just War Theory, it is still largely state-centric, overshadowing the role of non-state actors and their legitimacy. In this debate, where non-state actors are central, the Just War Theory does not seem to completely explain the role of groups like the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. The issue of having a legitimate authority to wage war is a matter of debate as non-state actors might not have a legitimate body to go into war sometimes, and that this war could also be waged by individuals in the context of foreign occupation. The Just War Theory highlights the importance of self-determination and

⁶⁸⁴ Finlay, p. 7.

⁶⁸⁵ Gutiérrez M. Gustavo, "Notes for a Theology of Liberation," **Theological Studies**, 31(2), (1970), p. 2.

⁶⁸⁶ Bellamy, pp. 604.

⁶⁸⁷ Kretzmer, pp. 237.

⁶⁸⁸ Bellamy, p. 4.

“the right of people to become free by their own efforts,”⁶⁸⁹ but at the same time, makes it illegitimate for non-state actors to fight from within civilian areas. In the case of Hamas in Gaza, for example, it is almost impossible not to fight from civilian areas considering the population density, which was created by the flood of refugees resulting from the creation of Israel and the mass displacement of the Palestinians in 1948. This is a situation Walzer’s theory does not address.

Placing Hamas under siege in Gaza, which is one of the oldest forms of warfare, violates the principles of Just War Theory, which considers siege to be one of “the oldest forms of total war.”⁶⁹⁰ Walzer highlights the right intention to go to war, which is also open to interpretation, which includes imposing siege, thus calling into question the morality of such an argument. In this context, the Just War Theory is not without criticism. The principles of the Just War Theory, if applied, treat the US Invasion of Afghanistan as a just war too, because from the US point of view, they were waged in self-defense and the Iraq war as a hardly regime change, which many disagree with.⁶⁹¹ Walzer wrote his book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, while on a fellowship in Israel and his treatment of the Six Days War of 1967 as a preventive war, Israel’s fear of destruction by its neighbors as “just fear,”⁶⁹² and that Israel’s first strike is a case of “legitimate anticipation”⁶⁹³ also might be worthwhile exploring whether this sheds doubts or raises questions about some of his theoretical contributions.

5.1.1. Revolutionary Terrorism

Of all theories of terrorism, in the context of this study, revolutionary terrorism is the best suitable and available theoretical bridge that includes both liberation and terrorism to explain the use of political violence by the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.⁶⁹⁴ The FLN, Hamas and Hezbollah have adopted terrorist tactics in their attacks which provided state-actors with the excuse to list them as terrorist. Although the FLN and Hamas exist(ed) in the context of settler colonialism, regional and global politics such as the Cold War and the Arab Spring

⁶⁸⁹ Walzer, *Just and unjust wars*, p. 88.

⁶⁹⁰ Walzer, *Just and unjust wars*, p. 160.

⁶⁹¹ Walzer, *Just and unjust wars*, pp. 129-134.

⁶⁹² Walzer, *Just and unjust wars*, p. 84.

⁶⁹³ Walzer, *Just and unjust wars*, p. 85.

⁶⁹⁴ Hutchinson, p. 383.

have shaped their perceptions as terrorist or liberation groups by state-actors. This is especially true in the case of Hezbollah, which was involved in sectarian politics after the Arab Spring by being part of the Iran bloc. Hezbollah has left a mixed legacy of fighting Israel, carrying out assassinations, and its involvement in the Lebanese and Syrian civil wars. Countries decide if a group is a terrorist or a liberation group based on factors such as protecting national interests, history, ideology, and threat perception, but one of the major differences that distinguish terrorism from liberation is the randomness of terrorism where no clear distinction has been made between combatants and non-combatants.⁶⁹⁵

There are attempts by scholars such as Finlay to provide an alternative theoretical reading of terrorism and liberation, since existing theoretical attempts are either outdated or state-actors or non-state actors centric and make states the principal actors of international politics. This highlights the need to develop a comprehensive theory of legitimate, armed, non-terrorist resistance that stresses the agency of non-state actors, the narrative of the Global South in the context of waging a liberation war as well as the agency and responsibility of both state and non-state actors before, during and after the end of war. What the terrorism-liberation debate needs today is a theory that explores legitimate resistance and that reconciles the fact that non-state actors in the context of foreign occupation use terrorist tactics too, especially in the context of settler-colonialism such as the case of the FLN and Hamas. Christopher J. Finlay, a scholar, raises this critical argument and explains that the first step to address the theory of war is “by offering a theory of legitimate, armed, non-terrorist resistance to oppression”⁶⁹⁶ as existing theories of war and terrorism do not provide a comprehensive answer to why and how non-state actors are considered terrorist or liberation groups and they are mostly state centric.

Therefore, there is a need to have a theory of legitimate resistance, as suggested by Finlay, where resistance to foreign occupation, which involves using terrorist tactics, is distinguished from terrorism. Such a theory could serve as a middle ground between the theories of war and terrorism. This theory of legitimate resistance should give agency to non-state and state

⁶⁹⁵ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 197.

⁶⁹⁶ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 197.

actors alike in the context of settler-colonialism and foreign occupation. It should make international law along with international relations its points of reference. In this theory of legitimate resistance, state and non-state actors should abide by the principles of proportionality and discrimination. Equally important, restrictions on states and non-state actors' ability to use violence should be applied to ensure more protection of civilians during armed conflicts. The post-war period should ensure, within this understanding, access to justice and fair trial for people accused of committing wrong doings during war.

Finlay suggests that there is a need to have a theory of legitimate resistance, to serve as a middle ground between the theories of war and terrorism. People under colonization should have the right to use all forms of resistance within the restrictions imposed on the conduct during war such as protecting civilians, and criteria are set to define what makes a civilian in the context of settler colonialism should be introduced too while recognizing people's right to self-determination in the context of foreign occupation. International law could certainly be a point of reference too, however, providing that all actors abide by the principles of proportionality and discrimination. Equally important, restrictions on states and non-state actors' ability to use violence could potentially be applied to ensure more protection of civilians during armed conflicts. The post-war period should ensure, within this understanding, access to justice and fair trial for people accused of committing wrong doings during war. People under colonization should have the right to use all forms of resistance within the restrictions imposed on the conduct during war such as protecting civilians, and criteria are set to define what makes a civilian in the context of settler colonialism should be introduced too while recognizing people's right to self-determination in the context of foreign occupation and where revolutionary terrorism could be used such as the cases for the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.

5.2. State-Centric View of Terrorism and Liberation

Most scholarly contributions to the available literature on the concepts/theories of war and terrorism are influenced by state interpretation of terrorism and liberation. This situation is a reflection of realpolitik and the general view of terrorism and liberation in the post-9/11 United States. This is not to say that the available literature on terrorism and liberation lacks a critical view of this state-centric view, but to argue that a considerable portion of the available literature adopts views in line with that of state-actors. Critical views of terrorism from the developing world (the Global South), who have been the main victim of settler-colonialism and military interventions, seem marginal. Not only this, but theories of liberation are mostly state centric, such as the Theory of Just War or non-state actors centric, such as the theory of National Liberation. Thus, there is a need for a third debate of a theory of non-terrorist resistance to oppression.⁶⁹⁷

The state- centric view that equates liberation with terrorism in the context of the FLN in Algeria, Hamas in Palestine, and Hezbollah in Lebanon, is unlikely to change anytime soon. Thus, regional, and global politics and other factors including but not limited to interests, histories, values, ideology, and individual elements shape this heated debate. Terrorism will likely continue to be viewed negatively, liberation will be equated to terrorism and vice versa, because violence and randomness motivate it, two principles that the West largely reject in certain contexts. In addition, whether non-state actors threaten the interests of state-actors or support them, this shapes how state-actors view them as terrorist or not. Violence by non-state actors is unlikely to be normalized and accepted anytime soon in the United States or Western Europe even in some cases of military occupation and national liberation struggles. Therefore, this perception will continue to pose a dilemma for the FLN, Hezbollah, Hamas and other non-state actors using violence to fight foreign occupation in the Global South.

State-actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist groups or liberation movements based on a number of factors including state-interests, economic and political ties, regional and global politics. Hamas is a terrorist group in the eyes of Israel, the EU, the US, and

⁶⁹⁷ Finlay, p. 7.

Britain. Israel sees in Hamas a threat to its existence as the group is committed to the destruction of Israel, refuses to recognize it, carried out hundreds of attacks against Tel Aviv which claimed the lives of thousands of Israelis, and maintains strong ties to Iran and Hezbollah, Israel's enemies in the region. As for the US, its strong ties to and support for Israel, to the extent Tel Aviv became part of the US domestic politics, Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel and its refusal of the US peace process brokered, Hamas' commitment to the destruction of Israel, and its attacks in Israel that killed Americans, all contributed to the US terrorist designation of Hamas in 1997.⁶⁹⁸

In the case of Germany and Britain, historical factors related to settler-colonialism, and the Holocaust, play a role in their view of Hamas as terrorist, which explains why the two countries took harsher stances on Hamas than the rest of the EU. Individual factors too play a role such as having pro-Israel politicians such as UK Home Secretary Priti Patel who listed Hamas as terrorist in 2021 influenced by her personal strong ties to Israel.⁶⁹⁹ The EU however has adopted a slightly different policy towards Hamas which was open to Hamas' political wing although indirectly, which also applies to Hezbollah's political wing, as part of the EU Good Neighborhood policy.

The impact of the Cold War and the Arab Spring on the three case studies is vivid. The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have clearly identified their discourse, presenting one based on liberation despite the view of concerned state-actors of them as liberation movements or terrorist organizations. In the case of the FLN, the group recognized the need to use urban terrorism as the only option for the Algerian people. In the case of Hezbollah, it did not describe its actions as terrorism, but rather legitimate liberation acts which were necessary to drive Israeli and foreign forces out of Lebanon. In the case of Hamas, it highlighted its liberation nature and Palestinian nationalism. The context in which Hamas exists under siege following winning the 2006 PLC elections, has pushed the group to adopt a more pragmatic discourse, without giving up its main principles.

⁶⁹⁸ Levitt, "Hamas from cradle to grave," pp. 3-15, Kindt, pp. 130.

⁶⁹⁹ El Masri, Mirna, and Brian J. Phillips, "Threat perception, policy diffusion, and the logic of terrorist group designation," **Studies in Conflict & Terrorism**, (2021), p. 11.

5.3. The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and The Cold War

The FLN was viewed as a legitimate political group by the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab League as both were supportive of non-state actors waging wars in the context of self-determination. In addition, these two blocs had economic, political, cultural, and social ties to the FLN and the Algerian people, which shaped their views of it. The western bloc, led by the US, was not very vocal about criticizing the actions of the FLN fearing that it might get closer to the USSR. US president John F. Kennedy, as a young senator, expressed support for the FLN and the US refused to provide France with the NATO cover during its war in Algeria.⁷⁰⁰ American officials have criticized the French approach in Algeria, which made the FLN reciprocally not adopt a harsh stance on the US, which feared that a French withdrawal from Algeria would be filled by the USSR.

According to FLN's internal documents, the group paid attention to strengthening its ties with China too as an emerging power at the time which was accepted to the UN system with the help of Russia, replacing Taiwan. The FLN expressed fear that France's potential diplomatic ties with China would push the latter to take a harsh stance against it, thus the need to establish irreversible ties with Beijing at the time.⁷⁰¹ Also, The US did not allow France to use the NATO cover in Algeria because American politicians knew that the French strategy in Algeria would eventually collapse.⁷⁰² At the same time, the US feared that a French withdrawal from Algeria would create a vacuum that might be filled by the USSR. The US understood well that pressuring the FLN too hard could further push it towards the USSR. The FLN's ties with the US, therefore, went through ups and down especially after the 1967 war. As seen in the FLN case here and with others, global and regional politics have played a role in how it is viewed by state-actors.

Hezbollah, on the other hand, was involved in the politics of the Cold War at Syrian and Iranian requests indirectly serving the interests of the USSR. Hezbollah targeted western forces in Lebanon in 1980s, including killing hundreds of American and French forces in line

⁷⁰⁰ Stephanson, p.11.

⁷⁰¹ "Annex #1 to "Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961."

⁷⁰² Wafa, p. 20.

with Iran and Syria's approach of limiting western influence in the region.⁷⁰³ It also kidnapped hundreds of Swiss, German, Italian and American nationals, torturing and killing some of them. This alone drew US attention early on to its regional role, and paved the way for its terrorist designation, in addition to Hezbollah's targeting the US' GCC allies and its commitment to the destruction of Israel. Aside from kidnaping Soviet diplomats in 1985, and its refusal of both US and USSR hegemony in its Open Letter in the same year,⁷⁰⁴ Hezbollah's actions during the Cold War, including attacking Israeli targets in France and Italy in 1986, still contributed to serving the interests of the USSR.

Thanks to this balance of power between the US and the USSR, the term terrorism has gone through different changes since its onset some 125 years ago in Russia. From being a positive term that meant the opposite of being a murderer, i.e., being a political activist, the term today has very negative connotations. In the 1950s and 1960s, which was the peak of the military actions of the FLN, the term still had its connection to revolution and anti-colonialism despite the rise of nation-states after the establishment of the UN. One way to explain this is the politics of the Cold War and the balance of power it created, which benefited liberation groups the most especially in the context of the FLN. The group seems to have learnt how to exploit these differences and balances to its benefit, unlike Hezbollah and Hamas, which emerged at times the term terrorism had increasingly gained negative connotations. "Terrorism...emerged as a strategy of revolutionary struggle only in the period after World War Two."⁷⁰⁵

The concept gained much of the negativity surrounding it after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, which resulted in unleashing the so-called religious terrorism, with which both Hezbollah and Hamas have later been associated. Suicide bombings were soon adopted as an effective tactic by Hezbollah in Lebanon and later by Hamas in Palestine,⁷⁰⁶ which largely contributed to their terrorist designation. Hezbollah's training of hundreds of Palestinians deported to Lebanon by Israel in 1992 was a major factor that promoted and empowered

⁷⁰³ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, p. 192.

⁷⁰⁴ ICT Staff, 1998.

⁷⁰⁵ Walzer, p. 198.

⁷⁰⁶ Hassan, "Hamas: A New Phase of Palestinian Resistance," p. 1317.

Hamas members to use suicide bombings against Israel, which contributed to the US and Israel's view of the two groups as terrorist in 1996 and 1997 respectively. The use of suicide bombings also contributed to pushing the EU in 2001 to list Hamas as a terrorist group.

