

# Political Parties and the Provision of Non-State Security in Lebanon

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# **Political Parties and the Provision of Non-State Security in Lebanon**

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## **Abstract**

Security is the canonical public good provided by the state to its citizens. Yet many states, especially those in the late developing world, are incapable or unwilling to provide security in a consistent fashion across their territory. The provision of security, order, and management of crime is a crucial “good” that parties can and do offer their constituents, particularly in divided and insecure societies. This leads to widespread variation in security and policing at the neighborhood level. What explains this variation in the provision of security and local policing by political parties? Why do certain parties defer to the state for security as opposed to providing their own security measures? Drawing on 131 semi-structured interviews conducted during eight months of fieldwork in Lebanon, this study suggests that organizational structure is one determinant of whether parties will step into the role of local security provider. It shows that political parties with strong organizational cohesion among members and robust linkages with constituent communities at the local level provide two distinct types of policing and security, guided by different political logics. Parties that lack the requisite organizational structure, however, are more likely to favor working through state institutions to provide policing.

## **Introduction**

How do average citizens access security and protection? Political science has long centered the Weberian definition of the state as having a monopoly over coercive power (Weber, 1946). Criminologists have questioned the validity of this conceptualization with reality; developed states have increasingly delegated authority to privatized policing firms (Baker, 2002; Bayley & Shearing, 2015; Dupont et al., 2003; Jones & Newburn, 2002; Marks & Wood, 2010; Shearing, 2005; Shearing & Wood, 2003; White & Gill, 2013). Others around the world have found themselves in hybrid or mediated arrangements with non-state actors (Bagayoko et al., 2016; Fregonese, 2012; Hazbun, 2016; Mazzola, 2020). These states are not in the middle of an ongoing war, but rather characterized by fragmented sovereignty; they are not solely responsible for security and do not have a monopoly over the use of coercive power.

There are numerous non-state groups around the world that offer policing and security to local communities. This type of non-state security is most common during wartime. A growing literature explores, for example, how militias govern areas and provide order amidst violence (Arjona, 2016; Mampilly, 2011). Much of this literature finds its roots in Olson's (1993) argument on stationary bandits. Framed as a theory of state formation, he claims that once bandits stop roving and establish themselves in a specific location, they will begin performing governance functions, including providing security, as their own economic success becomes based on the future viability of this set of stationary resources. Weinstein (2007), meanwhile, differentiates between ideologically motivated groups, who he posits will provide local populations with goods and services to gain support, and predatory groups, who he argues will exploit local populations instead.

Security provision by non-state actors may also occur outside the context of war. Lessing (2020: 13) developed a framework for criminal governance, arguing that Criminal Organizations may opt to police civilians for a variety of reasons, including political leverage or "to foster loyalty, sympathy, or even partisanship among residents..." Lessing & Willis (2019: 585), similarly, have explored how Brazil's Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) gang governs areas by "establishing a form of legitimacy along Weberian, rational-bureaucratic lines." Finally, one of the more common non-state security actors are vigilante groups (Johnston, 1996). In most cases, vigilante groups are the result of grassroots, bottom-up efforts by civilians living in insecurity. In Nigeria, for example, the Bakassi Boys infamously arose to combat rising crime, allegedly murdering criminals "with machete blows, dismembering their bodies and then burning them at the site of the execution" (Smith, 2004). The Bakassi Boys were eventually accused of many of the same crimes for which they had executed others.

This article focuses on the provision of security by political parties. Unlike some of the other actors engaged in local governance, political parties are both a part of the state *and* private organizations. They may therefore offer security and policing not merely as a form of territorial control, but for explicitly political purposes. Relying on the case of political parties in Lebanon, this article outlines a basic typology of politicized security provision to show that different security services are motivated by different political logics. It distinguishes between *community-oriented security*—i.e., providing security services, such as dispute and crime resolution, to constituents as part of a quid pro quo for political support—and *border management*—i.e., protecting a specific geographical region from outside interference to insulate the political party from state encroachment, generally through the use of barricades and checkpoints. Based on 131 semi-

structured interviews conducted during eight months of fieldwork in Lebanon, this study contends that political parties may provide one or both of these types of local security, and that the organizational structure of the party is a key determinant of the type of local security that party will be able to provide. In order to provide both *border management* and *community-oriented security*, political parties need both strong organizational cohesion, defined as the linkages between party members, and deep social embeddedness, understood as the linkages between the party and its constituents. Conversely, parties that lack a strong organizational structure will only be capable of offering limited types of *community-oriented security*.

### **Clientelism and Policing**

Although Scott (1972)'s definition of clientelism pointed specifically to security and protection as part of the clientelistic exchange, there are few studies of clientelism—either theoretical or using the case of Lebanon—that focus on security as the locus of the clientelistic exchange. This may be due to the impression that “in many polities, security and protection are provided by the state as a public good” (Stokes, 2009). Some studies note that *jobs* in the state police force may be allocated on a discretionary basis, or as a patronage good (Chandra, 2004; McCaffery, 1993). Yet, violence, crime, and (in)security are frequently relegated to background context, rather than security being considered a clientelistic good itself (Gade, 2018). For example, Gay (2012) shows in Brazil that drug gangs first emerged in *favelas*, or urban slums, as violent competitors to local neighborhood associations. Over time, these gangs wrestled their way to becoming key elements in the distribution of clientelistic goods from political parties, unseating the neighborhood associations in some cases. Although they used violence to intimidate local populations, they also provided dispute resolution, personal security provision, and established themselves as the police, jury, and executioner of local robbers, rapists, and child abusers. Müller (2016) goes further, centering the concept of security as a valuable patronage good in post-democratic Mexico City. In most cases, he claims, political parties used their access to state security resources to strengthen their local support base. This included increasing police presence in certain areas or co-opting state programs such as the *policía de barrio*, a state-funded community policing program. In addition to the co-optation of state police resources, Müller (2016) notes that some politicians organized informal security measures, called *vigilantes*, to police certain areas, in exchange for either political support or money. The party therefore stepped into the role of private security provider.

Security ties naturally to the conceptualization of clientelism as a coercive strategy based on negative inducements, such as threatening the withdrawal of future benefits or the use of violence (LeBas, 2013; Lemarchand, 1972; Stokes et al., 2013; Van de Walle, 2007). Yet, the role of clientelized security and policing need not be inherently negative or violent. Recent literature on civil wars has shown that these violent conflicts are characterized by a great deal of order provided by armed, non-state actors (Arjona, 2016; Keister & Slantchev, 2014; Mampilly, 2011). Militias and other wartime combatants often organize to provide order and create institutions, ranging from courts and police to public goods provision (Arjona, 2016; Weinstein, 2007). Rizkallah (2017: 2062) argues that in order to effectively control territory, “militias need to develop organized contact with the population” that is built over repeated interactions that help build trust rather than fear. This aligns with Auyero’s (2001; 2000) theory that clientelism may be based upon long-term relationships that become both practical and habitual; clientelism is based on reciprocity or mutual feelings of shared obligation between patrons and clients (Lawson & Greene, 2014). Furthermore, Nichter and Peress (2017) show that clientelism may not be an elite driven phenomenon; voters often come to the party with specific requests for benefits. Individuals may then opt to vote for the parties based on a sense of duty, or because the party is fulfilling needs not met by the state, rather than in response to threats or fears of being denied future goods (Mares & Young, 2016). Without these deep reciprocal connections, local citizens are unlikely to tolerate the party’s security and policing actions.

Discussions of clientelized security provision by political parties also dovetail with the criminology literature on alternative modes of policing outside the public control of the state (Baker, 2002; Bayley & Shearing, 2015; Crawford, 2006; Dupont et al., 2003; Jones & Newburn, 2002; Marks & Wood, 2010; Shearing & Wood, 2003; White & Gill, 2013). By providing security services, political parties challenge the quintessential role of the Weberian state as having a monopoly over the use of force. That said, the literature demonstrates that in different contexts, these privatized security arrangements can either disrupt or supplement the state’s monopoly over policing. Shearing (2005: 58) argues that “today, the police are only one node in a network of auspices and providers of nodes that work to govern security both alone and in conjunction with each other”. Other studies have shown how informal institutions and rules may instead serve to complement official state services (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006), and even allow the state to focus on other pressing issues (Cammett, 2014).

Importantly, however, in developed countries, the state endows these privatized police groups with authority. They are not sovereign and remain beholden to state laws and justice. State

oversight to “ensure that the state and non-state providers offer high *quality* services in an efficient, impartial, and accountable fashion” is necessary even in the case of non-state social welfare provision (Cammett & MacLean, 2014: 11). In developing countries or states with limited capacity, the rise of privatized policing may follow a different trajectory. The state does not bestow its authority upon a privatized police group and maintain ultimate control, but instead finds itself in an arrangement of fragmented authority with non-state actors in regards to governance and the use of force. This may involve the creation of autonomous states within a state, where the official government no longer enjoys jurisdiction over a given territory and people, or a hybrid situation where these new actors opt to defer to the state on some matters and not on others (Davis, 2009: 233).

Security provision is also distinct from other forms of clientelism. The distribution of items like cash transfers or even job appointments can theoretically be completed by a small number of individuals as they are a one-time exchange. Cammett and Issar (2010) argue that bricks and mortar clientelism, where political parties establish welfare institutions like healthcare clinics or schools, have higher costs than electorally based clientelism, as these forms of clientelism require the construction of buildings, the purchasing of equipment, and the hiring and managing of personnel. Clientelized security measures, meanwhile, require a more intensive time commitment to daily, or even hourly, monitoring and engagement. Moreover, local residents must respect the authority of the political party providing these services. Security is more *imposing* than other public, club, and private goods. While access to adequate and affordable medical care is undoubtedly essential, policing (or the lack thereof) is omnipresent. It creates physical barriers and obstacles.

Securitization has translated into constraints on our mobility and daily experiences in city spaces. Blocked streets, deviated passages, no parking zones, no photography areas, illegal parking, and other security measures imposed daily harassments, lengthened commutes, and constrained many of our daily practices (Fawaz et al., 2012: 174).

In a more extreme case, Gordon and Filc (2005) argue that the securitization of the Occupied Palestinian Territories has not only destroyed what they refer to as risk society, or “a society that develops a system of strategies and technologies to secure and manage the lives of its members” (544), but it has upended all sense of time and space. The imposition of physical barriers and manned checkpoints, where a person may be stopped for seconds, hours, or denied passage, means that individuals cannot calculate how long it will take to travel between locations.

In other words, policing and security has created physical and psychological limits that literally orders how citizens move through their day.

## **Research Design**

This study relies on a comparison between two political parties operating within the city of Nabatiyeh. Assessing the variation across political parties in a single geographic location allows me to hold constant the local socio-political and economic context, to uncover the within-party dynamics that facilitate security provision. Lebanon is often categorized as an outlier or unique case due to Hizbullah. A former civil war militia that refused to decommission its weapons at the end of the war, Hizbullah maintains an active militia that has engaged in interstate wars and is designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. and others. It is simultaneously a democratically-elected party that participates in Lebanon's national and local municipal governments (including in Nabatiyah, the city of study). Yet, the presence of militias and extra-state actors that wield influence over national and local politics is not a situation unique to Lebanon. The dynamics of fragmented security provision within Lebanon can provide insights into similar dynamics at play in other states.

