



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AND HEZBOLLAH

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ABSTRACT:

There are many resemblances as well as differences between the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah. The basis of their foundations also has a set of similar circumstances such as the mitigation of foreign powers and removal of colonial power from their respective countries. However, there is a key ideological difference between both organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood belongs to the Sunni sect of Islam, meanwhile Hezbollah belongs to the Shia sect of Islam. The primary aim of this research paper is to analytically compare the formation and objectives of both parties by applying the analytical framework to the circumstances of their formations, ideologies conceptions, etc. Furthermore, this research paper endeavours to find similarities and dissimilarities specifically in terms of political and religious perspectives between both parties. Meanwhile, secondary research methodology has been employed as a research methodology in this research paper.

KEYWORDS

Muslim brotherhood, Hezbollah, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Jihad, Social work, Sunni, Shia.



INTRODUCTION

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

The Muslim Brotherhood is a well-known political entity in Egypt that was primarily based on the Sunni thought of school and its basic objectives included opposition to British occupation through social work and services. The Muslim Brotherhood originated in the Egyptian city of Ismailia in 1928, which eventually spread to the Arab world and led to violent protests throughout the region, against the monarch's rule and its rampant corruption. It has been acknowledged as the oldest and one of the most influential Islamic organizations that was established by an Egyptian school teacher whose name was Hassan al-Banna. The primary objective of Hassan al-Banna was to educate the Muslim populace according to true Islamic ideologies and teachings. Later, his aims eventually transformed to form an Islamic state based on social impartiality, redeployment of resources, an elected assembly and a constitution that restricts the privileges of power possessors and manifests their accountability to people. Al Banna believed that it was the Islamic constitution which would restrict the lawmakers in the formation of laws and regulations that are in opposition to Islamic norms and standards. (Lagervall, 2021)

FORMATION

The eradication of the Caliphate, which has existed for centuries after the beginning of Islam, through the newly formed Turkish government, was an ultimate stimulation for the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood. At that time Al Banna and his fellows believed that it was a call for the reinstallation of Islam in the centre stages of society and also politics. It has been supposed that one of the significant factors in the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood was its appreciation and gradual coalition with Nazi Germany. The Muslim Brotherhood has been funded by the Germans before and during the world war II. The critics also claim that the peak point of the coordination of the Nazi party of Germany and the Muslim Brotherhood was in 1942, when German militias came within reach of the western side of Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood geared up the unrest and pronounced for the mass execution of the



Jews and Christians in the Egyptian territory, meanwhile, a large number of arms that was supplied by Germany were already concealed for the revolt. However, due to unfavourable circumstances, this revolt did not meet its desired goals.

In the initial 10 years, the Muslim Brotherhood was deemed at employing and creating branches across Egypt. Al Banna worked on the organization constitution which is mainly imitated from the Quran and Sunnah and also from the standards put forth by the first four Caliphs.

The Muslim Brotherhood put assertions on two principles which are “strategic” and “tactical”. The strategic principle is based on the instituting of a social order that would be centred on the Islamic Sharia. At the time of the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood, there was no Islamic-based social order in any Muslim country including Egypt and therefore it was considered non-Islamic as well as corrupt. Furthermore, this order was perceived as a root cause of social disorders and it was mandatory to overthrow such rule. Meanwhile, the tactical principle of the Muslim Brotherhood highlighted its strategic objective and achieved it through uplifting awareness in the Muslim population and setting recommendations for Muslim rulers non-violently. The Muslim Brotherhood was not involved in any violent activities, initially, unlike the other religious political parties that were formed against the Sadat regime of Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood drew the attention of the masses to the corruption of the government on every occasion, even sometimes exclusive of asserting on Sadat directly. (Ibrahim 1982)

The Muslim Brotherhood had been divided due to different reasons such as to what extent the Muslim Brotherhood should put Sharia into practice, the modus operandi of response to the repression of the organization by the governmental authorities, the perspectives of the Muslim Brotherhood on Jihad and the kinds of candidates and positions allotted to them during elections and in parliaments. This deficiency in ideological consistency has generated logic in the Arab population that the organization is involved in internal strife while leading to the disbelief of Arabs in the capability of governance of the Muslim Brotherhood. This division in the Muslim Brotherhood became more evident in



the regime of President Nasser when its members endeavoured to assassinate President Nasser while creating ideological fanaticism and radicalization and rigid policies of Nasser to oppress the organization that asserted Sayyid Qutb, one of the prominent leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, to call forth for a holy war against the existed system and its backers. Meanwhile, other members believed in a conservative and constitutional reaction. (Obaid, 2017) Also, divergent ideologies appeared as a consequence of the gathering between the Wahhabi traditionalists and foreign members of the Muslim Brotherhood, which gradually challenged the political stature of Saudi Arabia. Those (Jihadists) who reckoned the readings of Sayyid Qutb robustly opposed the Saudi government when Saudi Arabia approved the involvement of American armed forces in the land of Saudia during the Gulf War of 1991. (Lagervall, 2021)