Additionally, Cold War politics placed the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas within regional and international blocs, resulting in gains and pains to the three non-state-actors. This helped the FLN gain some legitimacy from state-actors and groups associated with the Non-Aligned Movement. France's designation of the FLN as a terrorist group (which did not happen immediately as France considered the insurgency of the FLN an issue of law and order at first) meant too little for the Front which enjoyed the support of the Non-Aligned Movement including Egypt, which supplied it with arms and training.⁷⁰⁷ The FLN was smarter than Hezbollah and Hamas in building regional and international alliances.⁷⁰⁸ Having to balance between the West, the USSR and later China, and enjoying the support of the Non-Aligned Movement, allowed the FLN to win international support and legitimacy, thus eventually forcing France out of Algeria. This was less the case for Hezbollah, officially founded in 1985 and which had strong ties to Iran from the very beginning of its emergence in the early 1982, placing it at the heart of sectarian politics with the outbreak of the Arab Spring.

The first few years of the establishment of Hezbollah saw the end of the Cold War and the start of the change of the world order and its impact on the Middle East. During the Cold War, Hezbollah was involved on the side of the USSR, although indirectly and at the request of Iran and Syria, despite the fact that the group had rejected both the US and the USSR in its Open Letter. Hezbollah had also kidnapped Soviet diplomats in Lebanon in 1985 as part of its hostage crises, which lasted for nearly 10 years from 1980-1990.⁷⁰⁹ Despite kidnapping Soviet diplomats at some point, Hezbollah's approach has always been focused on the West by targeting Western interests, embassies, diplomats, and nationals both inside and outside Lebanon in line with Iran's approach of limiting western influence in the region. Hezbollah targeting of western diplomats, forces and embassies contributed to it being listed as a

⁷⁰⁷ Ghetas, p. 20.

⁷⁰⁸ Cizel, p. 2.

⁷⁰⁹ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, pp. 210-211.

terrorist group by the EU and the US. However, the main reason these bodies and state-actors listed it as such was because of targeting Israel (in the case of the US), targeting Israel and Israeli targets in Europe (in the case of the EU) and its strong ties with Syria and Iran.

Hezbollah also targeted some GCC and western targets in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war between 1980-1988 as part of sectarian politics in the Middle East, including targeting Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on behalf of Iran.⁷¹⁰ The group's targeting of GCC countries sent an early warning to these countries vis-à-vis its ties with Iran and its involvement in sectarian politics in the Middle East, which explains why the GCC was the first body in the Arab world to list Hezbollah as a terrorist group following its involvement in the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring saw the outbreak of a cold war between Iran and Saudi Arabia, where according to the GCC, the group was accused of training GCC nationals to carry out attacks on behalf of Iran and Hezbollah and where Hezbollah was directly involved in Syria and Yemen, among other countries.⁷¹¹ Hezbollah's affiliation with Iran meant that Sunni Arab states would view the group with suspicion after the Arab Spring, which eventually translated into the GCC and Arab League designating it as a terrorist organization. This led to an official Arab boycott of Hezbollah, with some exceptions. Hezbollah and Hamas paid the price for their involvement in the Arab Spring and with Iran, although their specific involvement and the impact on the two groups differ.

Hamas, on the other hand, was less involved in the Cold War because it emerged towards the end of it. However, the emergence of the US as the only superpower meant that Hamas' isolation by the US and its allies, and its terrorist designation, would only increase. Israel's security containment of Hamas, a policy applied by the US against state-actors during the Cold War, was applied against Hamas, this time taking a more sophisticated form to push the group to offer political concessions. Hamas eventually made some changes to its discourse by issuing a new document in 2017 which accepted the two-state solution though it continues to refuse to recognize Israel, applied non-violent tactics along with violent ones and made a differentiation between Judaism and Zionism. The Hamas 2017 document meant to ease the

⁷¹⁰ Hänni, Riegler, and Gasztold, p. 194.

⁷¹¹ Levitt, 2016, "Hezbollah's Pivot toward the Gulf," pp.11-15.

pressure on Hamas and remove it off terror lists in the EU and the US and make it more acceptable regionally especially after the Arab Spring. The shift in designation, however, has not yet materialized.⁷¹²

It is worth mentioning that the EU and the US have adopted different approaches towards Hamas with the EU being more open to indirectly engage with Hamas. The US adopted a strict approach towards Hamas compared to the EU for two reasons. Although Hamas has not targeted the US, the US-Israel ties has only grown stronger over the years. There is a strategic partnership between Israel and the US, and this made the US largely adopt the Israeli narrative vis-à-vis Hamas. During Hamas' attacks against Israel, US nationals were killed, including Israeli nationals who held dual citizenships and happened to be in areas targeted by Hamas. Hamas has also been committed to the destruction of Israel similarly to Hezbollah refusing the peace talks brokered by the US with the Palestinians. Keeping the US' discourse on terror and the 9/11 attacks in mind, and most importantly the US' strategic relationship with Israel, the US will unlikely remove Hamas off its terror list anytime soon. Even if the US indirectly engages with Hamas through its Middle East allies, this will unlikely change the way the US views Hamas in the short term if Hamas continues to refuse the peace process and the two-state solution.

While the EU still classifies Hamas as a terrorist group, the EU was late to list Hamas as a terrorist group compared to Israel and the US. Despite this classification, the EU has repeatedly engaged indirectly with Hamas including meetings to resolve the internal Palestinian division or to maintain calmness in the Gaza Strip. This is true for both the US and the EU which indirectly engaged with Hamas following the May 2021 escalation in the coastal enclave by calling for reaching a ceasefire and reconstructing Gaza. The EU, too, is unlikely to get Hamas off its terror list but it is more likely to get engaged in talks with Hamas in the future than the US would. The EU, unlike the US, has repeatedly criticized Israel's policies in the occupied Palestinian territories, which paves the way for talks and engagements with Hamas to take place, especially keeping in mind Hamas' change of

⁷¹² Hamas, 2017.

discourse and its readiness to accept the two-state solution. The reason the EU still maintains diplomatic channels with Hamas is because of Israel's occupation of Palestine and its Good Neighborhood Policy. Another factor that contributed to the isolation of Hamas, and Hezbollah for this matter, was the outbreak of the Arab Spring and the re-formation of the regional order in the Middle East.

5.4. The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and The Arab Spring

Regional politics including the Arab Spring and the increasing number of countries normalizing ties with Israel meant that more Arab countries would view Hamas as a terrorist group in light of its ties with Iran and Hezbollah. The designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization in 2013 by Egypt, the UAE and Saudi Arabia and the ongoing Palestinian division has contributed to the isolation of Hamas and its terrorist designation. A similar situation applies to Hezbollah, which has completely sided with the Iran axis during the Arab Spring, providing support for groups working against the interests of the GCC such as the Houthis in Yemen.⁷¹³ In 2016, at the request of Saudi Arabia, the GCC listed Hezbollah as a terrorist group citing its intervention in the GCC affairs. The involvement of Hezbollah in the Iraq-Iran war by targeting Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, sent early warnings to the GCC about the sectarian nature of Hezbollah vis-à-vis its involvement in regional politics. The US cited that Hezbollah's attacks against Israel, its refusal of the US brokered peace process and its targeting of US forces and diplomats, are behind listing the group as terrorist.⁷¹⁴

The politics of the Arab Spring and more recently the normalization deals signed between Israel and four other Arab countries, known as the Abraham Accords, have impacted the legitimacy and discourse of Hamas and how some Arab governments view the group. Unlike Hezbollah, Hamas was safe, at least on paper, from being classified as a terrorist organization by most Arab countries. However, following the outbreak of the Arab Spring and Hamas' siding with Iran, and more recently the Arab normalization waves with Israel, there is a growing possibility that some Arab countries might classify Hamas as a terror group as they did with Hezbollah in 2016. Now, some Arab countries already deal with Hamas from

⁷¹³ Shaw, pp. 596-597.

⁷¹⁴ Kindt, pp. 123-144.

security lenses and the ground is fertile at least for some of these governments to designate Hamas as a terrorist organization. In fact, Saudi Arabia has publicly called Hamas a terrorist group, while courts in the UAE and Egypt used the same wording to refer to it after the Arab Spring over its Muslim Brotherhood, Iran and Hezbollah ties.

Iran's relations with Hamas and Hezbollah and the sectarian regional politics in the Middle East will likely continue to shape how countries in the region view the two groups. However, Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories and Hamas' lack of involvement in the internal affairs of Arab countries will likely mean that some state-actors in the region will continue to view Hamas as a legitimate political party too. Countries, such as the UAE, Egypt and Saudi Arabia will still view Hamas as part of the Iranian axis due to the public support the group receives from the Islamic Republic. Countries such as Türkiye, Malaysia, Algeria, and Qatar view Hamas as a legitimate political group due to historical, economic, religious, and political reasons. Qatar and Türkiye, as part of maximizing their influence in the Middle East, and as part of the ongoing regional competition with other regional blocs after the Arab Spring, and due to Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestine, have ties with Palestinian political factions including Hamas, and view it as a legitimate political party.

The involvement of the FLN in regional politics after the Arab Spring was very limited as the FLN had already become a state-actor (Algeria). Over accusations of mismanagement and lack of democracy, the Algerian government was faced by popular protests calling for reforms in 2019.⁷¹⁵ The FLN, however, because of its earlier establishment, was more involved in and influenced by the politics of the Cold War compared to Hezbollah and Hamas. By applying a strategy of balancing its relationships between and against global powers and due to its Non-Aligned Movement ties, the FLN was able to have multiple ties with China, the USSR, the US, Egypt, and Morocco (the Non-Aligned Movement) all at the same time. These ties reflect the political maturity of the FLN compared to Hamas and Hezbollah, where it eventually led Algerians to victory over France. Though France viewed the FLN as terrorist, the US, China, Egypt, Tunisia, and the USSR did not. This FLN

⁷¹⁵ Zeraoulia, pp.25-53.

relational strategy of balancing led to the role it played in the American hostages' crisis in Iran in 1981 and their eventual release,⁷¹⁶ as well as brokering an agreement between Iraq and Iran in 1975.⁷¹⁷ The FLN's ties with the US went through ups and downs, especially over the US support for Israel and its request from Spain to withdraw from Western Sahara.

The Arab Spring has greatly impacted Hamas. The siege on Gaza has further tightened and Hamas was increasingly suffocated in the Gaza Strip, a siege that contributed a great deal to the suffering of the Palestinians at large. Hamas' departure from Syria has impacted its relationship with Iran. This explains why the movement sent a number of thank-you letters to Iran to repair its damaged ties with Tehran, its main military supporter, after the Arab Spring and its departure from Syria. These thank-you letters succeeded in resuming the ties between the two parties, albeit at a smaller scale than they were before the Arab Spring. Hamas' relationship with other countries such as Qatar, Türkiye and Egypt created a dilemma for the movement in light of the nature of this relationship and the changing nature of politics in the Middle East. For Iran, the group is not clear enough where it stands, and this limits the possibility of further improving their ties. It appears that Hamas is satisfied with this equation in which it maintains political and military ties with different state-actors, some of which are adversaries, at the same time. But this Hamas approach will create challenges for the movement the same as it creates opportunities, the least of which is losing some of its popularity in the Arab world, as Hezbollah did.

5.5. The FLN, Hezbollah, Hamas' View of Terrorism and Liberation

The FLN Proclamation of Independence, called for launching a "true revolutionary struggle,"⁷¹⁸ by seeking help from Morocco and Tunisia, which were part of the Non-Aligned Movement. The FLN aimed at restoring Algeria and establishing a state based on the principles of Islam and promoting freedoms without discrimination. The public opinion was central to the Front, where the FLN said it would fight corruption and adopt reforms. It sought to internalize the Algerian question, achieve North African unity, and express solidarity with

⁷¹⁶ Wafa, p. 20.

⁷¹⁷ Burki, p. 8.

⁷¹⁸ **National Liberation Front**, "Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation," p.1.

all peoples who support its struggle, a strategy that was largely successful. The FLN initiated a dialogue with the French authorities to reduce bloodshed, free detainees, and make null and void all laws that made Algeria “French soil.”⁷¹⁹ The FLN offered to respect French interests, cultural and economic, allow French nationals to remain in Algeria if they wished to, and establish ties with France on the basis of equality, which France refused, as it saw the FLN’s revolution as an issue of law and order in light of France’s view of Algeria as French.⁷²⁰

Hezbollah views itself as the “sons of the Muslim (Ummah) Nation, the vanguard of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, that obeys the instruction of the leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran Khomeini,”⁷²¹ and called for bringing to account the Christian Phalanges for “crimes,” committed against the Lebanese and Palestinian people, as outlined in the Open Letter.⁷²² It made its goal to expel western forces out of Lebanon and establish an Islamic Republic, in line with its dedication to the teachings of the jurist of the Islamic evolution in Iran, a goal it abandoned in its 2009 manifesto.⁷²³ Hezbollah was very clear from the beginning that its ties with and inspiration from Iran are central to its discourse, as is its theology of liberation, stressing that it’s a Lebanese group with a liberation discourse that emerged during the Lebanese Civil War over differences with the other main Shite group, *Amal*, as to how to deal with the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon. Its focus on helping the downtrodden, the marginalized, and the oppressed, a word that is repeated 31 times, along with the word oppressors, in its 1985 letter,⁷²⁴ won it popularity in Lebanon through its provision of social services. It has expressed its refusal to both the hegemony of the US and the USSR and expressed its commitment to the destruction of Israel by using arms.⁷²⁵ The use of a discourse based on supporting the oppressed resonate with the discourse used by

⁷¹⁹ **National Liberation Front**,” Front de Liberation Nationale Proclamation,” p.1.

⁷²⁰ Loyal, p. 407, Ibid.

⁷²¹ ICT Staff, The Hizballah Program - An Open Letter.”

⁷²² ICT Staff, The Hizballah Program - An Open Letter.”

⁷²³ Alagha. p. 4.

⁷²⁴ Mauriello and Marandi, p. 51.

⁷²⁵ ICT Staff, The Hizballah Program - An Open Letter.”.