This article is based on eight months of fieldwork conducted from 2016–2018.<sup>1</sup> I undertook a plausibility probe in January 2016 that included site visits in six of Lebanon's eight *Muhafazat* districts and included interviews with individuals from all eight regions.<sup>2</sup> The majority of the interviews and field research were conducted in the cities of Beirut, Tripoli, and Nabatiyeh. I conducted interviews with 131 individuals, including average Lebanese citizens, local elites and civil society activists, and current and former members of state security institutions. Twenty-three interviews were conducted in Nabatiyeh. Numerous additional interviews conducted in Beirut also addressed the security situation in South Lebanon.

Interviewees were selected based on snowball sampling. This method was selected due to the sensitive nature of security provision in Lebanon. Security and security institutions are often considered a taboo topic; the word for security, “amn,” is fraught and conjures images of foreign spies. My sampling began by reaching out to networks of co-workers, friends, and acquaintances established in 2011–2014, including individuals from across Lebanon's socio-economic spectrum

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<sup>1</sup> A total of five field research trips were undertaken in December 2016–January 2017, June–August 2018, April–May 2018, August–September 2018, and November–December 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Field research was not conducted in the Akkar and Beqaa *Muhafazat*.



and from Lebanon's main religious sects: Maronite, Sunni, Shi'a, Druze, and Armenian. As Ghosn and Parkinson (2019: 495) noted in their work on sectarianism in Lebanon, "generating long-term, trust-based relationships was essential to getting past many interlocutors' 'stock responses' to researchers and journalists, particularly those who they believed had not bothered to learn history". These connections established a sense of trust among interviewees that made them more willing to speak to me, particularly given my position as a foreigner. This method allowed me to branch out not only to co-workers of my connections, many of whom worked in various non-profits operating in Lebanon, but often to their families and friends outside this sector. Interviewing average citizens was particularly important to understanding how these individuals actually access security provision as compared to how elites or politicians *claim* citizens access security. For example, an individual working for the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities argued that Lebanese citizens respect and trust the Internal Security Forces (ISF),<sup>3</sup> a claim that was in direct contrast to the responses given by most interviewees.<sup>4</sup>

### **Defining Politicized Policing**

This study focuses on the variation in the provision of security by clientelistic political parties in Lebanon. This section will define key terms and discuss the variables used in the study, both in terms of security type and organizational characteristics.

Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) define clientelism as the direct, contingent exchange ("quid pro quo") between electoral constituencies and politicians. This study will define clientelistic political parties as groups that do not act as representatives of local interests or constituencies, but are instead driven by the goal of achieving public office and accessing state spoils. Since clientelistic exchanges are private and not formalized, the public has no role in shaping the benefits or resources of distribution (Stokes et al., 2013). Individuals vote for the party that provides them with benefits instead of based on their conscious or policy preferences. These parties may overlap with ethnic and traditional groups or kinship networks, but it is political expediency rather than personal connection that drives the resource distribution. That said, clientelistic political parties can also provide an avenue for communal networks that would not

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<sup>3</sup> The ISF are Lebanon's national police force. It is the oldest of Lebanon's security institutions, tracing its roots back to 1861 and the establishment of the *Mustasarrifate*, or Judicial Police, under the Ottoman Empire (*Safhat Min Tarekh Quwa Al-Amn al-Dakhle*, 2007: 20). The institution is plagued with accusations of corruption and, according to my interviews, is widely viewed as ineffective in its role as a protector.

<sup>4</sup> Interview 71.

typically compete in elections to do, albeit under the banner of a party and not as the network itself (G. Cox, 1999; Sartori, 1976).

Security, broadly defined, is protection from violence or harm. This study will adopt criminologists Johnston and Shearing's (2003: 1) definition of security as "personal, physical safety, as well as to the safety of [personal] belongings from damage or depredation." Politicized security is defined as the personal and material protection from violence or harm provided by political parties, which may or may not be distributed on a conditional basis. In other words, it is security that is offered by non-state actors—in this case political parties—with explicitly political purposes.

Based on inductive, qualitative research of five political parties in five neighborhoods across three cities in Lebanon, I further distinguish two distinct types of politicized security measures: 1. *Community oriented* measures, such as dispute resolution or crime solving, and 2. *Border Management* security including the erection of barricades or checkpoints around a specific geographic location. These two forms of security are distinguished by their *intended audience* and *goals*.

#### *Community-oriented security*

*Community-oriented security* is the routine, day-to-day action that seeks to maintain stability within a neighborhood context by preventing theft, assault, or the spread of drugs, among other crimes. This form of policing is divided into two types: *Club Goods* and *individualized policing*. *Club Goods* includes services targeted at the neighborhood level, and that all residents receive, regardless of political affiliation or support. This may include the use of informants and neighborhood watches to observe the community. *Individualized policing*, by comparison, targets assistance and services towards an individual person or small group of people, and may include help resolving a crime or arbitrating a dispute between neighbors. This assistance may be distributed on a quid-pro-quo basis, offered to supporters or those individuals pledging future support. For example, a political party may be willing to arbitrate a dispute involving supporters, but may be unwilling to engage in the same activity on behalf of non-supporters, even if they live in a party-controlled neighborhood.

As dispute resolution becomes a part of the party's regular security repertoire, with local members keeping a closer eye on relations between individuals involved in previous disputes, *community-oriented security* can have the effect of maintaining a peaceful neighborhood atmosphere for all

its residents—party members or not. This provides a way for the party to deepen its relationship with its constituents, but also with other residents living in regions with significant party support.

There is one specific form of *community-oriented security* that operates on a patronage basis—targeted directly to party members or high-level supporters—instead of on a clientelistic basis to voters. *Himaya*, which simply translates as “protection,” refers to the willingness of political parties to protect certain individuals from the state itself. Parties may use their political clout or power to contravene the authority of state institutions in the event that a party member has been involved in a crime, even if they are a perpetrator of violence. This creates a paradox where parties may both offer security and simultaneously undermine it in the same location. The idea of an organization creating an atmosphere of distrust and fear recalls Gambetta’s (1993: 25) description of the Sicilian mafia:

The mafioso himself has an interest in making regulated injections of distrust into the market to increase the demand for the good he sells: protection. If agents were to develop trust among themselves, he would become idle. The income he receives and the power he enjoys are primarily the fruits of distrust.

Unlike the mafia, however, it appears that the sense of unease caused by the practice of *himaya* is an unintended consequence. As one regional expert described, “The mafia has a long time horizon. It thinks in generations. Lebanese politicians think in news cycles.”<sup>5</sup> Lebanese political parties’ primary aim is to protect their own members, creating an even stickier relationship between itself and its members. The negative consequences this practice may have for fellow residents, including party supporters, remain a secondary concern.

This article includes *Himaya* as a security-related service even though the practice is not aimed towards providing protection or managing crime, as is the assumed goal of most forms of security provision. Policing, however, is also the exertion of authority and power over a civilian population. *Himaya* is thus an instance where political parties are exerting state-like authority and determining what counts as a punishable infraction and by whom.

### *Border management*

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<sup>5</sup> Interview. Boston, MA. 6 May 2020.

*Border management* involves securing and maintaining the borders of the neighborhood, deterring and thwarting external threats, which can range from terrorist attacks to kidnappings and automobile theft, among others. As such, it is a highly visible form of security provision. The logic behind this is a desire of political parties to establish authority and claim credit for services rendered (Mayhew, 1974; W. C. Müller, 2007). When parties mobilize to patrol neighborhood boundaries, they are reifying borders by creating physical delineations of space using barricades or checkpoints. In doing so, it appears that parties want constituents to know they are making such efforts on their behalf. People remain unaware of the actions of local police unless they are a witness, victim, or perpetrator of a crime, but can visually observe barricades and checkpoints each time they move in and out of a neighborhood. Parties are thus able to claim credit for providing security protection. For example, some barricades may be painted the colors of the local political party or tagged with their logo, or individuals wear an unofficial uniform that identifies them as party members. Political parties use *border management* as a means to establish their authority and claim credit for providing protection for their constituents and others living within that territory. Importantly, however, these measures are largely symbolic; an image of securitization without security. Furthermore, they appear to simultaneously create a sense of insecurity among the population—by implying that there are reasons to be concerned—and allay those concerns by imposing a sense of safety.

Finally, *border management* qualifies as a form of constituency service as it is a club good; it is non-rivalrous, but exclusively available to a certain subset of the population (Buchanan, 1965). *Border Management* security measures such as checkpoints are not targeted at individuals. They instead serve a specific region or neighborhood where the political party has a notable presence. It is thus unlikely that parties offer this service as a clientelistic good.

*Table 1: Breakdown of Security by Type*

<i>Border Management</i>	<i>Community-Oriented Security</i>
Checkpoints Barricades Border Patrols	<i>Individualized:</i> Crime Solving Dispute Resolution Arrest Himaya <i>Club Good:</i> Informants Neighborhood Watches/Nighttime Patrols (within the community)

### Organizational structure variables

This study argues that strength of a political party's organizational structure affects its capacity to provide security. A strong organizational structure is necessary because security provision—as compared to other clientelistic goods—requires a high degree of coordination among party members, and between the party and the local community.

Security provision requires three things: 1. The ability to manage and direct resources, 2. The ability to organize and direct people, including preventing members from defecting and personalizing services in their own name, and 3. The cooperation of the local population. Parties with moderate or weak connections with their local representatives and members are less capable of organizing and scheduling the various activities required for effective policing, and are also less capable of deterring potential defectors from personalizing any services. Similarly, parties need to have the support of local communities in order to avoid protests or insurrection at this type of non-state governance.

Parkinson and Zaks (2018) show that organizations are made up of four essential dimensions: 1. Roles, 2. Relations, 3. Behaviors, and 4. Goals. Relations—that is “the social linkages that define the nature, centralization, and hierarchy (if any) of the organization” (Parkinson & Zaks, 2018: 274)—form the backbone of organizational structure. Pearlman (2011: 8) similarly defines organizational structure as “the system of relationships and rules that integrate members of a movement for the pursuit of collective aims.” This project analyzes two specific aspects of the organization's structure and thus its organizational relations: 1. The *cohesion* of the party, which helps explain the linkages between the party and its members at the local level, and 2. The *social embeddedness* of the party, which explains the parties' linkages with the local community. If either of these relationships is missing, political parties will not have the capacity to provide security, because both relationships help parties overcome the coordination challenge of security provision.