The Muslim Brotherhood had been in opposition to the military power that had overthrown the monarch of Egypt in the middle of 1952. (Anon n.d.) In 1952, a radical nationalist group in the army led by Gamal Abdel Nasser apprehended the throne. Even though the Muslim Brotherhood had been involved in the movements, which were in opposition to the British and favour of Germany, Gamal Abdel Nasser and his party members did not consider sharing their power with others nor did they want to leave such a powerful rival undamaged. (Rubin, 2012)

The elements of Muslim brotherhood triumphantly penetrated various fields in Egypt such as the army and police Egypt were able to regulate the unions of lawyers, pharmacists, engineers, and doctors in the country. The Muslim Brotherhood enlisted technical specialists from universities that were uncomplicated due to the absolute repression of political representations and activities in the universities by Mubarak. Therefore, during the 1950s and 1960s, a large number of student unions vanished during the period of Mubarak. Students started to incline toward the Muslim Brotherhood to illustrate their dissatisfaction regarding the economy and policies of the government. (Aboul-Enein, et al., 2003)



After its reappearance in the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood has endeavoured to sustain its posture as a moderate and democratic association. Two writers from the Nixon Center S. Leiken and Steven Brooke have inscribed about the Muslim Brotherhood that it is an association based on national groups with distinct features and divergent sects who do not concur regarding the procedures to progress their tasks. However, all of these factions discard the phenomenon of global Jihad, meanwhile, adopting the characteristics of democracy such as elections. (Aly, 2007) As noted by Wickham the Muslim Brotherhood did not function in the revolutionary activities as an organization, however, certain young members of the Muslim Brotherhood added to such activities due to their affiliation with the other student organizations. (Ramos, 2016)

ELECTIONS

President Sadat freed the members of the Muslim Brotherhood from prison during the 1970s. He permitted the Muslim Brotherhood to participate unofficially in the liberalization of Egyptian politics devoid of legal standing. Consequently, members of the Muslim Brotherhood initiated to partake in elections; however, in a broader spectrum, the Muslim Brotherhood started participation in the political life of the country by running in elections as independent candidates while embracing new concepts of politics such as democracy, human rights, civil society, equal treatments and citizenship etc. Therefore, in the parliamentary elections of 2005, they acquired 20 per cent of the elected seats by achieving 88 seats. It was a significant victory for the organization as compared to their previous outcomes in the candidacy; they had acquired only 8 seats in 1948 and 36 seats in 1987. As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood has successfully gained informal legalization as well as their importance in public has been enhanced which made their existence stable in the Egypt and Arab media.

OBJECTIVES



One of the objectives of Al Banna was the eradication of secular law and the inception of Islamic law in place of Egyptian law. Al Banna's objectives also included the exclusion of several activities that are considered morally wrong in Islam such as gambling, monopolies, songs etc. Al Banna propagated pan Islamism, however, he never manifested opposition to pan-Arabism and pro-nationalist movements in Egypt.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The aspirant recruits as a follower of the Brotherhood and can remain in this phase from 6 months to 4 years. After this period a follower is approved at the local usra or family level which is led by a captain who is called naqib. In the 'usra' the ideologies of the followers are firmly monitored, through meetings at least once time in a week while discussing the activities of the followers. After clearing this phase the follower progresses to the supporter level as known as 'Muayyad', this period consists of one to three years. At this level, the supporter or 'Muayyad' has certain responsibilities given by their superiors, such as teaching, recruiting preaching etc. In this phase, the supporters have to memorize major parts of the Quran as well as it includes the reading of Al Banna's works. After this level, a candidate enters into the phase called affiliated or muntasib which is assumed as the last step towards full membership of the Muslim Brotherhood. This phase lasts for approximately one year. The next level is called organizer or 'Muntazim' which consists of two years terms. In the organizer phase, the aspirants have to memorize the Quran as well as the hadith. At this level, the candidate is assumed to be a lower-level leader who forms 'Usra' and can lead a chapter of several usras, and finally, after this stage, the candidate is promoted to amal also called working brother, after the test of his loyalty to the organization. (Trager, 2011)