Hamas in its 1988 Charter and internal documents,⁷²⁶ as well as with the Philosophy of Liberation and the approach of José Simeón in supporting the oppressed.⁷²⁷

Looking at Hamas' internal documents reveals too that the group perceives itself as a Palestinian national liberation movement with an Islamic foundation that wages "a liberation war" against Israel and uses Islam as its source of inspiration. When Hamas was created in 1987, its 1988 Charter outlined its vision and relationship with Israel. This Charter had a more religious discourse and approach than a nationalistic one compared to Hamas' 2017 Document of General Principles. It reflected Hamas' lack of political maturity at the time of its inception, while over the decades it has shown to have relatively gained increasing political awareness. This is also reflected in Hamas' interest to be removed off the EU and US terror lists, whereas the FLN and Hezbollah are two groups that exerted less effort to be removed from international terror lists due to regional and global politics which played into their benefit.

The Hamas document of general principles in 2017 advocated a more moderate approach, accepted two-state solution without recognizing Israel and highlighted its liberation nature. In an attempt to evade the label of anti-Semitism, the movement highlighted the conflict in Palestine is not between Muslims and Jews but rather against Zionism and Israel as a political project. The group insisted on the need to keep its arms which goes in line with the interpretation of the National Liberation Theory and the contributions of Amilcar Cabral, who calls for taking arms against the occupying power, which also goes in line with the approaches of both Hezbollah in Lebanon against Israel and the FLN in Algeria against France. Along with armed resistance, Hamas has highlighted the importance of non-violent resistance, but all these efforts made no state actors change their view of Hamas. Countries that view Hamas as terrorist in the past continue to do so and their number has increased after the Arab Spring due to the involvement of the group in sectarian politics and the wave of normalization with Israel in the Middle East region.

⁷²⁶ Maqdsi, pp. 122-124.

⁷²⁷ Berti, pp. 29-31.

5.6. The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas: A Comparative Examination

The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas share four main characteristics: 1. Being viewed as terrorist or liberation groups by different state actors. 2. Taking arms as a strategy to end forms of colonialism and occupation. 3. Engaging in civil war. 4. Claiming legitimacy as liberation movements to govern and at the same time failing at government. The FLN was about to engage in a full-out civil war in Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) and later engaged in a civil war following losing the 1991 elections. As for Hezbollah, it emerged during the Lebanese civil war and one reason it was created was to fight other Lebanese factions such as the Lebanese Forces and the Israel-created South Lebanon Army (SLA). Hamas too engaged in a full-out civil war with its main rival, Fatah, after it was placed under siege in Gaza in 2006, eventually violently taking over the Gaza Strip and kicking Fatah out in 2007.

The three groups have advocated taking arms to end foreign domination. Hezbollah was able to drive Israeli and other foreign forces out of Lebanon by 2000. Hezbollah still keeps its arms today and improves its capabilities under the pretext of Israel's ongoing occupation of Lebanese territories, which the UN considers Syrian. Hamas too adopts a largely armed resistance strategy against Israel, and it continues to improve its military capabilities, with the help of Iran and Hezbollah, under the pretext of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, a connection that contributes to its negative perception after the Arab Spring. Hamas has recently accepted non-armed resistance; however, it has not given up the principle of armed resistance on which it was founded and is still central to the movement's thinking. As for the FLN, it has tried the path of dialogue with France, as outlined by the Just War Theory, but France's refusal to recognize the rights of Algerians made the FLN adopt taking arms as the only way to gain Algeria's independence as outlined by the Theory of National Liberation. Today, the Algerian army, which was formed by FLN fighters after independence, still plays a strong role in Algerian politics due to this historical legacy of taking arms against France. The FLN was saved the brunt of the Cold War due to its ties with the Non-Aligned Movement and balancing against global powers. The FLN ties with the

USSR meant at the same time it would import an economic model from the USSR which still have negative implications for Algeria as of today.

The FLN's initial approach was to get the French out of Algeria through dialogue, advocated by FLN leaders who believed talks could push France to leave Algeria, as Walzer suggests in making a war a last resort.⁷²⁸ Yet, after France refused to keep its promises to Algerians, by granting them the long-awaited independence after the end of the First World War and following the killing of nearly 45,000 Algerians who went to the streets to call for independence in 1945 at the hands of French forces,⁷²⁹ the FLN's approach toward violence shifted completely. In response to the French mass killings in May 1945, more FLN leaders made calls to adopt armed resistance as a strategy to end the French colonization of Algeria. There is no doubt that violence brings about more violence. The more France turned violent in Algeria, the more the FLN internalized this violence both against France as well as their own people who collaborated with France or held different views than the FLN. The FLN became convinced that the (only) way out to gain independence from France was by taking arms and facing the French settler-colonial state with violence and fire, bringing both international solidarity and condemnation to the FLN. This condemnation of the FLN's use of violence mattered less at the time due to the political context of the Cold War, which brought other negative economic implications for the group.⁷³⁰

Although the use of terrorist tactics came at a high human cost, the FLN's approach proved to be effective. In the same vein, Hamas had initially adopted a non-violent approach when it was first created in 1987, leading the protests of the Intifada. These non-violent strategies were confronted by Israeli state violence, including adopting a policy of crushing the bones of Palestinians, leading Hamas, like the FLN with France, to eventually shift toward violence, a principle it highlighted in its 1988 Charter.⁷³¹ Hezbollah, on the other hand, emerged during the Lebanese civil war, which meant that, although it had wings that provided services to

⁷²⁸ Lango, p.8.

⁷²⁹ Tablit, p. 50.

⁷³⁰ Byrne, p.431.

⁷³¹ Maqdsi, pp.122-123.

those marginalized and, in the words of the group “oppressed (mustad'afin)”⁷³² among the Shiites of Lebanon, it also committed to violence from an early stage. Iran’s state sponsorship of the group, which was further strengthened with the outbreak of sectarian conflicts in the Middle East, meant that Hezbollah’s commitment to violence came much earlier than that of the FLN and Hamas. This also explains why Hezbollah was impacted the most by the sectarian politics of the Arab Spring compared to Hamas and the FLN.

Hezbollah had a similar experience when Israeli forces were forced to withdraw from Lebanon in May 2000 after a guerrilla warfare campaign in which the group applied psychological terrorism tactics.⁷³³ In each case for the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, taking arms, although it brought the terrorist designation to the three non-state actors, have proven to be the path to claim victories, big and small. Hezbollah’s early years too, in which it focused on establishing charitable networks in the fields of healthcare and education, was initially peaceful. In fact, it was Hezbollah’s discourse that focused on siding with the oppressed and its charitable work, just like that of Hamas, that helped the group boost its popularity among the Shiites of Lebanon, who were viewed as a marginalized group politically, economically, and culturally. The provision of social services by the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have been largely applied and by other non-state actors as a strategy to gain popularity. Besides gaining popularity, they were addressing the basic needs of their people – and by doing so, this built a connection with the non-state actors’ political motivations as well. In the words of Sageman, “social bonds are the critical element in this process [of joining the jihad] and precede ideological commitment.”⁷³⁴

Another feature that characterizes the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, was the outbreak of civil wars. In the case of the FLN, the argument that what happened in Algeria between the French settlers and the Algerians was a civil war is simplistic and negates the historical fact that Algeria was subject to French settler-colonialism. This notion advocates a one-sided view of the French rule of Algeria, which some Algerian elites advocated too in the form of

⁷³² Alagha, p. 4.

⁷³³ Brennen, “Hezbollah: psychological warfare against Israel,” 2009.

⁷³⁴ Crenshaw, “Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy,” p. 15.

federalism or integration at some point. A civil war happens between the components of one nation. Agreeing with this argument means accepting French colonization of Algeria as legitimate and denying Algerians their agency and right to end it, in light of the principle of self-determination. It also presents an imbalanced view of the war in Algeria and Algerians' view of their struggle against France's long settler-colonial rule as a liberation war, which is critical to the debate on liberation and terrorism. The infighting however, among French settlers and the French army, which broke out after France declared its intention to withdraw from Algeria, could potentially be viewed as a civil war although some of these assassinations took place in Algeria.⁷³⁵

At the same time, Algerians themselves experienced civil war both during the Algerian War of Independence which ended in 1962 and after. This research highlights the symptoms of Algerian civil war pre-independence (by stressing the role of the French factor too) manifested in massacres and assassinations committed against different Algerian groups and those carried out by Algerians themselves over differences how to deal with France. This includes the FLN violence inflicted on Algerians working under the command of France known as *Hirakis*.⁷³⁶ These assassinations carried out by the FLN against Algerians who wanted integration with France were encouraged by France in line with its policy of divide and rule. Additionally, Algerians who fought alongside France have added insult to injury, where they and their families are still viewed as traitors as of today, creating more divisions within the Algerian society.

Hezbollah itself was part of the Lebanese civil war which broke out in 1975 partially due to the Palestinian militant presence in Lebanon (the PLO) and the sectarian politics that divided the country over which international and regional powers (namely France, the US, Iran, and Syria) had a strong influence. Hezbollah fought other Lebanese parties, mainly Christian groups such as the Lebanese Forces during the civil war, adopting a discourse of defending the rights of what it described as oppressed Shiites in Lebanon, as a strategy to expand and win more popularity. After the end of the Lebanese civil war, which was facilitated by Israel

⁷³⁵ Merom, p. 54.

⁷³⁶ Haroun, "Le 25 août 1958: Une date tombée dans l'oubli."

and other regional and international powers, Hezbollah decided to join politics in 1992 at the request of Iran and Syria in an attempt to win legitimacy in the post-civil-war-torn country in line with Iran's theology.⁷³⁷ The civil war in Lebanon had a significant impact on Hezbollah and its involvement in Lebanese politics with the group tightening its grip on power over the years with the help of Syria and Iran especially after 2005. Hezbollah has become a quasi-state in Lebanon, acquiring arms and increasing its military capabilities by using the Israeli control of the disputed Shiba farms as an excuse to build its military arsenal and debunk criticisms of its armament by different Lebanese and international actors.

The Palestinians, too, were not an exception to civil war. In addition to being involved in the Lebanese civil war between 1975-1989, Palestinians fought a civil war in Gaza in 2007. Following Hamas' electoral victory in 2006, it was placed under siege in the Gaza Strip by different state-actors such as Israel and Egypt, a form of warfare Walzer considers one of the oldest forms of warfare and aggression.⁷³⁸ With the gap between Hamas and Fatah, the two major Palestinian political parties in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, widening politically over Hamas' refusal to accept the Quartet conditions, specifically the recognition of Israel, accepting a two-state solution and previous agreements signed between the PLO and Israel,⁷³⁹ a civil war broke out in 2006-2007, which ended with Hamas' violent takeover of the Gaza Strip. International interventions adding fuel to the fire of civil war can't be overlooked, where Hamas and Fatah took arms and fought in the streets of Gaza, resulting in the killing of hundreds of Palestinians. Hamas' takeover of the Gaza Strip increased its regional isolation especially after the Arab Spring and paved the way for more state-actors, including Arab states, to view it increasingly as a terrorist group.

Hamas was founded as the first Palestinian Intifada broke out in 1987, where it led largely peaceful protests of the Intifada that were initially meant to protest the killings of four Palestinian laborers from Jabaliya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip by an Israeli truck driver. Israel's violent suppressing of the first Intifada, meant that the protests, and Hamas which

⁷³⁷ Harb, p. 219.

⁷³⁸ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p.160.

⁷³⁹ Hovdenak, p. 50.

evolved along with them, would eventually turn to violent tactics. Though Hamas started as a nonviolent group during the First Intifada, by the time they released their 1988 Charter a year later, they had started to call for the use of violence because of the repression by the Israeli state. It is also true to say that Hamas at that time did not have the means to engage in violence and its military structures were not yet mature and were still evolving as it had only called for the use of violence in its 1988 Charter.⁷⁴⁰ The same as France did with the FLN in Algeria, Hamas' violence in Palestine was faced with more Israeli violence that also included breaking the bones of the Palestinians and arresting and killing thousands of them throughout the years of the Intifada.

Hamas and Hezbollah have shown little tolerance towards dissent voices. In the case of Hamas, its crackdown on Palestinian dissent at some stages cannot be viewed in isolation from the crackdown of Israel on the Palestinians on one hand and the Palestinian Authority's crackdown against Hamas' members on the other hand, especially after the Oslo Accords. Hamas was placed under a tight 15-year siege in the Gaza Strip following its violent takeover of the coastal enclave in 2007,⁷⁴¹ in which the group used much violence against its political rivals too.

The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, have expressed mutual solidarity with each other in line with the Theory of National Liberation's deliberations.⁷⁴² While the FLN came into existence much earlier than Hezbollah and Hamas, its political extension and wings today continue to express solidarity with the Palestinian people, including with Hamas, whose officials made repeated visits to Algeria, for reasons related to the history of settler-colonialism.⁷⁴³ Algeria's position on the Palestinian cause including on Hamas is a reflection of a popular trend in the country and a historical position that calls for supporting the Palestinians, because Algerians feel that there is a connection between their experience under French settler-colonialism and the experience of the Palestinians under Israeli settler-colonialism. Palestinians too share this

⁷⁴⁰ Maqdsi, p. 119.

⁷⁴¹ Nishikida, p. 8.

⁷⁴² Telepneva, p.1261.

⁷⁴³ J. Kēhaulani Kauanui and Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism Then and Now. A Conversation between J. Kēhaulani Kauanui and Patrick Wolfe," **Politica & Società**, 1(2), (2012), p. 245.

sentiment, and it is not strange to see Palestinian flags flying at Algerian protests or Algerian flags flying at Palestinian protests, which also resonate with the principle of solidarity of the National Liberation Theory.

This sense of solidarity also extends to Hamas (and Palestinian political parties at large) towards Hezbollah during the 2006 war with Israel and vice versa. Hezbollah's media has always covered Palestinian confrontations with the Israeli forces during the Intifadas or following the outbreak of clashes with Israel. The Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon was closely observed and celebrated by the Palestinians in 2000. Not only this, but Hezbollah has also fought alongside the Palestinians (PLO) during the Lebanese civil war in which Palestinian factions in Lebanon were involved. Some of Hezbollah's leaders have received training at the PLO's camps in Lebanon and were active members of Palestinian factions such as Fatah. When Israel deported 415 Palestinians from the Islamic Jihad and Hamas to Southern Lebanon in 1992, Hezbollah provided them with help and trained some of them.⁷⁴⁴ This relationship between Hamas and Hezbollah, which contributed to their terrorist designation, especially in light of sectarian politics in the Middle East, continues today.