#### *Party cohesion*

*Party cohesion* is one key variable that affects that party's ability to coordinate effectively. The concept of social cohesion has been the subject of a vast literature with numerous definitions (Friedkin, 2004; Moody & White, 2003). For the purposes of this project, I seek to assess the ways in which individual members are linked or committed an organization, specifically a political party. Pearlman's (2011) “organizational mediation theory of protest” argues that the cohesion of

a political movement, defined as “the cooperation among individuals that enables unified action” (2011: 9), determines whether protest movements will resort to violence or non-violence. In her conceptualization, this cohesion acts as the “command and control” structure for the movement, to ensure that it functions as a unitary actor. This mirrors Ocakli’s (2015: 394) explanation of cohesiveness as “the ability of a political party to behave as a united actor in the local community... Cohesive party organizations are like well-oiled machines—their leaders, bureaucrats, and activists efficiently execute and oversee tasks. They avoid factionalism and maintain internal discipline.” In essence, organizations (be they political parties, protest movements, rebel groups, etc.) need to create and maintain buy-in from members and supporters to continue to operate effectively.

I extend this concept to clientelistic political parties. The traditional roles of political parties—namely as a means of political communication between politicians and voters—are less important for clientelistic political parties. Instead, what matters more for the functioning and survival of these parties are the networks of institutions, political brokers, and members that facilitate the provision of goods and services.<sup>6</sup> Having a cohesive organization that is able to organize and direct resources, and, crucially, prevent any of its members or brokers from defecting (either to other parties or to create their own political movement) is critical to the party’s survival. In the case of security provision, *party cohesion* provides the structure and capacity necessary to mobilize and maintain a unified police force. I measure *party cohesion*<sup>7</sup> by qualitatively assessing the connections between the party and its local representatives. Like the variable on commitment to the state, a party’s cohesion may change over time.

### *Social embeddedness*

A political party’s *social embeddedness* in a specific locale also affects that party’s ability to provide security services. I define *social embeddedness* as the network of social relations tying citizens to the party. More so than other forms of clientelism or service provision, in order to provide security, parties need to forge links with local representatives and communities. Political parties may be able to rent or buy property in a specific location to run a clinic or school, even

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<sup>6</sup> There is a rigorous debate over whether robust organizational structures are necessary to winning elections (Hale, 2006; Katz, 1990; Van Dyck, 2014). Clientelistic political parties must, at a minimum, believe that distributing goods and services is crucial to winning elections, and thereby create organizations that facilitate that distribution.

<sup>7</sup> Pearlman (2011) measures cohesion by looking at three different aspects of the movement: 1. Leadership, 2. Institutions, and 3. Population’s sense of collective purpose.

absent close community ties.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, moderate or weak support within a local community makes the party less capable of coordinating security measures in that locality. They would not be able to rely upon voluntary citizen participation in neighborhood watches or for locals to act as informants. People may not trust them to broker and enforce dispute resolution. Similarly, highly visible security measures like checkpoints and barricades are less likely to be tolerated by citizens if the party is not deeply embedded within the community. In fact, people may view these activities as illegal or potentially view them as an occupation in the event of a deeply divided society.<sup>9</sup>

Linkages between a political party and its constituents can take numerous forms. Some linkages are solely based on electoral factors, such as agreement with a party's platform or even forms of clientelism like vote buying. During Lebanon's 2018 Parliamentary elections, for example, interviewees described voting marketplaces on Whatsapp, where individuals would pool together to "sell" a voting bloc to the highest bidder.<sup>10</sup> Corstange (2016) similarly argues that political parties in competitive elections need to offer the highest quality goods to maintain support, suggesting that the linkages between parties and constituents are tenuous. Despite these activities that seek to bind constituents to the party, individuals could feasibly shift allegiances to another party.

To allow a political party to provide security and essentially govern a territory, on the other hand, represents a deeper type of political connection. These require deeper linkages, such as familial connections, with high-ranking party members or previous membership in the party's proto-militia. Of the country's main political parties, only the Sunni Future Movement, headed by Saad Hariri, and the Christian Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), headed by former military General Michel Aoun, were not active militias during the war. Finally, family members of martyrs who died on behalf of the militia may also feel a close connection to its successor political party. I consider a political party to have low *social embeddedness* if its connections to the local community are solely based on clientelistic exchanges, whereas deeply embedded parties will display at least one other source of linkage with the local community.

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<sup>8</sup> Of course, whether or not these businesses succeed likely depends upon some combination of developing a customer base and receiving financial support from the party. As Cammett (2014) explores, political parties that intend to expand their bases of support may opt to build medical clinics in strategic locations *outside* their areas of core support.

<sup>9</sup> Interviewees from the Chouf village of Baakleen were concerned about what was perceived as Hizbullah's encroachment in the mountain regions. They were afraid that they would become subject to Hizbullah's security apparatus and would be unable to request state assistance in the event of a crime or incident. Interview 52, Interview 54.

<sup>10</sup> Interview 80.

In the context of the research conducted in Nabatiyeh, I expect that political parties with weak organizational structures—those with limited *party cohesion* and/or limited *social embeddedness* in the local community—will only be able to provide forms of *community-oriented security*. Political parties with strong organizational structures—those with *both* extensive *party cohesion* and deep *social embeddedness*—provide both *community-oriented security* and *border management*.

## Security in Nabatiyeh

Lebanon is a consociational democracy that divides power among its 18 officially recognized religious sects, mandating a 50/50 split of power sharing between Muslims and Christians. It has a fraught history, having fought a civil war from 1975 to 1990 that saw fighting both across and within the country's major religious sects. Thirty years later, many of the country's political leaders are former warlord and militia leaders. Lebanon also scores poorly in many important governance indicators. The Fragile State Index has it listed as the 40<sup>th</sup> most fragile state (out of 178)<sup>11</sup> and Transparency International scores it as the 137<sup>th</sup> most corrupt (out of 198).<sup>12</sup> Brookings' Index of State Weakness ranks Lebanon as the 93<sup>rd</sup> weakest state (out of 141), but gives it only a 3.89 for control of corruption and 2.69 on political stability and absence of violence (on a 10 point scale with 0 being the worst) (Rice et al., 2008).

Nabatiyeh is a predominately Shia city in the Nabatiyeh Governate (*Mohafazat*) in South Lebanon.<sup>13</sup> The Central Administration of Statistics estimated the Nabatiyeh district's population at 180,200, or 3.7% of Lebanon's total population in 2018.<sup>14</sup> According to the Data Liberation Project, the city of Nabatiyeh proper only had 28,427 registered voters during the 2018 Parliamentary election, of which only 3,547 are registered as Non-Shia voters.<sup>15</sup> The city and its environs have low levels of crime as compared to other areas of the country. According to data from the ISF, Nabatiyeh has the second lowest rate of murder cases from 2011–2016.<sup>16</sup> There were

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<sup>11</sup> <https://fragilestatesindex.org/2020/05/10/from-one-crisis-to-the-next-in-lebanon/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/lebanon>

<sup>13</sup> The UNDP estimates that the entire Nabatiyeh Governate has a population of 205,411 or 6.6% of their total estimated population of 3,111,828. See: <http://www.undp.org.lb/programme/pro-poor/poverty/povertyinlebanon/molc/livingcondition/D/Mohafazats.htm>

<sup>14</sup> See: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_732567.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_732567.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> There are likely numerous problems with this data. For example, Beirut has the fewest number of cases at only 18, or 2%, with 0 and 1 cases reported in 2011 and 2012, respectively. The fact that the suburbs of metro Beirut, including Dahiyeh, are included in the Mount Lebanon region rather than in the Beirut



740 official murder cases between 2011 and 2016, of which the South only accounted for 78, or roughly 10.5%.<sup>17</sup> In a survey conducted by International Alert, only 4% of respondents from Nabatiyeh report being a victim of a crime as compared to 21% in Beirut (Wannis, 2014: 8). An ISF officer in the Nabatiyeh police station claimed that there are few felonies in the city (like murder). Car thefts and purse snatching are the vast majority of crimes.<sup>18</sup>

There are several possible explanations for the reported low levels of crime. First, many interviewees attributed a lack of crime to the small size of the city as compared to bigger cities like Beirut and Tripoli. Others argued that the morality and culture of Nabatiyeh's residents prevent them from committing immoral acts. Southern Shi'a, they claim, are more traditional and religious than other areas of the country and thus emphasize values like neighborly relations.<sup>19</sup> Finally, another interviewee tied the lack of violence to the city's demographics. The homogenous population makes it less prone to the types of interconfessional violence, petty crime, or militant activity found in other areas of the country like Beirut.<sup>20 21</sup>

Conversely, the low levels of crime may also be the result of under-reporting by victims or a failure by the ISF to properly log these crimes. A police officer working in Nabatiyeh's police station (*Mukhfār*) claimed that they are understaffed and do not have the time to both take reports of crimes (which are handwritten on paper) and enter them into the official, electronic state database.<sup>22</sup> One interviewee said he waited 90-minutes to report a stolen phone and the officer who took the report was unfriendly and suggested that there is nothing they will be able to do.<sup>23</sup> The ISF's reputation as a corrupt institution may also lead many citizens to forgo reporting petty crimes. When asked what they would do in the event that their car or moped was stolen, most

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municipality *could* explain part of this low number. It seems highly unlikely, however, that the country's metropolitan capital and largest city experienced one murder over the course of two years.

<sup>17</sup> This data was acquired by the firm *Information International* and reported across various news media. (2018, March 16). Bil Arqam... Jarimiya al-Qatl fi Lubnan fi Azdyad. *Mahkama*. <https://www.mahkama.net/?p=6533>

<sup>18</sup> Interview 60.

<sup>19</sup> . This parrots the notion of *Ashraf al-Nass*, a phrase meaning "The Most Honorable People" that Hizbullah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah uses to address the country's Shi'a population. Khitab al-Sayyed Nasrallah fi Mahrjan al-Antisar. (2006, September 23). *Al-Akhbar*. [https://al-akhbar.com/Archive\\_Local\\_News/210126](https://al-akhbar.com/Archive_Local_News/210126)

<sup>20</sup> Interview 8.

<sup>21</sup> A similar claim was made regarding the absence of Palestinian camps within the immediate vicinity. The camps are perceived to be hotbeds of terrorist activity, drugs, and petty crime, thereby leading to an increase of criminal activity in their environs.

<sup>22</sup> Interview 102.

<sup>23</sup> Interview 28.

interviewees in the nearby village of Kfar Sir, for example, claimed that they would first turn to their fellow neighbors for help identifying a potential culprit or finding the vehicle before turning to the ISF for help.<sup>24</sup> No interviewees expected that the police would be able to help them with the issue beyond filing a report.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the “official” lack of crime, many interviewees still reported feeling unsafe. “The situation is really bad. There is no security... look, there are bombings even in the most secure places.”<sup>26</sup> This perception of insecurity is partially due to South Lebanon’s history of conflict with Israel. There exists a consistent and palpable fear among many that the future incidence of war is not a question of “if” but “when.”<sup>27</sup> Another key determinant of local peace and security is the relationship between Hizbullah and Harakat Amal. The two parties are viewed as allies due to the use of joint electoral tickets for parliamentary elections since 2000 (Hamzeh, 2015: 116; Samii, 2008: 43). Yet, their political alliance belies deep tensions and a fraught history.<sup>28</sup> During elections, for example, “... there was considerable animosity among grassroots supporters as reflected in the crossing out of each other’s candidates’ names on the coalition lists” (Hamzeh, 2015: 117). Many still harbor animosity and hatred towards their former adversary, especially older generations who remember the Civil War. Skirmishes between rival factions were common in the 1990s, over political iconography, hanging of flags, or control of particular mosques. One interlocuter even claimed that some Amal members hate Hizbullah more than they hate Israel.<sup>29</sup> Since the creation of a strong political alliance in the 2000s, however, these disputes have become increasingly rare, though they do still occur.<sup>30</sup> The alliance is preventative members are

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<sup>24</sup> Interview 9.