INVOLVEMENT IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

The Muslim Brotherhood is one of the dominant organizations in the Middle Eastern countries. Its members along with its branches are estimated to be found in more than 8 countries with different names for instance, the Hamas of



Palestine, Ennahda of Tunisia, and The Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. (Adam, 2013) It has penetrated the Middle Eastern and North African countries via indigenous branches and ideological persuasions. Furthermore, the organization became well-known among Muslims living in Europe as well as North America. It has become prominent in directing Muslim communities and their dealings with the non-Muslim community and their respective governments through representing them. It has been widely viewed that there is no coherency and close harmonization in its various branches functioning in different countries, therefore the Muslim Brotherhood is presumed as a decentralized entity. However, it is not easy to delineate the logical ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, since the organization had to alter its message and policy, due to the social and political state of affairs. (Lagervall, 2021)

HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah was founded in Lebanon in early 1982, when the Israeli armed forces annexed Lebanon, and is based on the Shia school of thought, and was focused on the ouster of colonial powers from Lebanon in its initial years. It has been backed by Iran and its revolutionary guards in Lebanon, and Iran has been a key supplier of personnel and funds to the Party. Hezbollah was instituted by Shia clerics and later its name was decided by Ayatollah Khomeini, the supreme leader of Iran, which means “The Party of God”.

FORMATION

The fundamental causes for the establishment of Hezbollah can be found in social and political atrocities on the Shia population of Lebanon. The formation of Hezbollah has also been stimulated because of three factors which included the occupation of southern Lebanon for 22 years, in August 1978, the unpredicted disappearance of Imam Musa Sadr in Libya, and last but not least, the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran by Khomeini through the Iranian Revolution of February 1979.



The international view of Hezbollah is as an aggressive jihadist Islamic organization. The ideology of Hezbollah is based on three factors which are given below:

The first ideology is the creation of an Islamic state in Lebanon; it has been described in the manifesto called “Open Letter”, which was publicized in February 1985, however, currently it is just an aim but is not included in the political objectives of the party.

The second vision is about jihad, which comprises the concept of ‘greater Jihad’ as well as the denial of the continuation of Israel's existence.

Finally, the third fundamental view of Hezbollah is regarding adhering to the doctrine of the Islamic Republic of wilayat al-faqih. It is based on the perception of establishing an ideal form of governance for an Islamic state based on the articulation of Khomeini. (Blanford, 2017)

Hezbollah has been a part of electoral procedures since 1992. It acquires its main support from its wide channels such as schools, youth programs, clinics, and other social services. The year 2005 witnessed the entrance of Hezbollah to the cabinet for the first time, and since then it held from one to three seats in every government of Lebanon. (E. Humud, 2023)

The present Secretary General of Hezbollah, Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah elucidated that Hezbollah is the result of a self-derived movement which instigated during the intervention of Israel in 1982. Therefore, according to Nasrallah the establishment of Hezbollah is because of the will and decision of the group based on the Lebanese populace, who were majorly influenced by the ideology of Ayatollah Khomeini, who captured benefits from the revolution of Iran and Syrian backing, to install a confrontational movement against the Israeli occupation.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The procedure of recruitment of Hezbollah involves a set of divergent, social and economic populations of qualified Shia representatives and Shia clerics who are trained under the impact of the Iranian religion. The primary objective of the recruitment of Hezbollah is to sustain the resistance of Islamic units to



liberate the annexed areas and the eradication of the Israeli militant forces from Lebanon. In the early developmental stage of Hezbollah, the procedure of recruitment was profoundly influenced by Iran in various ways such as religious education, military education and financial support. The “Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard was responsible for the constitution of the main cause of confrontational forces or mujahedeen for the Islamic Resistance including the assumption of positions of earlier recruiters and training groups. (Butler, 2011)