Hezbollah has publicly said it provided Palestinian factions, including Hamas, with weapons and expertise, including the know-how to manufacture drones and missiles. The May 2021 escalation in the Gaza Strip between Palestinian factions, led by Hamas, has shown once again the fruits of this coordination and solidarity at the highest levels between Hezbollah and Hamas. Hamas' leader in Gaza Yihya Alsinwar, who spent nearly 20 years in Israeli jails, said rockets fired at Israel from Southern Lebanon during the escalation were a coordinated effort between Hamas and Hezbollah, which again speaks of this coordination and solidarity among the two non-state actors, which will likely maintain their terrorist view by regional and international powers. Hamas has too condemned Israeli attacks against Syria, although it officially left the country due to the outbreak of the civil war in 2011, a move that reveals the group's desire to mend its ties with the Iran bloc. Today, Hamas seems in a dilemma of balancing its relations with Hezbollah, Iran, and Syria on one hand and losing

⁷⁴⁴ Sloan and Anderson, p.195.

some of its popularity in the region over the role of Hezbollah and the Syrian government of Bashar Al-Assad and Iran in the Syrian civil war on the other hand. The international balancing of the FLN against global powers proved to be effective. However, the regional balancing of Hezbollah and Hamas today, in light of the ongoing sectarian conflicts in the Middle East region, seems increasingly more complicated and less effective.

The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas lack a roadmap to move from war to government, which impacted their designation, in the case of the FLN recognizing it as a legitimate group after independence, and in the cases of Hezbollah and Hamas recognizing them as terrorist after winning elections. Liberating a country is one thing and moving into democratic governance is another process that many non-state actors might not be able to carry out smoothly.⁷⁴⁵ In the case of FLN, its military leaders were the ones who led the country after independence, but unlike their promises of establishing a democracy, they have engaged in a civil war and a coup. Thus, the military in Algeria, formed out of the FLN, still has the final say in the country over politics. All Algerian presidents have either emerged out of the FLN or had its support to run for president. As for Hezbollah and Hamas, although the military leadership does not run for government, politicians who have the strong backing of the military have a better chance to run for and win the election. Hamas' military wing still has much influence over decisions and governance, especially in the Gaza Strip. The two groups have also cracked down on critical dissidents who called for democratic reforms.

While non-state actors such as the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have been expected to stick to non-violence by international actors, settler-colonialism, on the contrary, has always been violent and in some cases brutal. This is true to France in Algeria and Israel in Palestine. The nature of settler-colonialism thus poses further challenges to the FLN, Hamas and Hezbollah and their commitment to non-violence. Settler-colonialism has been built on multiple forms of violence including the forced expulsion of the owners or inhabitants of the land, arrest, dehumanization, torture, denying people access to medical care, travel restrictions, control and surveillance, siege, and deportation. At the same time, settler-colonial states replace

⁷⁴⁵ Clapham, "Why Many Liberation Movements Fail at Government," *Politics Today*.

indigenous peoples with settlers who, unlike indigenous people, enjoy full rights, which the owners of the land lack, such as access to clean water and fertile land. This creates a feeling of helplessness among the indigenous population and its political forces, which result in forms of resistance, including violence and uprising. Many non-state actors from the Global South including the FLN, and Hamas, got involved in non-violent resistance at the start of their struggle, as Walzer stipulates in the Just War Theory, and his notion of the “non-combatant enemy.”⁷⁴⁶ yet the violent reaction of the colonial settler-states toward them and their struggle for freedom has encouraged them to adopt violence and/or terrorist tactics, as this is how these groups believe the world will finally listen to them.

5.7. The Impact of Designation on the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas

The designation of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations by relevant state-actors have had significant impacts on their international legitimacy and these groups’ ability to have the designation be changed. In the case of the FLN, France’s designation of the Front as terrorist had the least impact on it. This had to do with the development of the concept of terrorism which initially had a more positive spin when it first emerged some 125 years ago in modern-day Russia. A Russian anarchist screamed, “I am a terrorist, not a murderer,”⁷⁴⁷ after shooting and injuring the Governor of St. Petersburg in 1878, which reveals how the concept has evolved over time especially after World War Two and the rise of nation states with the establishment of the UN system. At the time, political violence was viewed legitimate and positive and to some extent acceptable targeting of the state. In the 1950s and 1960s too, when many countries were still fighting to win their independence from traditional and settler-colonialism, the concept was not as negative as it is today because the fight for self-determination was seen as a legitimate struggle. The shift in seeing struggles for liberation as legitimate or negatively explains how and why state-actors have the power and privilege to designate non-state actors as terrorist or not.

⁷⁴⁶ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 334.

⁷⁴⁷ Jay Bergman and Vera Zasuli. **A Biography**, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983, pp. 20-21.

After the Arab Spring, it has proven that getting into sectarian politics, might have negative implications for non-state actors, even in the context of military occupation and settler-colonialism. This has even proven to be increasingly true in light of the normalization deals between Israel and some Arab countries, which would make non-state actors such as Hamas, feel more isolated and further expand their terrorist designation in the future by more state-actors. The FLN was saved the implications of the Arab Spring as it became a state-actor, but not completely as the Algerian state and ruling party faced protests in 2019 over the lack of jobs and the worsening economic conditions in the country. The FLN brought an economic model from the USSR to the country that it was not in need of.

Although the terrorist designation of the FLN had less implications compared to Hezbollah and Hamas, the FLN was pushed to forge ties with international and regional powers such as Egypt, China, the US, and the USSR. This mitigated the negative implications of the terrorist label of the FLN which adopted a strategy of balancing against regional and global powers. The ties the FLN had with the USSR in particular had long-term implications on the Algerian state and people. This was clearly manifested in importing a Soviet-inspired economic model to the country which still have negative economic implications on Algeria, as the FLN aspired to establish a government maintained by the workers with Algerians taking to the streets in 1988 and 2019 to protest economic conditions and the lack of democracy.⁷⁴⁸ This might indicate that once non-state actors become state actors, could they behave in a way that internalizes state power and enact similar violence towards their people but within a civil war rather than fighting a colonial power? The Algerian army, an extension of the FLN, did so because it considers itself the keeper of the state in light of its liberation legitimacy and legacy.⁷⁴⁹ Keeping the liberation legitimacy of the FLN in consideration, the Algerian army saw itself the legitimate power that gained its legitimacy from its liberation war against France, thus refusing the election results and dragging the country into a decade of civil war.

Avoiding the impact of being listed as a terrorist group due to the politics of the Cold War did not mean that the FLN was able to mitigate the impact of importing a USSR-inspired

⁷⁴⁸ Escribano. p. 3.

⁷⁴⁹ Newton., pp. 57.59.

economic model into Algeria, which had proved to be catastrophic to the economy, as the needs of the Algerian economy were different from that of the USSR. This has paved the way for Algerians to take to the streets in the late 1980s to protest their worsening economic conditions. These bad economic conditions made it easier for the Islamic Salvation Front (FSI) to win the 1991 elections, which were rejected by the Algerian army and resulted in a decade-long civil war. The Algerian army, many of its members fought alongside the FLN during the War of Independence, considered that the army had the liberation legitimacy to govern the country due to its role during the war with France, even though Algerians said otherwise in the electoral boxes. This FLN self-perceived liberation legitimacy has resulted in a lack of democracy and corruption which Algerians continue to protest as of today, further creating instability in the country as exemplified by the Hirak Movement of 2019.

The international community, although it refused the use of violence, still expressed support for the aspirations of the Algerian people. This put France in an uncomfortable position and made it eventually lose the international legitimacy of its war in Algeria. Despite this, countries such as the US preferred to choose strategic silence because it feared that a French withdrawal from Algeria will create a vacuum that might be filled by the USSR. The FLN's strategy to have multiple ties with different regional and global powers allowed Algeria to win international solidarity as outlined by Cabral and the Theory of National Liberation,⁷⁵⁰ especially that the FLN's taking arms resulted in more violence in Algeria at the hands of France, "allowing the FLN to mobilize the rest" of Algerians.⁷⁵¹

The use of violence by the FLN during the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) against France was proceeded with a more brutal campaign of violence by the colonial authorities against the FLN. The exclusion of some FLN leaders from political life after independence and the violence used against Algerians who protested the economic conditions in 1988 or those who called for respecting the results of the 1991 election, lost by the FLN, are prime examples of the FLN intolerance. At the same time, compared to Hamas and Hezbollah, the FLN relatively showed some flexibility at some point towards dissent

⁷⁵⁰ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral**, p. 121.

⁷⁵¹ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 180.

voices in the country, an approach initiated by former Algerian president Bouteflika, who won some popularity for introducing legal reforms and engaging in a process of reconciliation to end the scars of the civil war of the 1990s.⁷⁵²

Hezbollah's military intervention in Syria in 2013, following the outbreak of the civil war in the country in 2011, has had a serious impact on the way Arab peoples and state-actors view the group. It could be argued that the group's intervention in Syria was the straw that broke the camel's back in relation to how Hezbollah is viewed in the Middle East as a terrorist group by most state-actors and peoples. Hezbollah's initial popularity in the Arab world was due to the group's fighting Israel, bringing Israel's occupation of Southern Lebanon to an end in May 2000 and fighting another short war with Israel in 2006. Hezbollah was more involved in the politics of the Arab Spring compared to the FLN and Hamas thus the impact of the Arab Spring on it was vivid.⁷⁵³ The GCC accuses Hezbollah of intervening in its own affairs and carrying out military intervention in Syria after the group sent thousands of militants to support Al-Assad government, which most GCC countries wanted to topple down at the time.

The image of Hezbollah has been largely shattered in the Arab world following its military involvement in Syria in 2013 and its involvement in Yemen and Bahrain, regardless of its anti-Israel discourse. This view and designation have only worsened after Hezbollah's military intervention in Yemen to support the Houthis, bringing Lebanese-Saudi ties to a complete halt in 2021 and challenging Hezbollah's claims and discourse. The Iranian factor in the cases of Hezbollah and Hamas has shaped how Sunni Arab states view the two non-state actors, although the impact on Hamas was less than that of Hezbollah. Though Hezbollah abandoned its 2009 manifesto calling for an Islamic Republic in Lebanon, it still views the Islamic Revolution in Iran as its main source of inspiration and theology and desire to export this revolution to the world.⁷⁵⁴ Hezbollah's approach goes in line with using ideology and national education to unify the masses as stipulated by the Theory of National

⁷⁵² Tlemçani, p. 8.

⁷⁵³ Neriah and Shapira, p. 4.

⁷⁵⁴ Harb, pp. 222.

Liberation as its active participation in the Arab Spring and ideological connection to Iran is connected to unifying the masses.⁷⁵⁵ Hamas' ties with Iran and Hezbollah have contributed to its increasing perception in the Middle East as a proxy group of Iran after the Arab Spring, although it adopted a discourse advocating ties with Sunni Arab countries too.⁷⁵⁶

Placing Hamas under siege in the Gaza Strip was a double-edged sword, as it pushed the group to improve its military capabilities and fight a total of four wars (military incursions) against Israel between 2008 and 2021. The Palestinian political division, which is more apparent between Palestinian political elites, has been partially enforced by Israel (through geographic separation and other means), and is still unresolved as of 2023. Placing the group under siege in Gaza also pushed Hamas to publish its new document of general principles,⁷⁵⁷ which adopted a more moderate discourse, accepting a two-state solution and making a distinction between Judaism and Zionism, all in an attempt though failed, to get itself off the terror lists of the US and the EU.

Most countries in the anti-Iran bloc in the Middle East still view Hamas with suspicion and try to minimize its role and political agency as a representative of the Palestinians. This is due to the military and political support Hamas publicly receives from Iran, especially after the Arab Spring, despite being a Sunni-Islam group. The normalization of ties between Israel and some Arab countries such as the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan have contributed to further isolating Hamas and viewing it as illegitimate in the region.⁷⁵⁸ In the case of the FLN in Algeria, France's view of the group as terrorist did not have the same impact as it has had on Hezbollah and Hamas for several reasons outlined in the following paragraphs.

Similarly, Hamas' growing arsenal of rockets and weapons have also enabled it to take over the Gaza Strip after it won the 2006 election, which the West refused to accept.⁷⁵⁹ The group was faced by international isolation, where the Quartet asked Hamas to recognize Israel and agreements signed by the PLO with Israel. Hamas' isolation has pushed it to adopt less

⁷⁵⁵ Dada, p.10.

⁷⁵⁶ Lecocq, pp.1074.

⁷⁵⁷ **Hamas**, "A Document of General Principles and Policies."

⁷⁵⁸ Huliaras. p.718.

⁷⁵⁹ Samuel and Rajiv, p.833.

tolerant policies against critical voices within the Palestinian society. Hamas has in many instances grown impatient of Palestinians criticizing its governance and the lack of employment opportunities resulting from placing the group, and the Palestinians at large, under siege in Gaza for 16 years. Placing Hamas under siege had only pushed the group to improve its military capabilities which have clearly advanced over the years, thanks to Iran's support that became even more sensitive after the Arab Spring. Hamas' ties to Iran and Hezbollah explains why an increasing number of Arab governments, which are part of the Saudi-led bloc, have turned more hostile towards the group, with some Arab governments, officials, and courts calling Hamas a terrorist organization more recently, especially with the outbreak of the Qatar diplomatic crisis in 2017.⁷⁶⁰ Hamas and Hezbollah turning into quasi-states have also impacted their designation by relevant state-actors, which recalls the experience of the FLN after it became the ruling party after independence forcing many countries to recognize its legitimacy. In the case of Hamas, China took it off its terror list in 2006, while Russia engaged with both Hamas and Hezbollah after they ran for elections.

The FLN, unlike Hamas and Hezbollah, was less interested in building a quasi-state because its declared objective was to liberate Algeria from the French colonization and it hardly had any interests in regional projects except for the North African unity. The vision of the FLN was clear: there should be no transition to government before independence, unlike Hamas and Hezbollah. The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, however, based their rule on what they viewed as a legitimacy resulting from their fight against colonization. That is the legitimacy of resistance and arms, which in a way explains why, although they had been successful, partially, or completely, at winning their countries' independence and establishing a rule of their own, they still had failed at governance due to internal and external factors.