<sup>25</sup> I specifically asked interviewees about how they would respond to a stolen vehicle for two reasons. First, car theft is one of the more common crimes in Lebanon. According to a report by the Central Administration for Statistics, over 29% (1,761) of the 5,997 crimes committed in 2011 were related to cars, with car theft being the most common. Second, Lebanese citizens are incentivized to report a car theft to the ISF given the possibility that stolen vehicles might be used in other crimes, particularly car bombings. See: <http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/Excel/SYB/2011-2013/PART%20I%20-%20RESIDENTS%202011-2013.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Interview 7.

<sup>27</sup> There is a sense of pride in surviving this history; some signs during the most recent 2019 protests in Nabatiyeh against government corruption read “Nabatiyeh does not bow, just ask the Zionists.”

<sup>28</sup> Whereas Hizbullah was able to wrest political support and control of the Beqaa and Dahiyeh from Amal, Nabih Berri’s party has been able to maintain strong support in the South. Of the 16 Amal MPs election in the 2018 elections, only three were not in the South. Ghazi Zaiter won in Baalbeck-Hermel, Mohammad Nasrallah in West Beqaa-Rashaya, and Fadi Alameh in Baabda (Data Liberation Project).

<sup>29</sup> Interview 131.

<sup>30</sup> S. Jaffal. (2016, August 16). [Ishkal al-Sarafand: Hizbullah Yradakh li Amal wa Yanziaa Shaaratho wa Souraho. Janoubia.](http://www.almourabitoun.com/2016/08/blog-post_55.html); A. A. M. al-Alamiya. Bil Soura: Ashkal aala Rafea al-Sour bein Hizbullah wa Harakat Amal fi Sarafand. *Almourabitoun*. [http://www.almourabitoun.com/2016/08/blog-post\\_55.html](http://www.almourabitoun.com/2016/08/blog-post_55.html)

incentivized to avoid problems with rival party members. The peace pact is precarious, however. “Right now, there is a mutual decision between Hizbullah and Amal to maintain stability. So, things are good. People don’t say ‘Oh thank God there is security and safety,’ they say ‘thank God things are good right now between Hizbullah and Harakat Amal.’”<sup>31</sup>

In terms of security provision, the two political parties maintain a great deal of influence over state security institutions in Nabatiyeh, ensuring that their members are stationed in the city. This allows both Hizbullah and Amal to have sway over the actions taken by individuals representing state institutions, as well as leaving the impression among citizens that state institutions are merely a “façade” for the political parties.<sup>32</sup> The head of the local police station (*Mukhfir*) in Nabatiyeh is allegedly associated with Amal. An interviewee associated with Amal claimed that this appointment was made specifically so that the party can directly and immediately fix issues. He added that having de facto control over the station also means that in the event that any member of Amal is arrested, they can ensure either their quick release or minimal punishment.<sup>33</sup>

Others similarly brushed off the ISF, saying “all of them are Harakat!”<sup>34</sup><sup>35</sup> When asked who is the most effective security institution on the ground, one interviewee responded with a laugh and stated “either Hizb[ullah] or Harakat [Amal], who else is there?”<sup>36</sup> Citizens believe that all individuals working for state institutions are there at the behest of, or in support of, a particularly political party;<sup>37</sup> “for example, if someone got their job in the ISF thanks to Berri or whoever, then they’re going to keep that in mind and be making decisions and working towards goals that fit with whatever Harakat Amal wants.”<sup>38</sup> The station thus operates on two levels: 1. In its official capacity as the coercive arm of the Lebanese state, and 2. As the coercive arm of a political party.

State-run checkpoints allegedly operate at the request or direction of the parties. Until Fall 2018, Nabatiyeh was surrounded by military and police checkpoints. Many interviewees shrugged when questioned about the necessity of these checkpoints, some citing the threat from ISIS and

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<sup>31</sup> Interview 103.

<sup>32</sup> Interview 116.

<sup>33</sup> Interview 103.

<sup>34</sup> Local residents typically use ‘Harakat’ (movement) instead of the party’s official name when discussing Harakat Amal.

<sup>35</sup> Interview 43.

<sup>36</sup> Interview 5.

<sup>37</sup> Interview 12.

<sup>38</sup> Interview 117.

others suggesting that they are symbolic.<sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup> Whereas Amal operates the checkpoints by proxy thanks to their patronage appointments in the ISF, local citizens argued that these checkpoints would never be allowed to operate without either tacit or explicit approval from Hizbullah.<sup>41</sup> <sup>42</sup>

In addition to the capture of state institutions, both Amal and Hizbullah operate independent security measures. The most common form of *community-oriented security* is the neighborhood watch. “There are guys (*Shabāb*) from the party who watch and pay attention to what’s happening.”<sup>43</sup> Most interviewees claimed that these, typically, young men were working to supplement gaps in police provision, arguing that the state does not have the capacity to effectively patrol the city, particularly at night. These efforts are supplemented by informants. According to a community leader, “parties will do things like pay someone to open an espresso stand and pay them to keep their ears open. Or they’ll pay a taxi driver \$200 a month.”<sup>44</sup> Others are more obvious. During a Monday market,<sup>45</sup> an interlocuter pointed out young men seemingly waiting around, noting that they were Hizbullah members tasked with watching for any potential problems.

Interviewees repeatedly claimed that the political parties help in resolving crime only to party members or known supporters. For example, a young man in Nabatiyeh whose family and friends are affiliated with Amal recounted a story of how he identified a driver that hit his parked car.<sup>46</sup> This car happened to be parked within the vicinity of Amal’s offices, which have security

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<sup>39</sup> Interview 11.

<sup>40</sup> The symbolic nature of the checkpoints is supported by the fact that LAF and ISF soldiers were removed from them during the parliamentary elections in May 2018. Empty checkpoints stood with no one guarding them in the days ahead of the elections and cars passed through the typical bottlenecks unencumbered. The soldiers were allegedly re-deployed to voting stations to help prevent electoral violence. At a minimum, the fact that these security points were not seen as necessary during the elections was an indication that the checkpoints were unwarranted in the first place. In fact, these checkpoints (including some that predated the ISIS threat) were later permanently removed in Fall 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Interview 102.

<sup>42</sup> There are allegedly two reasons for the checkpoints. First, living under a condition of fear is essential to Hizbullah’s survival. Hizbullah’s *raison d’être* is resistance to Israel. The shadow of future violence thus justifies—for supporters—the need for Hizbullah its weapons. The continued presence of checkpoints suggests that there is something to protect against. Second, the presence of state operated checkpoints allows Hizbullah to claim that it is not going over the state, a common criticism of the militia. Instead, they are evidence of respect for Lebanese sovereign authority. Interview 103.

<sup>43</sup> Interview 7.

<sup>44</sup> Interview 103.

<sup>45</sup> The Monday market is a large street market held every Monday. In addition to fresh fruit and vegetables, pop up stands selling scarves, clothes, and housewares, among other items, are on display through the city center.

<sup>46</sup> Interview 116.

cameras in place. He was able to ask the office to identify the make, model, and plate of the vehicle that had hit his car. Once he had this information, he then reached out to a member of army intelligence—also affiliated with Amal—to get the name and phone number of the registered owner of the vehicle. This resolution was completely dependent upon his connections with the party; it is highly unlikely that Amal would have given an unknown or unaffiliated person access to the cameras that identified the vehicle in the first place.<sup>47</sup> Another interviewee claimed that if he got a speeding ticket, he would go through Amal to cancel the ticket. “I know they would do it because they know me, and they know my political stance.”<sup>48</sup> Many bemoaned that *wasta*, or political connections, is needed to solve problems. Numerous interviewees claimed that they could not request assistance from either political party; they would not help them since they were not members or known supporters. Notably, most of these individuals also reported not voting in the previous elections. Their lack of political involvement thus left them outside the necessary channels for patronage.

Finally, *Himaya*, or “protection,” is only offered to party members, as opposed to supporters. While it can mean protection from harm, it also covers the willingness of the party to aid members in the event of a crisis. A local municipal policeman claimed that “if there is any problem between two guys from opposite parties—like fighting or whatever—I don’t get involved with it because the parties will deal with it.”<sup>49</sup> Although this quote implies that he *opts* not to respond, the reality is that the parties will often not allow local police to get involved. In this way, *Himaya* acts as a double-edged sword.<sup>50</sup> While members may benefit from the party offering them protection and safety, other community members tend to lose out, particularly in cases where a party member engages in violence or criminal activity and the party steps in to prevent that member from facing state prosecution. A common nickname used to refer to members of Harkat Amal is *Zabran*, or “thugs”. This nickname reflects the feelings among many Lebanese that Amal employees will act violently with little recourse. “If you get into a fistfight and don’t have *wasta*

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<sup>47</sup> The reason that he chose to use his political connections to identify the person rather than reporting the incident to the ISF was because of his perception that the police would be ineffective. He claimed that reporting the incident to the ISF would have taken longer to resolve, if they resolved it at all.

<sup>48</sup> Interview 103.

<sup>49</sup> Interview 40.

<sup>50</sup> *Himaya* may also be responsible for the low levels of reported crime within the city. Not only will the party intervene to protect their own members from prosecution, but it is also likely that the ISF may be unwilling or incapable of recording any crime involving political party members because of the problems it may cause them. Interview 124.

with the parties, you'll be taken to jail. If you have connections (*wasta*), you won't."<sup>51</sup> Another recounted an incident where an Amal bodyguard began spraying bullets into the air indiscriminately within the city center during a dispute.<sup>52</sup> Although he was questioned by ISF, he was quickly released without any punishment or recourse, despite committing an arrestable offense.

Of the two parties providing clientalistic security provision in Nabatiyeh, only Hizbullah mobilizes *border management* mechanisms. Following a series of bombings targeting Shia areas in Beirut starting in 2013, Hizbullah began operating checkpoints on all of the main streets entering the city center. Most of these checkpoints were placed mere feet away from ISF checkpoints, forcing cars to stop at two different places within seconds. According to local residents, these types of security measures were an unusual, but not unprecedented, step for Hizbullah. The party erects temporary checkpoints during the yearly Ashura celebrations to protect parishioners during the *Masira* procession.<sup>53</sup> The party also employs bomb sniffing dogs and other measures during these types of special events.<sup>54</sup> The semi-permanent checkpoints erected around Nabatiyeh were thus indicative of the special circumstances facing the organization, particularly given the security failures that led to multiple bombings within Hizbullah-controlled neighborhoods in Beirut.