INVOLVEMENT IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Since, the commencement of Hezbollah, it has constantly been robustly linked with Iran, which has played a considerable role in its establishment, hence, delineating the primary reason behind the robust commitment of Hezbollah to Iran. Moreover, there is a set of examples that provides evidence of the degree of the involvement of Iran in the establishment of the party. Such as, after the intervention of the Israeli armed forces into Lebanon in June 1982, the principal Shia clerics of Lebanon moved to Tehran Iran to be present at the annual Islamic Conference. Iran manifested its instant willingness to assist those clerics and volunteer to reinforce and consolidate the prearranged confrontation in Lebanon. (Lucic, 2009) Also, Iran has sent off a deputation of Iranian Revolutionary Guards to Bekaa to assist Hezbollah, whose aim was to hire, train and teach the newly recruited soldiers of the combative section of Hezbollah. Its transformation to a regional player while supporting the interests of Iran involved the transmission of significant members from positions deemed at Israel, which involved the incorporation of Iraq, Yemen, and Syria. (LEVITT, 2021) As per the Open Letter of Hezbollah, it embraces its devoted support and pronounces for the Arab and Muslim harmony. Hezbollah proclaimed its solidarity and support for Tunisia and Egypt as soon as the unrest erupted for social change according to the contemporary era, in 2011. Furthermore, Hezbollah had an analogous response to the disorders in other Middle Eastern countries such as Yemen, Libya, and Bahrain. (Shalabi, 2015) The association of Hezbollah in Syria has been evident since 2011, however, it



was publicized in 2013. It described its involvement in Syria based on providing security to Shia shrines and the Shia community who were under attack. (Bowen, 2015) It is not comprehensible why Hezbollah would support Hamas during the war between Hamas and Israel from the side of Palestine, because, Hezbollah and Hamas have been in opposition to each other in the Syrian civil war. Hezbollah has fought from the side of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad meanwhile Hamas militants have backed the primarily the Sunni opposition. Nevertheless, both parties share a common enemy, Israel. (What to Know About Hezbollah, the Powerful Iran-backed Group on Israel's Border, 2023)

ANALYTICAL COMPARISON

The analytical framework includes the analysis of the phenomenon which further breaks down that phenomenon for the evaluation of it. Similarly, the appearances of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah have been split independently to analyze the features and factors that influenced the behaviour and posture of these organizations.

By comparing the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah following are selective similar and dissimilar factors, which are further delineated below. The presence of colonial power, the oppression of local communities, the objective of social work, the objective of Jihad, and the aim of the establishment of the Islamic state.

The main cause of the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood was to mitigate the influence of British colonial power from Egypt. One of the chief causes of the formation of Hezbollah was to force out the Israeli militia from the soil of Lebanon. Both organizations share the objective of liberating Palestine from the Israeli occupation.

The recruitment process of the Muslim Brotherhood involves religious teachings. The recruitment procedure of Hezbollah also incorporates religious scholars. Both organizations shared the vision of an Islamic state; however, Hezbollah uses the Republic of Iran as an example of an Islamic state.



The founder of the Muslim Brotherhood was Hassan Al Banna, due to the fading image and teachings of Islam. Hezbollah was formed by the robust support of Iran, due to the oppression of the Shia population of Lebanon. The Muslim Brotherhood was primarily formed based on social work, while Hezbollah was established with the Jihadist conception. Both countries support democracy. The Muslim Brotherhood also participated in the electoral process while Hezbollah also participated in the electoral process in Lebanon.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper employs a secondary research methodology which involves the collection of data from various newspapers, research articles as well and books. In this research paper the data has been collected from foreign affairs, the Middle East Institute, Council on Foreign Affairs, ResearchGate, Jstore, Brill, and Arab Studies Quarterly. During the research process, the Hamas relevancy was very frequent to both organizations; however, the focus of this research paper was not Hamas therefore Hamas related data was not incorporated unnecessarily in the paper.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research paper are given below:

- To evaluate the circumstances of the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah.
- To contrast the recruitment process of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah.
- To analyze the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah.
- To differentiate the basics of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah.
- To analyze their involvement in other Middle Eastern countries.

CONCLUSION

The origin of both the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah belong to two different Middle Eastern countries, Egypt and Lebanon, respectively. These organizations came into existence either because of the unsuitable



circumstances of Islam in the entire world or due to social injustice to the selective communities such as the oppression of Shia in Lebanon. One of the reasons for the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah was the occupation or annexation of colonial powers or external forces of their territories. The Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah have also a similar approach towards the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The recruitment process of both organizations involves a set of complicated procedures, which is based on the teachings from clerics (Sunni clerics in the Muslim Brotherhood and Shia clerics in Hezbollah), and physical training. The Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah both support and call forth for Pan Arabism and Pan-Islamism. The Muslim Brotherhood initially never adhered to the Jihad and militant activities while the members of Hezbollah have been in its stating years were trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The Muslim Brotherhood has initiated a series of uprisings throughout the Arab world; meanwhile, Hezbollah is mainly involved in the Syrian civil war. Lastly, the core difference between the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah is the basis of their ideology as the Muslim Brotherhood's aim was to proceed with the Caliphate system meanwhile Hezbollah operates on the proclamations of Ayatollah Khomeini.

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