It is notable that the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas sought international legitimacy in different forms. In the case of the FLN, the group was not in much need for international legitimacy because it gained enough recognition by balancing against international powers such as the USSR, the US and China, in addition to the regional support it enjoyed from countries such

⁷⁶⁰ Al Madani, pp. 58-60.

as Morocco, Libya and Egypt. The Cold War politics has created the needed balance that to some extent decreased the interests of the FLN in avoiding its terrorism label as international support for non-state actors waging liberation wars at the time was strong. The FLN made use of creating an international outcry in favor of the Algerian people by engaging in violence during the Battle of Algiers (1957) and its leaders saw no problem in using violence to create international pressure on France because, as its leaders put it, this was the only way out.⁷⁶¹ And this tactic has worked effectively for the benefit of the FLN despite its negative implications.

Unlike Hamas, which changed its founding document in 2017, and Hezbollah which issued a new manifesto in 2009, the FLN did not adjust its founding document to sound more acceptable internationally, thanks to the politics of the Cold War. Hamas published a new document of general principles in 2017, which also did not push relevant actors to change their view of the group. The Algerian Proclamation of Independence of the FLN, the General Document of Political Principles of Hamas, and the Hezbollah Open Letter explain comprehensively the self-perception of the three non-state actors as liberation groups. The change of discourse, especially in the case of Hamas, did not push state actors that view the group as terrorist to change their view. Self-interests, economic, political historical, religious, and regional and global power ties will continue to shape how state-actors view the three non-state actors. The post-Cold War power politics have proven to be more challenging for Hezbollah and Hamas, which had no international cover the same as the FLN did, where the two group were increasingly viewed as terrorist due to sectarian politics after the Arab Spring.

5.8. Realpolitik and The Terrorism and Liberation Designation

It is beyond doubt that realpolitik, rather than emotions and reactions, largely governs and shapes the process of designation of non-state actors as terrorist or liberation groups in the cases of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. In this research, two patterns seem to have undeniable influence on the way state-actors view the three case studies which are the Cold

⁷⁶¹ Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 387.

War and the Arab Spring. This section aims to identify how these two patterns have impacted the designation of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas throughout two historical phases which had a great impact on global and regional politics, namely the Cold War and the Arab Spring.

The Cold War has provided three case studies with a cover (to varying degrees), allowing them to navigate their international relations and establish ties with different regional and global powers. At the same time, the Cold War has shown how great power politics was translated into state-actors using non-state actors to realize their own foreign policy agendas in different parts of the world. The USSR understood the enmity the FLN had towards the Western Bloc, which France was part of it, thus it provided the group with political and military support, which helped it achieve its goals of forcing the French out of Algeria. At the same time, being part of the Non-Aligned Movement, the FLN forged ties with Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, which in return provided it with the needed financial and military support. The FLN translated this political maturity during the Cold War by forging ties with China, fearing that if it does not fill in the gap, France will build strong ties with China, which might harm the Algerian cause. The FLN made use of its long-established ties with the USSR to establish diplomatic ties with China.

The US, although supporting France against the FLN, didn't do so publicly, because it knew that the French strategy in Algeria would collapse. It also did not want the FLN to lean more towards the USSR, which will give the bloc a stronghold in Algeria. At the same time, the FLN and its government in the future still maintained ties with the US, which allowed Algeria in 1981 to successfully mediate the release of American hostages in Iran after 444 days in custody. Other issues such as Algeria's support for the PLO and its refusal of Israel as well as its public expression of inspiration of the Cuban model as a successful "social" model for government kept the US skeptical of Algeria.

Hezbollah was at the heart of the Cold War too and it greatly contributed to its events on behalf of Iran and Syria. In its Open Letter of 1985, the Shite group refused the hegemony of the US and the USSR, which sent an early warning to the US of the intentions of the group. Although Hezbollah refused the USSR too and kidnapped four of its diplomats in the late

1980s, all of its other actions contributed to the benefit of the USSR, including targeting western forces in Lebanon such as American, French, and Italian forces. The group was also heavily involved in the hostage crisis in Lebanon, in which hundreds of western nationals were kidnapped, tortured, and killed. Hezbollah targeted American and western allies in the Gulf as part of the Iran-Iraq war from 1980-1988, including French targets in 1985 and 1986 because of France's support for Iraq against Iran during the war. It saw in Israel an extension of western influence in Lebanon which needed to come to an end.

At the same time, state-actors that were part of the USSR, or the Non-Aligned Movement viewed the FLN as a liberation group such as Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, and Iraq, which gave the group more space to maneuver and gain regional and international legitimacy. Countries such as Cuba, most African countries, Arab countries, and the Non-Aligned Movement saw in the FLN a legitimate political force especially at a time when the wave of support for national liberation movements across the group was prominent. The FLN didn't change its discourse over the years because of its terrorist designation by France and the Western bloc. As for Hezbollah, the Arab League, Iran, and some western governments considered the group a legitimate political force up until the outbreak of the Arab Spring and Hezbollah's targeting of Israeli tourists in Sofia in 2012. Iran and Syria have seen in Hezbollah a tool to promote their own foreign policy in Lebanon and beyond and the organic relationship the group had with the two countries allowed for this relationship to exist. Most Muslim and Arab countries viewed Hamas as a legitimate force towards the end of the Cold War, but the emergence of the US as the only superpower, Hamas' use of violence and the politics of the Arab Spring have pushed some of them to distance themselves from the group or consider it a terrorist group.

Hamas, which emerged towards the end of the Cold War, had a much less involvement in the Cold War, but its anti-Israeli and US discourse, and the emergence of the US as the only superpower in the world, meant that the US would also list it as a terrorist group in 1997, a year after Israel did so. The implications of the Cold War politics such as the US policy of containment was also applied to Hamas, where Israel and the US aimed to apply a strategy of security-containment of Hamas, which translated into its political and economic isolation

in the region including by US allies. This was vivid more during and after the Arab Spring in 2011, but also prior due to Hamas' rejection of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians brokered by the US starting from 1993.

As for the Arab Spring, it created a significant pattern that impacted the designation of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas at varying degrees, which also reveals the role of sectarian and regional politics in this process of designation. The FLN, which became the ruling party in post-independence-Algeria was impacted by the politics of the Arab Spring through the *Hirak* movement protests that broke out in the country in 2018, challenging its liberation legitimacy won through years of fighting France. This has pushed the group to adopt new economic policies and political measures to mitigate the anger of young peoples in the streets. But the fact that the FLN is no longer a non-state actor, and it is the ruling political party in Algeria today gave it more political cover compared to Hezbollah and Hamas.

As for Hezbollah, its involvement in Syria and alleged involvement in GCC affairs, in addition to its Iran ties, have all contributed to designating it as a terrorist group by the Arab League and the GCC in 2016. Only Iran, Syria, and some non-state actors such as Hamas and the Houthi group still view Hezbollah as a legitimate political group. Despite the limited change in discourse, such as the 2009 Manifesto of Hezbollah, the group still sticks to its discourse and became more open about its Iran ties.

The politics of the Arab Spring have impacted Hamas and pushed it to change its discourse the most compared to the FLN and Hezbollah. Due to its Muslim Brotherhood ties, the group suffered isolation in the post-Arab Spring settings, especially after it decided to exit Syria at a time when new sub-regional orders started to emerge, of which Turkey and Qatar were part of. The two state-actors, in addition to Algeria, have viewed Hamas as legitimate, while the Saudi-led bloc tried to delegitimize Hamas and isolate it in the region, with some courts and officials in countries such as Egypt, the UAE and Saudi Arabia referring to Hamas as terrorist. This has impacted Hamas greatly due to geopolitics and its concentration in the Gaza Strip, which eventually resulted in the group's change of discourse by issuing a new political document in 2017 in an attempt to gain regional and international recognition, which

was much less the case for Hezbollah and the FLN, which didn't change their discourse in a radical manner.



CONCLUSION

The saying, “one’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter”⁷⁶² speaks of how state-actors view the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas differently than how they might view themselves. This debate, whether when non-state actors are viewed as terrorist or liberation groups, is deeply rooted in intra-state relations, and the perception of state-actors of political violence in light of regional and international politics such as the Arab Spring and the Cold War, thus the course of the debate will likely be presented in many cases based on the sole interests of state-actors. In this sense, as Skinner notes, liberation could have “a neighborly” relationship with terrorism, which suggests that almost all non-state actors waging a war in the context of foreign occupation use terrorist tactics too.⁷⁶³ At the same time, non-state actors, which are labeled as terrorist organizations by certain state-actors will unlikely, too, change the way they perceive themselves as freedom fighters waging guerilla warfare, even if they refer to their actions as terrorism in very limited cases, such as the FLN in Algeria.⁷⁶⁴

Many non-state actors invest in removing themselves from the terror lists of state-actors and intergovernmental bodies. This is because the connotation of terrorism has changed over time from being identical to liberation and self-determination (positive), to being a bad and evil concept associated with illegitimate acts (negative). This has been particularly the case after World War Two and the new world order which was put in place. When modern terrorism had first emerged in Russia in 1878, it was only associated with legitimate acts of using violence. A Russian anarchist named Vera Zasulich shot and injured General Fyodor Trepov, the Governor of St Petersburg, and when captured she screamed, “I am a terrorist, not a murderer.”⁷⁶⁵ She carried out the attack in an effort to get rid of autocracy from the country, and she was organized under a group called Land and Liberty.

The concept of terrorism has evolved over time to a completely negative one. The politics of the Cold War played an important role in balancing the narrative and labeling process. With the collapse of the USSR, the US, and its allies, had the full freedom to list non-state actors,

⁷⁶² Ganor, p. 299.

⁷⁶³ Finlay, **Terrorism and the right to resist: a theory of just revolutionary war**, p. 3.

⁷⁶⁴ Hutchinson, “The concept of revolutionary terrorism,” p. 387.

⁷⁶⁵ Bergman and Zasulich, pp. 20-22.

the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist groups, followed by implications that entail including negativity and delegitimization. At the same time, other state-actors view these non-state actors as legitimate political actors such as Qatar, Türkiye, Russia, Algeria, and others do in the case of Hamas, Iran, and Syria in the case of Hezbollah and the Non-Aligned Movement, the Arab League, and the USSR and China in the case of the FLN. These state actors' decisions were governed by regional and global politics in addition to historical, political, economic, and cultural factors.

To understand why and how state-actors label a group as terrorist and perceive another as a liberation movement, isolating the first and defending the other, one has to dig deep into the theoretical debate surrounding terrorism and liberation/war. There are different theories of liberation/war and terrorism, which make the discussions surrounding the two concepts both interesting and daunting. It makes the debate interesting due to the richness it adds to it. This richness involves what it reveals about the interests of state-actors and the self-perception of non-state actors of themselves as legitimate liberation movements. This debate is complicated, but it is simple: it is governed by interests, history, ideology, shared values, self-view, and individual motivations as well as regional and global politics. States decide if a group is terrorist or not based on their interests and this debate in many cases is driven by intra-state relations rather than international law.

Theoretical Framework

The theories of terrorism and liberation/war fairly explain the empirical part of the study. The existence of many theoretical frameworks that explain terrorism and liberation could be interpreted in different ways. One way to interpret it is that the two concepts are too complex and thus they could be explained differently by different theorists as well as by state and non-state-actors. Having opposite opinions on the subject would enrich the debate. State-actors will unlikely give up their interests and continue to be driven by them when they decide to label a non-state actor as a terrorist or a liberation group. At the same time, non-state actors will likely commit to their self-view as liberation groups, as the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have done, which makes reconciling the two concepts of terrorism and liberation a daunting task. A way forward is to have a theory of non-terrorist resistance that includes both state and

non-state actors and that builds its guiding principles on both intra-state relations, view of non-state actors and international law.

Theories that explain terrorism and liberation, although talking about two opposing concepts, have some meeting points. Revolutionary terrorism and just war sound in some cases identical in the context of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, although they were intentionally meant to speak of two different concepts, where benefits outweigh costs.⁷⁶⁶ The process of labeling the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas has been impacted by a number of regional and global structural changes including the Cold War and the Arab Spring. During the Cold War, labeling a group as terrorist was not as sensitive as it is today, because the bipolar politics of that period provided non-state actors with the ability to negotiate some level of power. For this reason, in the available literature during the Cold War, researchers might come across guerrilla warfare leaders like in the FLN's self-describing their actions and groups as terrorist, understanding that this was the only way to end the oppression of their people.

Of the theories that explain terrorism, there are revolutionary terrorism which includes psychological terrorism and urban terrorism. Of the theories that explain liberation/war theories the Just War Theory, and the National Liberation Theory. Between these opposing theories, Revolutionary Terrorism and Just War serve as a bridge between all these theories. Revolutionary terrorism advocates taking arms and using violence in the context of foreign domination after exhausting all peaceful means to end the conflict.⁷⁶⁷ This includes the use of terrorist tactics to achieve independence, an action that could potentially be increasingly reconciled within the debates of liberation and terrorism. Other critical issues to consider are limitations on how to use violence that might include targeting civilians during war and recognizing and addressing how defining what makes a civilian in the context of settler-colonialism remains a challenge. This approach seems very much in line with the Theory of National Liberation, and the contributions by Amilcar Cabral on taking arms, national

⁷⁶⁶ Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 386.

⁷⁶⁷ Harb, p. 383.

education, and ideology.⁷⁶⁸ Education, ideology, and unity matter in this context, but so do non-state and state-actors' view too.

The Just War Theory too provides critical theoretical explanations in the case studies of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.⁷⁶⁹ Main criticisms of the Just War Theory include it being state-centric, and leaving some of its main principles, such as the right intention to go to war, open to interpretation. Both state and non-state actors could easily claim having the right intention to go to war, and this is not limited to our current times, the example of the Catholic Church going to war in the Middle Ages is evident. The same applies to having a just cause for war, which is equally open to subjective opinions of both state and non-state actors. The Crusaders' declared goal behind waging wars in the East was saving Christians. However, the outcomes of war, as the just war doctrine notes, should outnumber its harms.⁷⁷⁰

Making war a last resort too is at fault because when a war starts, it is difficult to predict and a few could expect its direction or outcomes, especially when global and regional powers are involved. The most relevant examples here include the two Great Wars. Making war a last resort is a noble notion, but even in the cases of settler-colonialism and military occupation such as that of France in Algeria and Israel in Palestine and Lebanon, colonial powers too could claim the lack of a partner for dialogue and peace and that they tried all other options before going to war. The example of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians especially in the Gaza Strip as well as its view of the PLO over time from being terrorist to being legitimate speaks of this reality. The same applies to France's view of the FLN as an issue of disorder then recognizing the group after refusing to set on a dialogue table with it in the 1950s. For these reasons, a theory of non-terrorist resistance is even more needed today.