Hizbullah will occasionally use checkpoints and barricades in targeted areas during important meetings, events, or trainings, sometimes referred to as “no-go” areas.<sup>55</sup> Said one interviewee, “Sometimes they will close the street and not even let the police in.”<sup>56</sup> Another interviewee claimed that he and his friends were barred from camping in a public area by Hizbullah officials.<sup>57</sup> This type of security is intended to benefit the party rather than its supporters. The measures reify borders by creating physical delineations of space using barricades or checkpoints and indicate the party's territorial control over the neighborhood; “they were

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<sup>51</sup> Interview 30.

<sup>52</sup> Interview 103.

<sup>53</sup> Interview 28.

<sup>54</sup> Interview 43.

<sup>55</sup> An infamous example of these ‘no-go’ zones is the former “security square” (*al-Muraba' al-Amni*) located in the South Beirut neighborhood of Haret Hreik. Many of the Hizbullah offices were located in this district (until they were destroyed during the 2006 war with Israel) and the organization operated checkpoints that would ban not just state forces but non-residents from entering the area. In 2007, for example, members of the ISF were allegedly detained and interrogated by members of Hizbullah's *Indibat* when they attempted to intervene in a street fight within Dahiyeh.

<sup>56</sup> Interview 40.

<sup>57</sup> Interview 116.

showing who is the boss. They put the checkpoints right next to the ISF or the army to show ‘hey, we are the power here’.”<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the party can use these measures to signal to constituents that they are providing the crucial governance of protection (W. C. Müller, 2007).

### *Organizational Cohesion*

Harakat Amal has a moderate organizational structure; while it lacks strong cohesion among its members, it still maintains linkages with its constituent communities. Amal’s lack of organizational cohesion is the result of two primary factors. First, the party no longer maintains a clear guiding ideology. Amal was established by Imam Musa Sadr in 1974 as a movement aimed to improve the social and economic conditions for Shi’a in Lebanon, whose communities had historically received less state funded development (Lob, 2013: 138). It specifically sought to create a more just power-sharing system that reflected the actual demographics of Lebanon, rather than using the 1932 census, upon which the existing system was based (Maktabi, 1999). It never intended to *overthrow* the Lebanese government and install a new regime, but to improve the established regime. Nabih Berri, a Shi’a lawyer who had previously held a number of important positions within the organization, including spokesperson, secretary of the political bureau, and assistant secretary general, became Secretary General in 1980 following the disappearance of Sadr in Libya (Nir, 2011: 25). Amal participated in disarmament following the end of the Civil War and did not—at least openly—maintain its militia, instead turning towards establishing a political party. In fact, it was Amal’s increasing incorporation into the political system that gave Hizbullah the opportunity to take over as the ideologically-driven defender and protector of Shi’a. As Szekely (2012: 119) describes, the growth of Hizbullah’s robust service institutions grew a “reputation for scrupulous honesty and piety [that] lent the organization a moral authority that Amal lacked.” Instead of ideology, what binds most Amal members to the party in contemporary times is the provision of clientelism, and specifically political appointments. As Shanahan (2011: 119) argued, “... many of Amal’s supporters are therefore attracted by its ability to dispense patronage rather than by its ideological orientation. Consequently, there is little or no pressure on the party to develop its ideological position, and in this regard, it has stagnated.” There is thus no logic driving Amal as a political movement beyond accessing government spoils.

This lack of ideology has turned Amal’s membership into a hodgepodge of former fighters and Civil War loyalists, sycophants dedicated to party leader Nabih Berri, and a collection of

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<sup>58</sup> Interview 119.

moderate Shi'a who are ideologically opposed to Hizbullah.<sup>59</sup> There are many former fighters who continue to support the party because of their longstanding connections. There are also several moderate Shi'a, most of whom are not driven to support the party for anything Amal itself has done, but rather because they are ideologically opposed to Hizbullah's domestic politics. Finally, comprising most of the party, are those who have accessed clientelistic spoils and thus continue to support Amal and Berri in order to maintain those channels of access. The net result of the majority of party members being driven by clientelistic spoils is that Amal has increasingly practiced *Himaya*, and is notorious for being one of the more corrupt and mafia-like parties in the country. A local resident in Chiyah described Berri's leadership:

The government doesn't provide anything and then they want to charge you high taxes for the nothing they do... There is no government, no security, no nothing. The entire country is run by mafia men. They have their hands in everything, run everything, steal everything... It's all run by a mafia.<sup>60</sup>

Second, Amal makes little effort to organize and engage its membership. Historically, the party had little organizational structure during its nascent years as a militia. At first, the militia did not attract many fighters. "For many Shi'i villagers, the movement's name was merely a synonym for any collective self-defense activity carried out in the village" (Norton, 1987: 63). Many of the country's Shi'a who participated in the early years of the war did so primarily as part of leftist militias, including the Communist Party and Ba'ath party (Nasr & James, 1985: 13). The Amal militia was originally one ally among the patchwork of leftist militias headed by Kamal Jumblatt's Lebanese National Movement and backed by the PLO (Schulhofer-Wohl, 2019: 89).<sup>61</sup>

The current political party also has a very loose organizational structure. At the top there is a President, Vice President, Political Bureau, and six-member Executive Board (Elias, n.d.). These positions are supposed to be elected every three years by a General Conference. In 2013, however, the board voted to extend their mandate until 2015, allegedly in an attempt to

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<sup>59</sup> Although a small group of independent Shi'a have been working to offer a third way for constituents, they also suffer from a lack of cohesion. A ticket comprising independent Shi'a (*Shibana Hki*) ran for the South II race during the 2018 Parliamentary elections. Just days before the election, one of the candidates, Rami Aleik, publicly denounced the ticket allegedly due to a dispute with journalist Ali el-Amine. Interview 89.

<sup>60</sup> Interview 89.

<sup>61</sup> At later stages of the war, Amal fought against its former ally, the PLO, for control of South Lebanon (Picard, 2002).



restructure and reinvigorate the party.<sup>62</sup> This election is merely a formality as Berri controls the leadership of the party and ensures his own reelection. Harakat Amal has four regional offices.<sup>63</sup> Two of the offices cover the areas of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, and the Beqaa. The other two offices split the south into two regions: one manages the region of Nabatiyeh, Jezzine, and Saida, while the other focuses on the border areas of Marjayoun, Hasbaya, Bint Jbeil, and Sour. These regional offices are allegedly run by a committee. Underneath these regional offices are 29 sub-regional offices. These offices are also supposed to be run by committees headed by an organizational officer. At the lowest level are the individual employees and members. These members are arranged into divisions at the village or neighborhood level. In 2004, Timur Goksel estimated that Amal had roughly 5,000 armed members, but who are not properly trained and organized into a militia.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the appearance of a cohesive structure, Amal's central and peripheral offices do not function in a cohesive manner. In fact, interviewees—including party members—often seemed puzzled when questioned about whether and what the structure of the party is. Diplomatic cables also show many local leaders and academics describing Amal as “disorganized.”<sup>65</sup> What is clear, however, is that Berri retains ultimate authority over top-level decision making; “... Berri tries to make all decisions himself, but he makes those decisions in the interests of his family members' finances, not for the sake of the party.”<sup>66</sup> It appears that the functional relationship between Amal's central organization within Beirut and its peripheral offices is one of quasi-independence. Despite Berri's ultimate control over the party, there is no stringent oversight mechanism. Party leaders in Beirut allegedly only interfere in important issues, leaving the local office a great deal of leeway in distributing resources and appointing individuals to positions.<sup>67</sup> There is also only coordination between the regional offices when necessary.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, the party rarely holds events to engage members. There are no conferences or meetings that allow members to hear of leadership decisions or give input on the development of the party. On the rare occasions that they do hold an event (such as a commemoration of Sadr's

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<sup>62</sup> See: [Harakat Amal tahdar li'aadar haykilatha al-tanthemiya](#). Janoubia. 25 October 2013.

<sup>63</sup> Interview 117.; <http://amal-lmahromin.alafdal.net/t694-topic>.

<sup>64</sup> [Lebanon: What's Wrong with Amal?](#) (Wikileaks Public Library of US Diplomacy 04BEIRUT4941\_a). (2004). Lebanon Beirut.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Interview 117.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

disappearance), only high-level leaders are invited to attend.<sup>69</sup> Lower-level members thus typically only engaged with the *Rais Shabi*. There is thus little linking membership to the party beyond the promise of clientelistic spoils. This lack of cohesion thus makes it more difficult for Harakat Amal to effectively coordinate its members on a daily basis.

Hizbullah, by comparison, has a highly cohesive organization. This is the result of three factors: 1. Its hierarchical structure, where leadership exerts control over the entirety of the party, 2. The Resistance militia, and 3. The distribution of patronage resources to party members.

In a 2003 documentary by Lebanese television station NBN on the formation of Hizbullah, head of the Politburo Sayyed Ibrahim al-Sayyed claims that the original intention was to create an organized popular movement, not a political party (Assaf & Jalāl, 2003). Yet, Hizbullah maintains the most cohesive, vertical organizational structure of any party in Lebanon, “where the highest level of leadership exerts ultimate authority” (Khatib et al., 2014: 16). This is particularly true in the South.<sup>70</sup> The organization is headed by the Secretary General (SG), who is supported by a Deputy Secretary General. Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was elected as SG in May 1993 and has consolidated control over Hizbullah’s vast organization and institutions. He has since worked to personalize Hizbullah and has maintained his power by appointing allies to key positions.<sup>71</sup> Nasrallah has, in essence, turned the party into a cult of personality typical of many

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<sup>69</sup> Interview 131.

<sup>70</sup> Hizbullah’s “control” over its representatives in the Beqaa region is a little more complex and tenuous than the South. The Beqaa has traditionally had numerous large clans (*‘ashair*) that still hold traditional sway over their individual family members (Shanahan 2011: 40-1). The region is also known for having a sense of lawlessness, thanks to the prevalence of marijuana farms, smuggling, and other criminal activities like the infamous Brital car theft ring. Hizbullah keeps the support of these large families through two means. First, it recruits important, but not the highest-ranking, members of the family as politicians. This creates buy-in from the families to support their own without Hizbullah having to directly contend with the highest-ranking member of the family. Second, Hizbullah provides protection for criminal activities in this area. Simply, Hizbullah does not allow the army to intervene and arrest criminals, nor raid the illegal marijuana farms, as long as the families continue to support Hizbullah politically and do not challenge the organization. If an individual or family challenges Hizbullah or creates a major issue, the militia will allow the government to step in. For example, there was a crackdown on the Brital car theft ring in 2014 after stolen vehicles had been used as car bombs against Shia targets in South Beirut ([al-Alaaf al-Sayarat al-Masrouqa... tijara wa tfkheikh bein Souriya wa Lubnan](#). (n.d.). *Al-Joumhouria*; [Report: Car Theft Gangs Sell Vehicles to Assailants to Carry out Bombings in Lebanon, Syria](#). (2014, February 27). *Naharnet*.). Similarly, the July 2018 raid on drug kingpin Ali Zaid Ismael showcases the willingness of Hizbullah remove its protection when necessary. The raid by the LAF on the town of Brital-Hammoudiya led to eight deaths, including members of his family, and laid bare the tensions between Hizbullah and the town ([Aal Isma'ael Istalmo Jathith li Ams... Nuqima ala al-dawla wa Hizbullah](#). (2018, July 24). *An-Nahar*.). Ismael had previously avoided 2,941 arrest warrants (See: [Army kills 'Lebanon's Escobar' drug dealer who evaded 2,941 arrest warrants](#). (2018, July 24). *Al-Arabiya*).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*.

other Lebanese political parties.<sup>72</sup> The death of his son Hadi during a Hizbullah military operation in 1997 cemented his support among many (El-Husseini, 2012: 76).<sup>73</sup> For example, while many southern Lebanese will accept criticism of Hizbullah, Nasrallah himself is a redline.