When the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas are viewed from the lenses of the theories of liberation, the existing theories only discuss taking arms such as the National Liberation Theory and the Just War Theory. Non-armed resistance seems almost missing from the debate or is presented

⁷⁶⁸ Cabral, **Unity and Struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar** Cabral, p. 121.

⁷⁶⁹ Walzer, pp. 129-134.

⁷⁷⁰ Lango, "The just war principle of last resort," p.8.

in the case of a full invasion, or in Walzer's words, "non-combatant enemy,"⁷⁷¹ which does not apply to all case studies of this research, which have seen pro-longed military occupations. Recently, however, there have been various examples of non-state actors adopting non-armed means to express their aspirations, including in the case of prolonged occupation in Palestine and Algeria. This includes Hamas, which agreed in its 2017 document of general principles, on adopting non-armed resistance, however along with armed resistance.

The theories of liberation should be developed to reflect this reality and agency of non-state actors and the development of new tactics such as non-violent resistance. This highlights the need to reflect on the complex histories and structures of these non-state actors, thus the need for a third way, or in other words, a theory of non-terrorist resistance. Walzer has discussed the use of non-violent resistance in his afterword to *Just and Unjust wars*, under the title *Afterword: Nonviolence and the Theory of War*, but these discussions were limited to the cases of invasion.⁷⁷² The same applies to the FLN, which before engaging in an eight-year long war against French colonialism had engaged in dialogues with the French colonial authorities to end the French rule in Algeria, which had failed. The three non-state actors are much more complex than being liberation or terrorist groups. Hezbollah and Hamas too have a wide network of NGOs and services and have political wings which run for elections and viewing them from the lenses of violence alone do not provide a full picture of the two non-state actors.

Theories of national liberation and terrorism should expand to reflect the growing complex nature of non-state actors. Increasingly, especially in the cases of Hezbollah and Hamas, the two groups have grown into quasi-states. Hamas and Hezbollah have complex structures of educational, religious, social, economic, and societal institutions which are deeply rooted in the society and have a strong influence of their base of supporters. Understanding this reality will necessarily result in different interpretations of the two groups, and for this matter, the concepts and theories of liberation and terrorism. This could be done through having a theory

⁷⁷¹ Walzer, *Just and unjust wars*, p. 334.

⁷⁷² Walzer, *Just and unjust wars*, pp. 129-132.

of non-terrorist resistance, which highlights the importance of understanding the social contexts in which non-state actors, viewed as terrorist or liberation groups by different state-actors, emerge, along with equally highlighting the view and agency of these non-state actors. As a result, the three non-state actors of this study are not merely urgent phenomenon to the societies from which they emerged, but rather an extension of long-term processes and changes that are deeply connected to history, culture, religion, politics, society, ideology, and national aspirations, among others.

Finally, the state-centric nature of most theories of terrorism and war/liberation with some exceptions of theoretical contributions from the Global South shows the need for a third and more inclusive debate. The third-way theory suggested by Finlay could attempt to reconcile these two opposing views of non-state actors, the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, and state actors' view of the three groups, a division that will continue to be the defining feature of the liberation/terrorism debate. This shows the need to have a third way, a theory of non-terrorist resistance that gives agency to both state and non-state actors and bind them legally during and after the end of war as Finlay suggested.⁷⁷³ Such a theory should also restrict the use of arms under certain conditions to save civilian lives.

The theory of non-terrorist resistance could call for applying the same rules before, during and after waging a war by both state and non-state actors to abide all actors on the ground legally. It could highlight the social construct of non-state actors such as ideology and social services because non-state actors do not exist and emerge in vacuum or isolation from their surroundings. The actions of state-actors including state-terrorism and torture would be central to this theory. This translates into recognizing the agency of peoples and non-state actors waging a liberation war. At the same time, these peoples and non-state actors, the same as state-actors, would have a clear set of principles to abide by before, during and after waging a war, such as proportionality and discrimination, as well as treating people with dignity and leading construction and transitional justice efforts after the end of war.⁷⁷⁴ This theory of non-terrorist resistance would open the way for contributions by scholars from

⁷⁷³ Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 7.

⁷⁷⁴ Kretzmer, p.253.

different backgrounds, thus having a more balanced approach than the theories of terrorism and liberation/war. This is not without challenges as international law and realpolitik still make state-actors the main actors on the international stage where the role of non-state actors is still underrepresented but it gives an opportunity for a more inclusive theoretical engagement addressing the critical issues above.

The Cold War and the Arab Spring

For non-state actors including the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, when all other options such as dialogue and non-violent tactics are exhausted, using political violence is the only means to end foreign domination. For state-actors, their regional and international political, economic, and strategic interests, shape why they view non-state actors as terrorist or liberation groups. Non-state actors like Hamas and to a lesser degree Hezbollah care more about their designation, while other non-state actors, like the FLN in Algeria, might barely pay attention to their terrorist designation when regional and global politics play into their favor as it did during the Cold War.⁷⁷⁵

Two major events took place in the world in 1978 and 1989. In 1978, the Islamic Revolution broke out in Iran, and it was the catalyst and theological foundation for Hezbollah which established itself only four years after the Revolution began and drew its theology from which marked the start of sectarian conflicts in the Middle East.⁷⁷⁶ Religious terrorism was emerging around the same time frame that Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine were established, both in 1982 and 1987 respectively, where suicide bombings were incorporated in their terror attacks. Terrorist tactics such as suicide bombings, the emergence of sectarian politics with the Iran-Iraq war from 1980-1988 and the Arab Spring, contributed further to not only the negative perception of terrorism but also to these groups' terrorist designation. These two non-state actors were impacted the most by sectarian politics, especially Hezbollah considering its involvement in bombings that targeted Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as part of the Iran-Iraq war and due to the nature of Hamas and Hezbollah's

⁷⁷⁵ Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 387.

⁷⁷⁶ Rueda, pp. 57-58.

ties with Iran at the time.⁷⁷⁷ The impact on Hamas came at a much later stage, coupled with the end of the Cold War and the rise of the US as the only superpower.

The Soviet Union was dismantled in 1991, paving the way for the United States to emerge as a superpower. The collapse of the USSR had ended decades of a system of bipolar politics in the world order, Western world, and the Soviet bloc, and meant that the US and its allies, in this case Israel, would have more freedom to both contain non-state actors and label them the way it fits its own interests. The United States has become more able to impose its perception of non-state actors on the international stage with the absence of the USSR. Despite the emergence of more global and regional powers, the US still maintains this privilege, with its allies adopting almost identical positions, especially after 9/11.

The US-led polar world order impacted Hamas and Hezbollah, which were labelled as terrorist by Israel in 1996 and the US in 1997. The US and Israel's view of the two groups were so dominant that the two non-state actors lacked enough power and struggled to present their view to the rest of the world. The US cites targeting American and Israeli interests in the Middle East and killing American nationals in these attacks, opposition to US brokered peace talks with Israel, commitment to violence, anti-American discourse, and refusal to recognize Israel, as main reasons for labeling Hamas and Hezbollah as terrorist groups.⁷⁷⁸ The two groups' ties with Iran and Syria (Hamas ended its ties with the Syrian government in 2011, while towards the end of 2022 there have been reports suggesting it might mend these ties) is also an important factor that pushed the US to label the two groups as terrorist in light of Washington's attempts to contain Tehran.

The FLN did not care about whether its actions would be considered terrorist, thanks to the politics of the Cold War that helped the group build its base of international solidarity based on a strategy of balancing against global powers. For this reason, the FLN was more willing to accept that it had to carry out terrorist actions and use terrorist tactics because all other options had not convinced the French to withdraw from Algeria. Over time, especially at the

⁷⁷⁷ Hänni, Riegler, Gasztold, p. 194.

⁷⁷⁸ Levitt, "Hamas from cradle to grave," pp. 3-7 and Kindt, p. 132.

end of the Cold War, which was preceded by the rise of nation states and the establishment of a new international system through the UN, terrorism gained an increasingly negative connotation, and the rise of religious terrorism cemented its negative perception.⁷⁷⁹

France's designation of the FLN as terrorist pushed the group to apply a strategy of balancing against global powers by having multiple ties with different regional and global powers including the USSR, from which Algiers imported an economic model, which proved to be catastrophic to the country. There were structural differences between the economies of Algeria and that of the USSR, which brought social unrest with the drop of oil prices in the late 1980s, pushing Algerians to take to the streets to protest the worsening economic conditions. The economic hardships resulting from adopting a socialist economic model in Algeria paved the way for the 1991 civil war, leaving huge scars on Algerians.

The FLN's balancing strategy also cultivated diplomatic ties with China, as recommended by FLN letters sent to its government in exile, which replaced Taiwan at the United Nations Security Council, with Tunisia and Egypt as regional powers, as well as with the US. The FLN noted that a French recognition of China would be irreversible and there was a need to establish ties with China through making use of ties established with the USSR.⁷⁸⁰ Having multiple ties with different powers enabled Algeria to protect itself to a certain extent by playing a successful role in mediating some important crises at the time such as the territorial border dispute between Iran and Iraq in 1975 and the American hostage crisis in Iran in 1981.⁷⁸¹ Algeria also had differences with these powers. For example, when Algiers cut its diplomatic ties with the US after the 1967 war, due to US support for Israel, lasting until 1974. The FLN was the most successful in building diplomatic ties with global powers as compared to Hezbollah and Hamas, and the role of the Cold War in this success cannot be overlooked.

In this context of international and regional balancing, which the FLN benefited from the most during the Cold War, the FLN's use of violence to cause an international outrage that

⁷⁷⁹ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 198.

⁷⁸⁰ Annex #1 to 'Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961.'

⁷⁸¹ Wafa, p. 20.

would eventually draw the attention of the international community to the plight of the Algerian people was more justified than it is today.⁷⁸² The excessive use of violence by France in Algeria, killing over 45,000 Algerians in the span of six weeks in 1945, which also pushed more Algerians to join the FLN, eventually contributed to the FLN's benefit and its cause, by drawing more attention to the plight of the Algerian people. As Walzer put it, "In fact, the guerrillas mobilize only a small part of the nation, a very small part, when they begin their attacks. They depend on the counterattacks of the enemy to mobilize the rest."⁷⁸³ The FLN proved to have well-understood the importance of balancing against global powers to win its war against France by having ties with the USSR, China, the Western bloc led by the US, of which France was a part, and the Non-Aligned Movement at the same time. Hezbollah and Hamas, which emerged towards the end of the Cold War, did not have the chance to apply such balancing, and thus they were involved, against their will or not, in the sectarian politics of the Middle East region, which only intensified with the fall of the USSR, which contributed to their terrorist designation.

As terrorism became an all-negative concept towards the end of the 1980s, the politics of labeling gained a different meaning and non-state actors started exerting more effort to avoid the label, which would bring with it more negative implications, including sanctions and isolation. This is especially true in light of sectarian politics prevailing in the Middle East with the outbreak of the Arab Spring in which Hezbollah and Hamas as non-state actors, played an important role. The two non-state actors, as a result, started putting more emphasis on their liberation nature, by highlighting their discourse, roots, and aspirations. This was clear in the founding charters and internal documents of the Hezbollah and Hamas alike such as the Open Letter of Hezbollah in 1985,⁷⁸⁴ and the Hamas Charter of 1988.⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸² Lilley, p. 2.

⁷⁸³ Walzer, **Just and unjust wars**, p. 180.

⁷⁸⁴ Fadlallah, p. 4.

⁷⁸⁵ Maqdsi, p.125.

The Impact of Designating The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as Terrorist or Liberatory

The labelling of a group as terrorist would likely have a negative impact on it, which turned more visible after the dissolution of the USSR.⁷⁸⁶ The existence of two major global powers during the Cold War, the US, and the USSR, in addition to the Non-Aligned Movement, contributed to balancing this negativity, which to some extent reduced pressures on non-state actors at the time, the FLN being a prime example then, compared to Hezbollah and Hamas now.⁷⁸⁷ Non-state actors would simply have the option of siding with one superpower over the other, or choosing non-alignment, which would provide them with much needed political, economic, and military support critical to their own survival (although siding with one bloc over the other would have its negative implications too as the case of Algeria importing a USSR-inspired economic model).⁷⁸⁸ The negativity of labeling a group as terrorist, however, increased over time especially towards the end of the 1970s and the 1980s for several reasons, including the rise of religious terrorism and the end of the pro-national liberation wave.

The designation of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist groups in most cases did not push them to drastically change their discourse and, in some cases, pushed them to use more violence/terrorist tactics. The FLN, whose members were subjected to French torture, waged an urban campaign of guerrilla warfare against the French, using many terrorist tactics such as planting bombs in cafes and restaurants, and kidnapping and torturing French settlers and armed forces to death.⁷⁸⁹ The FLN saw using this violence as a necessary evil after France refused to grant Algerians their long-awaited independence through dialogue and peaceful means, in line with the principle of making war a last resort in Just War Theory.⁷⁹⁰ Along with the FLN's international balancing against global powers, the FLN's use of violence in Algeria also contributed to internationalizing the Algerian struggle, which created further pressure on France to withdraw from Algeria, a tactic that proved effective. This international

⁷⁸⁶ Hess and Stoddard, p. 231.

⁷⁸⁷ Cizel, p. 2.

⁷⁸⁸ Byrne, p.437.

⁷⁸⁹ Hutchinson, "The concept of revolutionary terrorism," p. 383.

⁷⁹⁰ Lilley, p.8.

pressure eventually played into the benefit of the FLN, pushing France to finally leave Algeria in 1962 after 132 years of colonization.

The impact that French colonization had on Algeria was unprecedented in all walks of life; socially, political, economically, and culturally. The Algerian society's fabric was shaken to the core by French colonization of the country. Algeria, the same as Palestine and Lebanon, was hit hard by societal divisions resulting from the divide and rule tactic of France. France's colonization of Algeria has divided the Algerian society in a deep manner and Algerians are still to recover from this division. This division impacted the approach of Algerians towards liberation, with the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the Algerian National Movement, (French: Mouvement National Algérien), (MNA) engaging in a bloody conflict over differences as how to deal with the French presence in Algeria. The FLN ordered assassinations of Si Mohammed Bellounis, who led MNA, a great loyal to the Messali Hadj Movement.⁷⁹¹ These divisions continued even after independence and figures such as Bellounis and Messali continued to be excluded from the Algerian national narrative during and after the war of independence in line with the FLN's view of them as not patriotic enough. Not only this, prominent leaders in the FLN itself such as Ahmad Ben Bella were removed from governance by a military coup orchestrated by his FLN comrade Houari Boumédiène in 1965 over allegations of "dictatorship and corruption."⁷⁹²

In the same vein, the designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization has encouraged the group to expand and grow within the Lebanese state, eventually having more influence over the state's institutions and forming a state within the failing Lebanese state. US Sanctions imposed on Iran, Hezbollah, and later Syria, have also encouraged the group to build its own economy to avert international sanctions. These sanctions have also impacted the Lebanese people at home and those in the diaspora for allegedly sending money to Hezbollah. Thus, these sanctions have further suffocated Hezbollah, which saw strengthening its ties with Iran

⁷⁹¹ Rabah Aissaoui, "Fratricidal War: The Conflict between the Mouvement national algérien (MNA) and the Front de libération nationale (FLN) in France during the Algerian War (1954–1962)," **British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies**, 39(2), (2012), p.230.

⁷⁹² Jonathan Hill, **Identity in Algerian politics: The legacy of colonial rule**, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009, p. 2.

and Syria as its only way of survival, but this was not without serious implications. The GCC followed by the Arab League's designation in 2016 of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization was one of these implications that hit Hezbollah hard,⁷⁹³ and to a lesser degree Hamas, due to their ties to Iran and political Islam.

Despite Hamas' attempts to remove itself off terrorism lists in the US and the EU by issuing a new document in 2017, adopting a more moderate discourse, accepting a two-state solution but without recognizing Israel, and applying non-armed resistance along with armed-resistance, the group remains on the terror lists of Israel the US, the EU and most recently some Arab countries. An additional factor that affects Hamas and Hezbollah's designation is the Saudi-led bloc crackdown on pro-Iran non-state actors and political Islam parties following the Arab Spring proved to have impacted Hamas and Hezbollah the most due to their Iran ties.⁷⁹⁴ The FLN and to a lesser degree Hezbollah stuck to their discourse and made almost no changes to it. Though there were some changes in how the groups portrayed themselves through their discourse, the three non-state actors, especially Hezbollah and Hamas, did not see an increase in their regional and international acceptance.

The political and economic siege imposed on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, due to its refusal to accept the Quartet conditions, including recognizing Israel, has paved the way for the Palestinian political division and Hamas' violent takeover of the coastal enclave in 2007, which further increased its isolation and that of the Palestinians. The siege was a double-edged-sword for Hamas as it pushed the group to send mixed messages by engaging in four major Israeli assaults on Gaza between 2008-2021 and making policy changes. It also pushed Hamas, at some point, to adopt a more pragmatic discourse due to the siege and isolation, which was manifested by its 2017 issuing of the Document of General Principles and its support for the Great March of Return at the Gaza's borders with Israel in 2018.⁷⁹⁵ The designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization has only served to increase the isolation of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, pushing it closer to the Iranian axis, creating a new

⁷⁹³ Harb, "The Hezbollah-Iran Pivot: the controlling agencies behind Lebanon's sectarian politics," p. 1.

⁷⁹⁴ Hughes, p. 526.

⁷⁹⁵ Abusalim, p.92.

dilemma for the group, and a move that mounted its negative perception and its terrorist designation by the anti-Iran bloc in the region. Some Arab courts in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt labeling Hamas as a terrorist organization, has also contributed to further isolating the group and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip at large.

Terms such as “national liberation movement,” would be repeated in the founding documents of the three groups, in addition to placing emphasis on their ideology and internationalism. The battle over labeling became more heated over time as it invited more negative implications for these groups, especially as each moved into forms of governance at some stage, which required international recognition. This pushed Hamas, for example, to change its discourse and issue a new document of political principles in 2017 in an attempt to remove itself off the terror lists of the EU and the US, and to stress its liberation nature.⁷⁹⁶ The three non-state actors did not have the privilege of defining their label and they were always on the defensive trying to refute accusations of terrorism against them. State-actors viewing these non-state actors as liberation groups also were on the defensive, especially in the cases of Hezbollah and Hamas, due to the impact of regional politics such as the Arab Spring.

Final Remarks on FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas

Although the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas, had different structures, operated in different contexts, had the support of different state-actors, used different tactics, and adopted different ideologies, some similarities still tie them together. The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas focused on their founding letters and charters, on the local population, their regional extension and strength, and their international appeal, stressing they were liberation groups who came to existence to end the oppression of their peoples at the hands of settler-colonialism/foreign occupation. This local grounding of violence mixed with the call for international solidarity galvanized by ideology and history by the three non-state actors find appeal and intrigue in the Theory of National Liberation.⁷⁹⁷ Therefore, it is no coincidence that three groups have also engaged in civil wars in their countries as they were impacted by the violent nature of

⁷⁹⁶ **Hamas**, “A Document of General Principles and Policies.”

⁷⁹⁷ Hubbard, p. 71.

settler-colonialism, eventually internalizing violence, and applying similar tactics used by colonial powers but this time against their own peoples.

In the case of Hamas, which bases its theology of liberation on Islamic and national principles, making Palestine an Islamic Waqf.⁷⁹⁸ The group saw in Islam and Islamic teachings, along with Palestinian nationalism, the base for its ideology, calling for the need to provide Islamic social services and teachings. Although Hamas has adopted a more nationalistic discourse recently, Islam continues to be at the heart of its discourse, and the group does not shy away from this. Its 1988 Charter spoke of a religious approach to the conflict with Israel based on the group's theology, in addition to stressing its liberation nature, reflecting the lack of political maturity of the movement at the time as the Charter was published in 1988, a year after Hamas was established where its political leaders had no political history.⁷⁹⁹ The group's Charter contained a national discourse that emphasized the identity of the Palestinian people and their existence in the Arab surrounding.⁸⁰⁰ However, Hamas' targeting Israel, Israel's isolation of the group, the rise of the US as the only superpower in the world with the fall of the USSR in 1991, Israel's strategic ties with the EU and the US, the Arab Spring and Hamas' ties with Iran, have all increased Hamas' isolation in the region and thus its terrorist designation.

Hezbollah, on the other hand, has based its ideology on Shiite theology, seeing in Iran and the teachings of the jurist as the prime source for its discourse.⁸⁰¹ Hezbollah has slightly changed its discourse, as was the case after the Middle East region became ever divided by sectarian politics and the rise of a new regional order following the outbreak of the Arab Spring, in which Hezbollah was heavily involved in especially in Syria, Bahrain, and Yemen. Just like Hamas, the Islamic liberation theology of Hezbollah has provided the needed educational base to indoctrinate the group's members, although the two groups have adopted different Islamic liberation theologies based on their religious sects. These theologies of

⁷⁹⁸ Knudsen, p.1377.

⁷⁹⁹ Litvak, p.718.

⁸⁰⁰ Maqdsi, p.131.

⁸⁰¹ Dodson, p.207.

Hamas and Hezbollah have proven to be the main sources for recruiting members and making sure they stay loyal to them.

The FLN adopted a socialist doctrine that drove and shaped its liberation theology. This socialist doctrine has been reflected in its discourse during and after war against France, but also in its economic thinking which saw replicating a USSR-economic model in Algeria. This is not to say that the theology and discourse of the FLN was only socialist. Islam too was part and parcel of the national socialist discourse of the FLN as explained in its 1954 Proclamation of Independence, which reflects a deep understanding of the FLN of its popular base and awareness of its own history. Stressing the Islamic identity of the Algerian society was the counter-discourse of French settler-colonialism, where French settlers were referred to as *Nasara* (Christians) as opposed to Algerian fighters, who were referred to as *Mujahideen*, (Muslim fighters).⁸⁰² This Algerian socialist and Islamic theology and approach, was galvanized by a nationalist discourse that promoted the Algerian national identity that sought independence from France, as they found it representative of their national aspirations, religion and history.

The FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas were motivated by ideology as a guiding principle of their actions, though each group adopted a different ideology than the other. The FLN adopted a socialist ideology based on the teachings of Islam at the core of its approach and was officially part of the Non-Aligned movement. The socialist ideology explains why the Front imported a USSR-inspired economic model into Algeria, although the country's economy had structural differences with that of the USSR. The Algerian Constitution of 1963 announced independence from the French and established a socialist government and society "ensured by the workers,"⁸⁰³ One of the most important influences of the FLN's mixture of Islamic and socialist teachings in its ideology was because it received support from the USSR and regional powers such as Egypt and Tunisia. Islam in Algeria at the time also was associated with the Algerian Muslims and Algerian national identity as opposed to the French Christian settlers. This is not to say that the FLN was religious, but it adopted a theology that

⁸⁰² Wise, p.137.

⁸⁰³ Go, p. 76.

kept the Islamic identity central, viewed as the antagonist of French Christian rule in Algeria, at the heart of its discourse.

The FLN adopted a socialist approach combined with Islam which meant it adopted an economic approach similar to that of the USSR after independence, a move that proved to be harmful to Algeria.⁸⁰⁴ Thus, the FLN had somehow a distinctive relationship with the USSR, maintaining closer ties with it and with China than the Western bloc. These USSR-FLN ties were not without implications too. The FLN's importing of a USSR-like socialist economist had serious negative implications on Algeria as the needs of the Algerian people and economy were different than the USSR, which explains why Algerians took to the streets in 1988 to protest worsening economic conditions as oil prices dropped.⁸⁰⁵

As for Hezbollah, its ideology is based on the teachings and the theology of the Islamic jurist in Iran, which the group considers its source of inspiration by committing itself to spreading the Iranian revolution in the region.⁸⁰⁶ It has also committed to taking arms as the only way to help what the group views as oppressed groups. Hezbollah's ties to the theologians of the Iranian Revolution from day one was clear and so were the implications for this relationship. Hezbollah has targeted countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as part of the rise of sectarian politics in the region as seen during the Iranian-Iraqi war between 1980-1988. With the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011, the Saudi-led bloc grew intolerant of Hezbollah's actions, especially its ties to Syria and Iran. These ties to Iran and Syria translated into a military intervention in Syria in 2013 on the side of the Syrian government, which significantly contributed to its terrorist designation by the GCC in addition to its intervention of the affairs of the GCC. Hezbollah has also been accused of supporting protests and groups in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait. Thus, the GCC designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in 2016, followed by the Arab League in the same year. The GCC cited "hostile actions of the militia who recruit the young people (of the Gulf) for terrorist

⁸⁰⁴ Annex #2 to 'Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961.'

⁸⁰⁵ Escribano, p. 3.

⁸⁰⁶ Higgins, pp. 11-13.

acts.”⁸⁰⁷ Increasing tensions between the Saudi and the Iran-led blocs suggests that Hezbollah’s isolation and terrorist designation is unlikely to change anytime soon.

Ideology was not part of Hezbollah’s approach alone in the region, and Hamas, which has been enjoying a good relationship with Hezbollah, also gives importance to it, basing its theology on Sunni Islam. According to Hamas, secularism and not adopting a national religious approach is behind the failure to liberate Palestine.⁸⁰⁸ The two groups equated western culture and secularism to “de-culturalization, colonialism and exploitation.”⁸⁰⁹ They have stressed the importance of national education in line with the National Liberation Theory, by “returning to the source,”⁸¹⁰ stressing the role of elites in leading the masses through national education, which the FLN applied through its program of Algerization after independence.

Hamas’ ideology is a mixture of both Islamic teachings (Sunni) and Palestinian nationalism⁸¹¹. Hamas has stated in its charter that its ultimate goal is to establish an Islamic state, considering Palestine a land of Islamic Waqf. The group attributed the failure to reaching a settlement of the conflict with Israel to other Palestinian parties, namely those under the PLO, adopting a secular approach.⁸¹² However, considering Hamas’ willingness to accept a two-state solution and its 2017 document that accepts non-armed resistance too, it is clear that the group believes in an Islamic state primarily on paper. Hamas still maintains taking arms, just like the FLN and Hezbollah, as very central to its approach. This will likely push more state-actors in the region, especially in light of the normalization wave with Israel by some Arab countries recently, to view Hamas as a terrorist group or at least keep it isolated in the coastal enclave. Hamas’ engagement in armed resistance brought more implications for the group the same it did to Hezbollah and the FLN.

⁸⁰⁷ Levitt, “Hezbollah’s Criminal Networks: Useful Idiots, Henchmen, and Organized Criminal Facilitato,” pp.11-13.

⁸⁰⁸ Maqdsi, pp.129.

⁸⁰⁹ Dunning, pp. 6-9.

⁸¹⁰ Cabral, “Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amílcar Cabral,” p. 11.

⁸¹¹ Litvak, pp.719.

⁸¹² Maqdsi, p.127.

Ideology has been an important landmark in Hamas' 1988 Charter and political practice. The movement has identified its approach to be based on Sunni Islam, Palestinian nationalism, and internationalism. The fact that Hamas emerged from the umbrella of the Muslim Brotherhood, despite denying organizational connections to it later following the Arab Spring due to its terrorist designation by some Arab countries, made many countries in the Arab region associate Hamas with political Islam, thus contributing to its terrorist designation after the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring has impacted how state-actors such as Egypt and Qatar deal with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Fearing its increasing international and regional isolation, Hamas issued a document of general principles in 2017, stressing the goal of attaining national self-determination for the Palestinians.⁸¹³

The engagement of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas in guerilla warfare has had impacts on them and produced isolated governance systems internationally and mostly failing governments at home. In the case of Algeria and the FLN, the group experienced divisions and internal conflicts. The emergence of different and contrasting views within the FLN almost ceded the country into civil war prior to independence from France, with two opposing views emerging, one calling for taking arms and the other for engaging in a dialogue with the French colonial authorities to gain Algeria's independence,⁸¹⁴ in line with the principle of last resort of the Just War Theory. Algerians, who advocated taking arms, eventually prevailed within the ranks of the FLN, thanks to the French brutal use of force. The FLN's use of arms served as a double-edged sword. It brought international condemnation and solidarity to the Algerian people.⁸¹⁵ Yet, the politics of the Cold War and international support for non-state actors fighting for self-determination at the time such as the FLN and the group's strategy of balancing against global powers have all contributed to its benefit.

As for Hezbollah, its commitment to keeping arms have contributed to highlighting its sectarian politics on one hand and increasing its regional and international isolation especially after the Arab Spring on the other hand. Hezbollah's anti-US and anti-Israel

⁸¹³ **Hamas**, "A Document of General Principles and Policies."

⁸¹⁴ Quandt, Personal conversation.