Underneath the SG is a seven-member Executive Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*), with six of the seven members being religious clerics (Qassem, 2005: 62).<sup>74</sup> This council is elected to three-year terms by a Central Council (*Majlis al-Markazi*), itself made up of important party members. In addition to these five councils, there are two military and security agencies. The first is the Islamic Resistance (*al-Moqawama al-Islamiyya*), whose primary purpose is the requirement and training of fighters. The second agency is the security organ. It is divided into two different sections: 1. the party's own security (*Amn al-Hizb*) and 2. External Security (*Amn al-Khariji*). While the latter is focused on counterintelligence, the former is "charged with internal security matters within the party and society at large" (A. Hamzeh, 2004: 72). This agency allegedly keeps files on all Hizbullah members in order to track and prevent any dissent (*Ibid*). Unlike the five main councils, the work of these two agencies is kept secret and is under the direct control of the SC as opposed to the Shura Council (Hamzeh 2004: 70). The work of party security does occasionally spill into the open, however. This is exemplified by the tacit house arrest of Sheikh Subhi Tufayli; the former leader allegedly cannot move freely or travel without approval from Hizbullah.<sup>76</sup> Finally, there are central offices for each region that oversee the party's activities

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<sup>72</sup> Quwwat is centered around the image of Samir Geagea, the Free Patriotic Movement is so dedicated to the figure of Michel Aoun that they are locally referred to as "Aounis", Harakat Amal is the party of Nabih Berri, Kataeb is essentially the party of the Gemayel family, and the Future Movement is organized around the Hariri's.

<sup>73</sup> A fairly common rumor among some Lebanese Shia is that Nasrallah knowingly sacrificed his son. The battle against Israeli soldiers was, they argue, clearly a suicide mission and Nasrallah thus sent his son off knowing he would be martyred.

<sup>74</sup> According to Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the council originally had nine members, three from each of the three groups that came together to create Hizbullah: Islamic Amal (the religious splinter group from Harakat Amal), the Brothers, and Hizb al-Dawa. Assaf, F. (2003). *Ahzab Lubnan: Hizbullah, 1982-2002*. Arab Film Distribution.

<sup>75</sup> The Consultative Council is essentially the administrative authority that manages all of the organization's work. This work includes five separate councils, each of which is headed by a member of the Consultative Council. The Executive Council (*Majlis al-Tanfizi*) oversees the party's social services, including its healthcare centers, schools, external relations, and media (including the *al-Manar* TV station). The Politburo (*Majlis al-Siyasi*) manages political endeavors, including elections. The Parliamentary Council (*Majlis al-Nuwab*), in contrast, manages relations between the party and Lebanese parliament. This includes supervising their own parliamentary representatives. The Judicial Council (*Majlis al-Qada*) is tasked with arbitrating conflicts between members. Finally, the Jihad Council (*Majlis al-Jihad*) determines military strategy.

<sup>76</sup> Interview 3.

on a local level. This hierarchical structure of Hizbullah and control exerted by Nasrallah has allowed the organization to oversee and manage all aspects of the party and their members.

This structure may reinforce cohesion, but it is predicated upon a variety of linkages that bind members to the party. The first, and most obvious, of these are the ideological ties and experiences of militia fighters. Hizbullah not only fought during the end of the Civil War, but has also engaged in various battles with Israel and, more recently, in the Syrian Civil War. The experience of war and the lives lost not only binds the fighters to the party, but their family members as well. Hizbullah has established the Martyr's Association (*Muassasat al-Shaheed*) to provide money, schooling, and health insurance to the families of those who died.

On a human level, Hizbullah distinguishes between full time employees (*mutafar'aa*), part time employees (*mut'aaqad*), consultative volunteers (*t'aabiyeh*), and supporters. Despite Qassem's (2005: 60) claim "the definition of affiliation to the Party was not tied to a Party identification card," current membership is delineated by such an item. Party employees, both full time and part time, have a card (*Bitaqat Nour*) that provides access to the array of Hizbullah's social service programming.<sup>77</sup> For example, the card allows members, and their spouses, to receive subsidized healthcare at participating clinics. For example, a check-up with an OBGYN cost a mere 5,000 Lyra (\$3.33USD) instead of the usual price of 50,000 Lebanese Lira (approximately \$33.33USD). Individuals must present their cards in order to receive this discount, however. Full time employees were also recipients of extra benefits such as furniture and thousands of dollars in wedding gifts.<sup>78</sup> The extensive connections between Hizbullah and its members creates a highly durable organization. This makes it easier for Hizbullah to coordinate both people and resources.

### *Social Embeddedness*

Amal's social embeddedness is complex. It has a rich history within the Shia community, both as a militia and as a social movement. For many former fighters and families of martyrs, these experiences help bind them to the organization. Although it does not host events for supporters, they do invest in iconography to remind citizens of their martyrs and their founder Musa Sadr. Yet, the party's current form, as essentially a patronage apparatus, has weakened these connections.

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<sup>77</sup> This card is different from the card (*Tasheel Marour*) for militia employees.

<sup>78</sup> Interview 123.

Harakat Amal's history is also the history of Shi'a political awakening in Lebanon. Musa Sadr's *Movement for the Disinherited* coincided with the emergence of Shi'a as a socio-political class that sought to secure an equitable distribution of benefits to a group that had been deprived (Norton, 1987; Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002; Shanahan, 2011). Amal still holds commemorations for Sadr's disappearance each year and make liberal use of iconography of the cleric, including giant cardboard cutouts hung on streets entering Chiyah. The party also makes similar use of iconography of its Civil War martyrs. For example, large posters of martyrs are permanently erected at the exit for Nabatiyeh on the main coastal highway.<sup>79</sup> Posters and small print-outs are also hung throughout Chiyah.<sup>80</sup> These images serve as a reminder (even subconsciously) of Amal's past support for the Shi'a of Lebanon.

The party's problem, however, is that these images harken back to what the party once *was* rather than what it *currently is*. Nabih Berri is not Musa Sadr. In fact, Nabih Berri is no longer driven by the ideological underpinnings of Harakat Amal—to overturn sectarianism and clientelism. Berri and Amal are now part-and-parcel of this system. "All Harakat [Amal] cares about now is, 'Are you going to support us? Okay, that's good enough'."<sup>81</sup> In other words, the party has squandered its ties with most constituent communities and is instead focused purely on electoral support and maintaining its control over government spoils.

In fact, many local and international commentators discount the continuing power and influence of the party, arguing that Hizbullah is the true power broker among Shi'a. It is true that Hizbullah undoubtedly has eroded Amal's support among the Shi'a, particularly in the Beqaa and Southern Beirut (Hamzeh, 2015: 116-135). This does not mean, however, that it no longer maintains its own independent support and power. For example, in the 2018 Parliamentary Elections, Hizbullah's candidate in the South II race Mohammad Raad received the most preferred candidate votes at 6,516, but the two Harakat Amal candidates on the same ticket received a total 4,909 preferred candidate votes.<sup>82</sup> While not a domineering performance, it indicates that the party still has a following independent of Hizbullah.

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<sup>79</sup> Author recollection.

<sup>80</sup> Author recollection.

<sup>81</sup> Interview 131.

<sup>82</sup> The two Amal candidates Yassin Kamal Jaber and Hani Hassan Qobeisi received 2,498 and 2,411 respectively.

This political support is not synonymous with social embeddedness, however. Like Harkat members, there are many supporters who join the party simply as a default. “I have a cousin. He’s Harakat [Amal] because he’s not religious so he thinks, ‘I can’t be Hizbullah and I only have two choices so I must be Harakat.’”<sup>83</sup> Others suggested that they were not “with” the party, but against Hizbullah. In other words, rather having deep ties that bind them to Amal, there are those who opt for the party because they either cannot see themselves ideologically aligned with Hizbullah.

It is likely that following the death of Berri or, given the country’s economic collapse in 2020, the party’s clientelistic resources dry up, that Amal will fracture. Despite its history, the party has little ground to stand on beyond providing clientelistic goods. The common trope is that Hizbullah will subsume the Shi’a voting bloc after Amal’s demise. However, this fails to account for the large number of Amal supporters that are either ideologically opposed to Hizbullah or who harbor animosity stemming from the Civil War.

Berri and his allies have used their positions to co-opt state institutions as their base of patronage resources. Amal’s primary interest now is maintaining their political power in order to maintain control over their vast array of government spoils, which form the backbone of their political support. The party has continued to prioritize *participating in* the government over directly anti-state activities.<sup>84</sup> Rather than establishing parallel institutions, the party has always focused on working through state institutions. Throughout the war, its militia attempted to “recapture its original essence” by providing resources to underprivileged citizens, particularly in the South (Norton, 1987: 95). This work has become the backbone of Amal’s continued power; it established a robust patronage apparatus that primarily relies on spoils from government institutions (Leenders, 2012: 153). For example, Amal controls the Council of the South (*Majlis al-Janoub*) (Harik, 1996: 41). Established in 1970 with an initial budget of 30 million Lebanese pounds, the Council is a public institution that was established to develop the underserved region of the South.<sup>85</sup> Resources from the Council were used to fund infrastructure projects like roads,

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<sup>83</sup> Interview 96.

<sup>84</sup> In the aftermath of the war, Berri maintained his position as leader of the Harakat Amal political party. He was also elected as Speaker of Parliament in 1992, a position which he still holds in 2019.<sup>84</sup> The original appointment appears to have been the work of the Assad regime, as Berri had been Syria’s key ally throughout the war (El-Husseini, 2012: 2014). The position of Speaker was also significantly strengthened by the Ta’if Accords—the document brokered by Syria and Saudi Arabia that ended the Lebanese Civil War; the Speaker now helps the President and Parliament deliberate on the appointment of Prime Minister and exerts control over chamber meetings, voting rules, and parliamentary committees (Nir, 2011: 92).

<sup>85</sup> See: <http://www.councilforsouth.gov.lb/%d8%aa%d8%a3%d8%b3%d9%8a%d8%b3-%d9%85%d8%ac%d9%84%d8%b3-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%ac%d9%86%d9%88%d8%a8/>

bridges, schools, and hospitals, as well as provide medical care to injured fighters during the 1980s (Harik, 2006). As a result of its capture of important leadership positions within the Council, development projects undertaken by the Council are perceived as assistance offered by the party.