⁸¹⁵ Lilley, p. 2.

discourse, commitment to taking arms, refusal of the peace process and commitment to the destruction of Israel, in addition to targeting western interests in the region, have all contributed to its terrorist designation by the US and Israel.⁸¹⁶ The group's targeting of Israeli tourists in Sofia in 2012 have pushed the EU to finally designate it as terrorist, but the issue goes deeper. It has to do with Hezbollah's ties to Syria and Iran, its commitment to violence and pledge to destroy Israel. Historically, Hezbollah has targeted American, French, and Italian forces on Lebanese soil too. The US and EU's ties with Israel, political, historical, and economic, have all contributed to the same end. In the Arab region, however, it was Hezbollah's intervention in Syria and the affairs of some Arab (reads GCC) countries that pushed the GCC and the Arab League to designate it as a terrorist group in 2016.⁸¹⁷ Despite the isolation and political implications, Hezbollah chose to side with its traditional allies, Syria, and Iran, who serve as its lifeline as part of the post-Arab Spring cold war and sectarian politics.

Hamas has suffered a considerable isolation because of being labeled as a terrorist organization especially after its electoral victory in 2006, its takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007, and the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011. When the group was in the Palestinian opposition before running for the PLC elections in 2006, it did not fully feel the full wrath of its designation as a terrorist group by Israel, the US, and the EU. However, when Hamas won the legislative election of 2006, the group was placed under a tight land, air, and sea Israeli siege and to lesser extent Egyptian siege in the Gaza Strip, where its main base is. Placing the movement under siege in 2006 pushed it to take over the Gaza Strip by the power of arms in 2007, which contributed to its further isolation and terrorist designation. The group's ties to Hezbollah and the Iran bloc have also led to strengthening its terrorist designation.⁸¹⁸

Hamas' violent takeover of the Gaza Strip also created a deep Palestinian division which paved the way for Arab governments to consider it a terrorist group, or at least treat it as such after the Arab Spring, due to its affiliation with political Islam, Iran, and Hezbollah. In other

⁸¹⁶ Kindt, pp. 127.

⁸¹⁷ Berti and Schweitzer, p.48.

⁸¹⁸ Wiegand, p. 672.

words, Hamas has lived under one of the most gripping isolation in the modern history of the Middle East because of its designation as a terrorist organization and its failure to meet the demands of the Quartet, including recognizing Israel, denouncing violence and accepting previous agreements signed between the PLO and Israel.⁸¹⁹ Despite Hamas' attempts to sound moderate, by running for the PLC elections in 2006 and issuing a new political document in 2017,⁸²⁰ it remains on the terror lists of Israel, the EU, and the US, and it will likely remain so for regional and global political, economic, and historic factors and reasons. The group has struggled to combine violence and governance, which has impacted the Palestinians at large, politically, and economically, especially those in the Gaza Strip.

The impact of labeling the three non-state actors as terrorist by concerned states was serious for various reasons. The FLN strategy of balancing enabled the group to forge ties with the USSR, the US, and China at the same time, while receiving support from the Non-Aligned Movement from countries such as Egypt and Tunisia. It also allowed the FLN to present its discourse to the world, allowing its leaders to engage with global events and politics by attending major conferences taking place at the time such as in Cuba, thus interacting with other state and non-state actors at the time, unlike Hezbollah and Hamas. Viewing "Algeria's socialist struggle as Castro-style socialism,"⁸²¹ has also contributed to the US' cold ties to the FLN. In response to its terrorist designation, one of the leaders of the FLN said that it did not matter that his group used terrorism to draw the attention of the international community to their plight, especially during the Battle of Algiers, again revealing that the FLN was hardly impacted by it.

The designation by different state-actors such as Israel, France, the US, the EU, and the GCC of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist groups so far has been unlikely to push them to change their view of themselves as liberation groups. Although it pushed some of them, such as Hamas, to modify its discourse. This is to say that placing non-state actors under pressure in order to coerce them to give up violence has shown a limited success in the cases

⁸¹⁹ Hovdenak, p. 60.

⁸²⁰ **Hamas**, "A Document of General Principles and Policies."

⁸²¹ Wafa, p. 22.

of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas. In fact, the three groups, with their designation and isolation, have turned more radical, and violence invited more violence, the opposite of what state-actors that listed them as terrorist and placed them under pressure aspired to achieve. States' use of violence too should be part and parcel of this debate, in cases of the FLN, Hezbollah, and Hamas.

The theoretical debate over liberation and terrorism seems to ignore the impact of state-terrorism on colonized people, as labeling state actions as terrorism is even more challenging than the designation of non-state actors as such. Meanwhile, most theoretical deliberations that center state-actors do not consider state-terrorism as a central part of the debate for reasons related to *realpolitik* and intra-state interests, although it is older and more costly.⁸²² When a state is associated with terrorism, intrastate relations seem all the more complicated. If a state is hesitant to label a group as terrorist, it becomes even more difficult to label other state-actors as such when they commit acts of terrorism or counterterrorism along the way. The same applies to a state-actor labeling a group as a liberation movement, fearing to anger another state-actor or ally. These challenges and parameters are true to the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas and how state-actors view them. In this context, intra-state relations, and interests as well as reactions play an important role. For this reason, states seem reluctant to engage in describing another state's actions as terrorism in some cases to avoid the consequences. Although complicated, when the concepts of liberation and terrorism involve non-state actors, it becomes easier for state-actors to engage in the debate. The process of labeling non-state actors or state actions as acceptable or not is deeply rooted in the realist view of regional, and global politics, and in non-state actors lack the privilege and the agency of being active participants in the debate. The role of non-state actors is largely limited to challenging or approving state-actors' perception of them as is the case with the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas.

As long as the terrorism-liberation debate is concerned, state-terrorism continues to be largely overlooked, thanks to *realpolitik* and regional and global politics.⁸²³ The lack of discussion of state-terrorism presents a one-sided narrative, considering that colonial powers could

⁸²² Schmid, p. 203.

⁸²³ Schmid, p. 203.

engage in documented crimes such as what France did in Algeria and what Israel did in Lebanon and Palestine. In fact, discussing the use of terrorist tactics/violence by non-state actors, while overlooking the actions of state-actors, which in many cases outnumber the actions of non-state actors and armed groups such as the FLN and France, will unlikely lead to a balanced debate. For this reason, there is a need for a new theoretical debate, a third way, that reflects the agency of both state and non-state actors, and colonized people, and provides rules of conduct that govern their actions during war. This could be presented “by offering a theory of legitimate, armed, non-terrorist resistance to oppression”⁸²⁴ that brings both state and non-state actors to account for their actions during and after war.

Criticizing the actions of a state-actor as terrorist is even more complicated. Both state and non-state actors, in the cases of France and Israel and the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas have used terrorist tactics to deliver their messages, however, much of the available literature discuss the actions of non-state actors. because revolutionary terrorism is seen as only coming from non-state actors. This is the gap the third way debate, namely a theory of legitimate resistance, is meant to bridge. In some cases, such as the FLN in Algeria, it was French state-violence that pushed the FLN to use terrorist tactics.⁸²⁵ For this reason, state-terrorism and non-state actors’ terrorism should equally be part of the debate/third way theory.

The FLN, unlike Hezbollah and Hamas (non-state actors), it is now in charge of and has a strong influence over the government in Algeria, turning into a state-actor after independence. The FLN and the Algerian government generally faces challenges related to the lack of good governance and corruption, its liberation legacy and discourse is not helping enough. The Algerian government maintains good ties with Hamas, and it distances itself from Lebanese politics. Recently, there have been accusations by Morocco, as part of the ongoing hostility between the two governments, against Algeria of allegedly having strong ties with Iran, especially after Morocco normalized its ties with Israel as part of the Abraham Accords in 2021.

⁸²⁴ Finlay, p. 7.

⁸²⁵ Hutchinson, p. 387.

The main difference that draws a line between terrorism and liberation is targeting civilians, in other words the randomness of attacks that make no distinction between combatants and non-combatants a challenge.⁸²⁶ Nearly all non-state actors use terrorist tactics in their struggle. In the case of the FLN in Algeria, despite being more willing to accept its terrorist designation, its resistance to France was legitimate despite applying terrorist tactics due to the existence of French colonialism in Algeria. In the case of Hamas, it has used violence and terrorist tactics, but its emergence under Israeli occupation makes its liberation discourse part of the debate too by state-actors that view the group as a legitimate political actor. The same applies to Hezbollah until 2000, where Israel occupied parts of Lebanon. Hezbollah's use of violence in Lebanon and Syria is viewed by state actors such as the Gulf countries as part of the sectarian politics of the region where its actions are largely viewed as terrorist by these state-actors especially its intervention in Syria and in the affairs of GCC countries.

In today's world, waging guerrilla warfare and using violence is not enough to win a liberation war. Having the legitimacy and the international support to do so is of equal importance. Without international support, it becomes hard for non-state actors to win a national liberation struggle in the context of foreign occupation. The FLN is a prime example of how international support and balancing of international powers led to its victory during the Algerian War of Independence against France in 1962. On the other hand, Hamas' lack of state-level military, and in many cases, political support in the Middle East, is a clear example of how the lack of such support hinders, delays, or even fails a non-state actor. Regional politics also shape this debate for Hezbollah and to a lesser degree Hamas, since certain state-actors' perception of these two groups have changed negatively over their ties to Iran, especially in the context of sectarian politics in the post-Arab Spring settings and the emergence of a new regional order, where Iran and Saudi Arabia stood on opposite sides.⁸²⁷

France has not taken concrete steps to recognize its colonial history except for forming a commission in 2021 to examine its colonial past in Africa. Paris still holds the remains of thousands of Algerian fighters. Soon after the end of its colonial rule in Algeria, France issued

⁸²⁶ Walzer, **Just and just wars**, p. 197.

⁸²⁷ Amour, "Introduction: The Regional Order in the Gulf Region and the Middle East," p. 4.

a decree pardoning all French officers from crimes they have committed in Algeria. This French view of its colonial past and holding the remains of Algerian fighters 60 years after the end of French rule in Algeria violates the principles of just war. In fact, only in 1998 did France recognize its colonization of Algeria as a war.⁸²⁸ Since the beginning of Algerian independence, Paris has shown a staunch unwillingness to admit its historical mistakes against the Algerian people. At the same time, France had to deal with Algerian governments, formed by the FLN, which it listed as a terrorist organization earlier, revealing that this terrorist classification of the FLN by France was motivated more by power and politics. The same applies to Israel which listed the PLO as a terrorist group in the past, and now recognizes and deals with it as the legitimate leadership of the Palestinian people, however without consent of the Palestinian people themselves. This explains the need to have “a theory of legitimate, armed, non-terrorist resistance to oppression”⁸²⁹ that guarantees accountability after the end of war that includes both state and non-state perpetrators of possible war crimes and that makes international law and relations its guide.

As for Israel, Israeli state violence against the Palestinians has been well-documented too. Israel has not admitted its historical wrongdoings and settler-colonialism against the Palestinians and continues to deny them much of their rights. Israel has not taken responsibility for the ongoing expulsion of Palestinians, land confiscation, mass house demolitions and arrests, racism, and siege, which mounts to war crimes and violates the principles of just war.⁸³⁰ Israel continues to refuse to admit responsibility for crimes against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples such as targeting schools and residential buildings and it will continue to list Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations, because they pose a threat to its existence in the region.

⁸²⁸ Alexander and Keiger, pp.3-4.

⁸²⁹ Finlay, p. 7.

⁸³⁰ Primoratz, p.229.

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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

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(Thesis titled: Terrorism and Liberation Movements in the Middle East: The Case Studies of the FLN, Hezbollah and Hamas).

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University of Malaya, Malaysia

MA in International Relations and Strategic Studies

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(Thesis titled: The Role of the Palestinian Diaspora in the West in the BDS Movement against Israel).

The Islamic University, Palestine

BA in English language from the Islamic University of Gaza

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High School Certificate

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WORK EXPERIENCES

Politics Today

Opinion Editor

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2019-2020

Euro-Med for Human Rights Monitor

Editor

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Just World Educational, US

Writer, and
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University of Malaya - Middle Eastern Program (Palestine-Israel)

Researcher

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University College of Applied Sciences, Gaza

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Assistant

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WRITING EXPERIENCES

Electronic Intifada, US

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The Palestine Chronicle, US

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Mondoweiss.net, US

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PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

- Prisoners Diaries: Palestinian Voices from the Israeli Gulag* Co-translator
Gaza Writes Back: Short Stories of Young Palestinian Writers Co-author
 Translator
Dreaming of Freedom: Palestinian Child Prisoners Speak
A book on Palestinian hunger strikers (to be published) Translator
A Shared Struggle: Stories of Palestinian and Irish Hunger Strikers Co-author

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BOOK CHAPTERS

- Travel Restrictions as a Manifestation of Nakba: Gaza, the Path Backward Is the Path Forward (Light in Gaza: Writing Born of Fire, Haymarket, August 2022, p. 203-216). Co-author
 Childhood Behind Bars: Palestinian Children in Israeli Detention Mohammed Al-Rozzi, Valentina Marconi and Yousef M. Aljamal (to be published, University of Georgia Press).

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- Aljamal, Y.M., Cohen, I.B. and Amour, P.O., 2022. COVID-19 in Palestine. *Insight Turkey*, 24(4), pp.105-122.

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MAGAZINE ARTICLES

Yousef M. Aljamal, (2014, September), Nowhere to Stay, No Way Out (갈 곳이 없는, 갈 수가 없는), ASIA, VOL. 9, NO. 3, 47-61.

SPEAKING TOURS

A nationwide speaking tour on Gaza Writes Back in the USA, April 2014.

A nationwide speaking tour on Palestine/Israel in New Zealand, March-April 2013.

A nationwide speaking tour on Palestinian child detainees in Israeli jails in the USA, October-November 2019, including meetings with 24 congress people/congressional offices.

A nationwide speaking tour on with Gaza in Light with the AFSC in the USA, October 2022.

CONFERENCES

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Presented a poster at the Third International Scientists for Palestine Conference held at MIT, Boston, US, between 10-12 January 2020.

Presented a paper at the Annual Conference of the American Studies Associations (ASA) on International Solidarity with Palestine held in Hawaii, US in November 2019.

Presented a paper at the Annual Conference of BRISMES on the Role of the Palestinian Diaspora in the BDS Movement held at King's College in London, June 2018.

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REFERENCES

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