Amal has participated in every election held since the end of the Civil War and its representatives have served in a variety of ministries, including the ministries of public works, agriculture, energy, trade, and health (Nir, 2011: 137). They have used these positions to divert resources to benefit Shia constituencies, particularly those in the South of Lebanon. Essentially, most Shia need to go through Berri and Harakat Amal in order to get a job within the government or access government institutions (El-Husseini, 2012: 105).

The party also uses taxpayer money to fund many of its institutions, including private schools,<sup>86</sup> and hospitals like the Government Hospital in Nabatiyeh (*Mūstashfā Ḥakūmi*). Even the Lebanese University, the country's public university, is believed to be under the control of Amal (El-Husseini, 2012: 105).<sup>87</sup> One interviewee relayed an overheard conversation in a manouche shop discussing an incident where a sick man was turned away from the official government hospital for not being a Amal supporter. The man was allegedly directed to another local hospital in the area that aligned with his political identity.<sup>88</sup> Regardless of the accuracy of this story, it illustrates the belief held by nearly all interviewees in South Lebanon that access to state-run, public institutions still required a political connection to Amal.

Because of its role in amassing state resources and using them for their own political ends, Harkat Amal has become the posterchild for Lebanese government corruption. Berri has also used his power as Speaker to delay legislation and budgetary processes “in order to solicit concessions from the other two “presidents” or from the government more generally” (Leenders, 2012: 137). It is also increasingly difficult for voters to tie the current party to its origins. Amal now blatantly adopts the sectarian rhetoric and clientelistic practices that Musa Sadr's original movement criticized.

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<sup>86</sup> [Lebanon: What's Wrong with Amal?](#) (Wikileaks Public Library of US Diplomacy 04BEIRUT4941\_a). (2004). Lebanon Beirut.

<sup>87</sup> See: 2014, March 18. [Harakat Amal Tahtalal al-Jamaat al-Lubnaniya bil Hadat, Janoubia](#); 2017, October 21. [Qasm al-Liwa' li "Amal" fi al-Jamaat al-Lubnaniya... ma radd "Harakat" ala ma hasl. An-Nahar](#).

<sup>88</sup> Interview 2.

Waning social embeddedness greatly affects Harakat Amal's capacity to provide security. Average citizens are likely to turn to the party for certain assistance, particularly given the weakness of Lebanon's security institutions. *Community-oriented policing* is thus supplementary to, rather than in lieu of the state.

Conversely, Hizbullah maintains deeply rooted connections within Nabatiyeh. This is due to two factors. First, Hizbullah actively strives to create buy-in from the community, including non-members. Its litany of hospitals, clinics, schools, and other social welfare organizations, like the Martyrs' Organization (*Muassasat al-Shaheed*) and Scouts, "are connected and administered through a central bureaucracy, which has in and of itself increased the organization's reputation for competence, fairness, and honesty" (Szekely, 2012: 119). Although some services are available only to members and their families, it also provides a number of services for supporters. A former Hizbullah member argued, "You want to know why Hizbullah is so loved? It's the money. Follow the money!"<sup>89</sup>

Hizbullah also offers opportunities for volunteers and supporters to feel actively involved in the decision-making and development of the organization. Beyond the numerous rallies held for supporters, the party previously hired consultative volunteers that would receive a per diem for attendance at meetings.<sup>90</sup> These volunteers were typically high-level supporters, though not necessarily members of the organization or its militia. Their participation in meetings was a strategy to increase support and buy-in by making citizens feel as if they had an influential voice in the party's decision-making. Notably, however, the party has cut funding for these volunteers in recent years due to budget shortfalls.<sup>91</sup>

Second, Hizbullah's religious ideology is also important to growing and maintaining support. Since its inception, religion has served as Hizbullah's guiding principles and foundation (Farida, 2019; Qassem, 2005; Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002). Although the party has long since abandoned its dedication to establishing an Islamic Republic in Lebanon (à la Iran), Hizbullah still relies heavily on religion as a justification for its policies. Indeed, the party frames much of its work in terms of Islamic morals. The party's various welfare institutions are often framed in terms of *Zakat* (alms-giving), one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam. Even Hizbullah's militia

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<sup>89</sup> Interview 3.

<sup>90</sup> Interview 121.

<sup>91</sup> Interview 131.



activities and struggle against Israel is framed within the context of a religious resistance (Farida, 2019: 81-2).

The strong connections between Hizbullah and its constituency are a key component of the party's security regime. The array of linkages creates a bond, whereby supporters trust (and potentially even prefer) Hizbullah to provide effective protection.

Amal has an overall weak organizational structure. The party lacks cohesion among its members; there is little communication beyond very local level representatives and its founding ideology has lost its potency as the party increasingly adopted Lebanon's 'classic' clientelistic party model. Over time, the party has focused on consolidating control over state institutions and utilizing state resources as its own patronage goods. It has traded much of its ideological motivation in order to become a patronage machine. Although the organization *had* strong social embeddedness, that is weakening over time as more constituents criticize the party for its participation in corruption. The theory of politicized policing argues that Harakat Amal would only be able to provide limited forms of community-oriented policing. The party utilizes state institutions to provide *border management*, thereby indirectly offering these services. And while it provides *community-oriented security*, such as crime and dispute resolution, its capacity to do so may deteriorate as its organizational structure continues to weaken.

Hizbullah, by comparison, has a very strong organizational structure. It boasts a hierarchical organization with a clear ideology and strategy to bind members to it. It also maintains strong social embeddedness thanks to multiple, overlapping linkages. Per my theoretical expectations, we would anticipate Hizbullah to offer both *community-oriented security* and *border management*. In the case of Nabatiyeh, the party consistently offers *community-oriented* services in the form of informants, neighborhoods watches, among other activities. It has also operated both temporary and semi-permanent forms of *border management* such as checkpoints and barricades.

### **Alternative Explanations**

There are four primary arguments from the clientelism literature that explain the logic behind who parties target and why they provide various goods and services. First is a socio-economic argument, claiming that clientelistic exchange is most effective and durable when targeting the poor, because the payouts provided by parties fill a need, and the clients will thus continue to show up to the polls for the party that helps them (Calvo & Murillo, 2004; Dixit & Londregan, 1995; Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007b; Shefter, 1977; Stokes et al., 2013; Weitz-Shapiro,

2014). Moreover, parties get more ‘bang for their buck’ as the poor accept less costly buyouts for their support and parties can therefore increase their electoral returns without increasing their payouts (Medina & Stokes, 2007; Weitz-Shapiro, 2014).

The economic status of Nabatiyeh is unrelated to security provision. Although the south has been a historically neglected region, Nabatiyeh is no longer one of the poorest regions in Lebanon.<sup>92</sup><sup>93</sup> As of 2008, the Nabatiyeh governorate’s poverty rate was below the national average at only 19%, and the region has the third highest household consumption in the country (Laithy et al., 2008: 9). The city of Nabatiyeh is also just above the national average in ‘Unsatisfied Basic Needs’ at just over 35% and has an even lower poverty rate than the governorate (around 12%). The Nabatiyeh region is also a middling performer as measured by the number of recipients of the Lebanese National Poverty Targeting Program, a World Bank funded program targeting Lebanon’s most impoverished citizens (Atallah et al., 2019).<sup>94</sup> Moreover, my interview data also suggests that the socio-economic status was not a direct determinant of whether an individual would receive assistance. Poor individuals may be more incentivized to seek out help from the parties. But whether or not either Hizbullah or Harakat Amal provided that assistance was based on whether those individuals do or will provide political support.

The second set of arguments assert that higher levels of political competition leads to greater overall levels of clientelism (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007b; Weitz-Shapiro, 2014). This is because parties in competitive districts must work harder, and provide more, to ensure electoral success. Cammett (2014) also argued that parties facing high degrees of intra-communal political competition will focus their goods on core constituencies, in order to shore up their support. Corstange (2016) further develops this line of thinking, suggesting that ethnic groups where a single political party has a monopoly on political support, or a *monopsony*, leads to the distribution

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<sup>92</sup> South Lebanon was historically neglected by the Lebanese government. Citing a 1960 *Irfed Study*, Suleiman (1967: 26) referred to the region as “underdevelopment.” As recently as the 1970s, there was no roads and no essential infrastructure. There were basic clinics in Nabatiyeh at that time, but anyone with serious medical issues would need to be sent to Beirut. In 1953, for example, the South had only 294 schools as compared to Mt. Lebanon’s 713 and the North’s 401 (Suleiman, 1967: 33)

<sup>93</sup> Although the city of Nabatiyeh itself was not under Israeli occupation, the South generally experienced lower levels of state development even after the end of the Civil War. Hizbullah has infamously invested money in the development of the south, but the access for these services and benefits is often uneven. Party members and the families of martyrs are given priority to resources. Moreover, the presence of Hizbullah also made it a key target for bombings during the 2006 war with Israel. A UN report estimated that Lebanon had incurred \$15 Billion in damages while an EU report found that 1,489 buildings, 21 out of 29 bridges, 535 sections of road, and 545 cultivated fields within the South alone had been destroyed (Alagha, 2008).

<sup>94</sup> See: <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P149242>

of lower quality goods. Ethnic groups that boast political competition, by comparison, see the distribution of higher quality goods.

While the degree of political competition among political parties may lead to higher distribution rates, this argument does not fully account for the variation in policing. There is deep cleavage between Hizbullah and Harakat Amal, and the parties compete with one another for voters. But this competition does not manifest in electoral competition at the parliamentary or (frequently) municipal level. Instead, these two parties typically run a joint list during elections. The provision of individually targeted policing assistance is part of the repertoire of services offered to sway voters from one party to another, and is thus at least partially explained by competition. Competition does not offer insights into why Hizbullah alone provides border management, or why Harakat Amal works with state policing institutions for these services.

A third argument, and potentially the biggest debate in the literature on clientelism, is that clientelist distribution varies based on whether political parties target core or swing voters (G. W. Cox & McCubbins, 1986; Dixit & Londregan, 1995). Core voters are those individuals who are considered loyalists that will always vote for the party. As such, many studies suggest that political parties will target their goods at marginal swing voters—those that are not ideologically opposed to the party, but not necessarily guaranteed supporters—because core voters do not need inducements to show up to the polls, but swing voters need extra motivation (Magaloni, 2006). However, other studies have suggested that clientelistic exchanges are often used to reward loyalists (Calvo & Murillo, 2004) or because of an inability to effectively monitor votes (Nichter, 2008). Stokes et al (2013) argue that brokers, or local representatives responsible for distributing goods, are more likely to target core—rather than swing—voters, because of their commitment and connections within their community.

The case of clientelized security provision in Nabatiyeh provides additional evidence for the argument that parties primarily target core voters. Numerous interviewees emphasized that they could only turn to political parties for help and support if they had the necessary political connections. However, this variable alone does not fully capture the phenomenon of politicized security. It explains why certain individuals have access to these services when offered, but like political competition, it does not capture the variation in which parties offer what types of security.

The final set of explanations emphasize ethnicity and kinship. Although ethnicity is a contested and complex concept, a basic understanding is that ethnicity is some combination of ascriptive differences—such as color, religion, or language—combined with a sense of shared

history or common origin (Horowitz, 1985). Ethnicity is thought to be an extremely powerful and durable affiliation (Chandra, 2004; E. Kramon, 2019). Ethnic groups and cleavages provide for their own group members, who then continue to vote for their party of kinship (E. J. Kramon & Posner, 2012). The variable of ethnic kinship is a compelling explanation for how clientelistic parties target their resources in the Lebanese context, and is confirmed by the general local practices of clientelism. Harakat Amal and Hizbullah are affiliated with the Shia community, and predominately provide services to in-group members. Yet, this variable alone cannot account for the variation in policing practices. Why does Harakat Amal provide less range of policing services than Hizbullah?

Each of these theories holds some explanatory power for how clientelistic parties in Lebanon operate, and who and where they target their resources. But these theories do not fully capture the variation in policing provided by Harakat Amal and Hizbullah. Future research should explore how the difference in resources affects the party's ability to provide policing. Hizbullah is believed to have deep pockets thanks in part to monetary support from Iran. Harakat Amal, meanwhile, does not appear to have the same privately held resources. Instead, it relies of co-optation of state goods as its own. It is reasonable to expect that political parties with more resources are more capable of providing state-like services, such as policing and protection.

My interviews suggested that Hizbullah is facing a tightening of its purse strings, likely a result of sanctions against Iran. The "extra" incentives offered to members, such as wedding gifts, are no longer provided. Per diems for volunteers have also ended. Moreover, Lebanon is currently undergoing an unprecedented economic crisis, to which Hizbullah is not immune. The country became the 62<sup>nd</sup> instance of hyperinflation on July 23, 2020.<sup>95</sup> The Lebanese Lira is spiraling out of control. Once pegged at 1,500LL to \$1USD, it inflated to 9,000LL per \$1USD by July 2020.<sup>96</sup> One year later, in July 2021, the exchange rate had reached 23,000LL per \$1USD.<sup>97</sup> If resources are a key determinant in providing security, we should expect to see a decline in policing in Nabatiyeh.

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<sup>95</sup> Arnold, T. (2020, July 23). Lebanon follows Venezuela into hyperinflation wilderness. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-emerging-inflation-graphic-idUSKCN24O20J>

<sup>96</sup> Chehayeb, K., & Chaya, L. (2020, July 8). Food prices in Lebanon are so high not even shops can afford them. *Middle East Eye*. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/lebanon-economic-crisis-food-shortage-price-hike>

<sup>97</sup> Ghali, M. (2021, July 19). In crisis-hit Lebanon, celebrating Eid is for the 'happy few.' *Aljazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/7/19/lebanon-celebrating-eid-is-for-happy-few>

## Conclusion

This article has presented an inductive, theory generating account of how and why political parties step into the role of security providers. Relying on subnational variation of five neighborhoods across Lebanon, it has argued that whether political parties will provide security and policing is based on their commitment to the concept of a Weberian state. Parties that emphasize the importance of a cohesive state with a monopoly over the use of force will not provide policing. At most, they offer limited forms of protection (*Himaya*) for high level members.

The specific type of policing offered by parties that adopt a mixed approach or prioritize their own organizational interests is determined by the strength of their organizational structure. Political parties need both strong social embeddedness within constituent communities and organizational cohesion among their members to effectively manage security. Parties that are weak in one or both factors are more likely to offer *community-oriented* forms of policing that intend to protect the neighborhood and maintain the peace. By comparison, parties that are strong in both of these variables are more likely to offer both *community-oriented* policing and *border management*, a form of policing deployed to prevent state encroachment.

This article aims to broaden the literature of clientelism by shedding light on an understudied good or service offered by political parties to constituents for support. This service becomes particularly marketable in countries who are unwilling or unable to provide security for their citizens. More research is needed to determine how widespread the practice is in patronage systems, as well as the potential long-term implications of the practice on state development. Politicized policing inherently undermines the Weberian role of the state by creating parallel institutions *or* co-opting state security institutions. While healthcare and education are undoubtedly important services, security is fundamental. Those that have security often fail to realize the value of security in daily life. In highly insecure or unstable systems—where simple tasks like shopping for milk become dangerous—politicized policing could make the practice of clientelism stickier

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## Appendix I

Table 2: List of Interviews

<b>ID</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Location</b>
1.	28 December 2016	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
2.	29 December 2016	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
3.	30 December 2016	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
4.	2 January 2017	Local Resident	Kfar Romman
5.	2 January 2017	Local Resident	Kfar Romman
6.	3 January 2017	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
7.	3 January 2017	Local Resident	Kfar Sir
8.	3 January 2017	Local Resident	Kfar Sir
9.	3 January 2017	Local Resident	Kfar Sir
10.	5 January 2017	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh

11.	5 January 2017	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
12.	5 January 2017	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
13.	5 January 2017	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
14.	5 January 2017	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
15.	7 January 2017	Local Resident	Via telephone, from Jeb Jennine
16.	7 January 2017	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
17.	9 January 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
18.	10 January 2017	Local Resident	Tarik Jdideh
19.	10 January 2017	Local Resident	Chiyah
20.	10 January 2017	Local Resident	Chiyah
21.	10 January 2017	Local Resident	Chiyah
22.	10 January 2017	Local Resident	Chiyah
23.	11 January 2017	Civil Society Activist	Beirut
24.	11 January 2017	Former LAF Officer	Beirut
25.	12 January 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
26.	13 January 2017	Local Resident	Khaldeh
27.	13 January 2017	Local Resident	Khaldeh

28.	15 January 2017	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
29.	16 January 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
30.	16 January 2017	Local Resident	Khaldeh
31.	16 January 2017	Local Resident	Khaldeh
32.	16 January 2017	Local Resident	Khaldeh
33.	18 January 2017	Civil Society Activist	Beirut
34.	19 January 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
35.	20 January 2017	Local Resident	Tripoli
36.	12 March 2017	Former Party Member	Via telephone, Geitawi
37.	27 June 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
38.	28 June 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
39.	1 July 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
40.	4 July 2017	Municipal Policeman	Nabatiyeh area
41.	5 July 2017	Civil Society Activist	Tripoli
42.	6 July 2017	Local Resident	Baakleen
43.	7 July 2017	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
44.	11 July 2017	Local Resident	Beirut

45.	11 July 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
46.	12 July 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
47.	15 July 2017	Local Resident	Chiyah
48.	19 July 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
49.	19 July 2017	Local Resident	Beirut
50.	19 July 2017	Civil Society Activist	Beirut
51.	20 July 2017	Local Elite	Baakleen
52.	20 July 2017	Local Resident	Baakleen
53.	20 July 2017	Former Military Commander- Progressive Socialist Party	Baakleen
54.	20 July 2017	Local Resident	Baakleen
55.	27 July 2017	Civil Society Activist	Beirut
56.	27 July 2017	LAF Officer	Beirut
57.	8 August 2017	Civil Society Activist	Baalbek
58.	8 August 2017	Civil Society Activist	Baalbek
59.	8 August 2017	Civil Society Activist	Baalbek
60.	9 August 2017	ISF Officer	Nabatiyeh
61.	10 August 2017	Local Resident	Beirut

62.	11 August 2017	Civil Society Activist	Beirut
63.	14 August 2017	Local Resident	Himlaya
64.	14 August 2017	Local Resident	Himlaya
65.	14 August 2017	Local Resident	Himlaya
66.	14 August 2017	LAF Officer	Himlaya
67.	17 August 2017	Local Resident	Chiyah
68.	18 August 2017	Local Resident	Tarik Jdideh
69.	27 March 2018	Former Local Resident	Via telephone, from Mt. Lebanon
70.	4 April 2018	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
71.	6 April 2018	Ministry Employee	Beirut
72.	8 April 2018	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
73.	9 April 2018	Former Political Party Member	Via telephone, from Geitawi
74.	10 April 2018	Local Resident	Geitawi
75.	10 April 2018	Local Resident	Geitawi
76.	10 April 2018	Local Resident	Geitawi
77.	11 April 2018	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities Employee	Beirut, Lebanon

78.	17 April 2018	Local Political Elite	Tripoli
79.	17 April 2018	Municipal Councilor	Tripoli
80.	17 April 2018	Local Resident	Tripoli
81.	18 April 2018	Civil Society Activist	Tripoli
82.	18 April 2018	Civil Society Activist	Tripoli
83.	19 April 2018	Former LAF Officer	Tripoli
84.	20 April 2018	Local Resident	Tarik Jdideh
85.	1 May 2018	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
86.	4 May 2018	Former Party Member	Nabatiyeh
87.	16 August 2018	LAF Officer	Via telephone, from Zahle
88.	20 August 2018	Mukhtar	Chiyah
89.	20 August 2018	Local Resident	Chiyah
90.	20 August 2018	Local Resident	Chiyah
91.	24 August 2018	Mukhtar	Geitawi
92.	24 August 2018	Local Resident	Geitawi
93.	24 August 2018	Local Resident	Geitawi
94.	25 August 2018	Local Resident	Tarik Jdideh

95.	27 August 2018	Journalist	Beirut
96.	27 August 2018	Local Resident	Chiyah
97.	29 August 2018	Civil Society Activist	Beirut
98.	29 August 2018	Brigadier General Ashraf Rifi	Beirut
99.	3 September 2018	Regional Expert	Beirut
100.	4 September 2018	Local Resident	Tarik Jdideh
101.	6 September 2018	Local Elite	Tripoli
102.	8 September 2018	Local Elite	Nabatiyeh
103.	10 September 2018	Local Political Elite	Nabatiyeh
104.	14 November 2018	Local Elite	Tripoli
105.	18 November 2018	Local Resident	Tripoli
106.	18 November 2018	NGO Leader	Tripoli
107.	18 November 2018	Local Resident	Tripoli
108.	20 November 2018	Political Party Representative	Beirut
109.	20 November 2018	Political Party Representative	Beirut
110.	21 November 2018	Local Elite	Tripoli
111.	22 November 2018	Activist	Beirut

112.	23 November 2018	Journalist	Beirut
113.	23 November 2018	Journalist	Beirut
114.	26 November 2018	Political Party Representative	Beirut
115.	28 November 2018	Local Resident	Tripoli
116.	1 December 2018	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
117.	1 December 2018	Political Party Representative	Nabatiyeh
118.	3 December 2018	Local Resident	Beirut
119.	5 December 2018	Local Resident	Chiyah
120.	7 December 2018	ISF Official	Beirut
121.	9 December 2019	Local Resident	Nabatiyeh
122.	18 December 2018	Regional Expert	Boston, MA
123.	5 January 2019	Local Resident	Via telephone, Chiyah
124.	5 May 2019	Former Resident	Boston, MA
125.	1 December 2019	Former Resident	Boston, MA
126.	1 December 2019	Former Resident	Boston, MA
127.	10 April 2020	Former Resident	Boston, MA
128.	10 April 2020	Former Resident	Boston, MA



129.	17 April 2020	Local Resident	Via telephone, Chiyah
130.	5 July 2020	Former Resident	Boston, MA
131.	9 July 2020	Local Resident	Via telephone, Chiyah
132.	19 July 2020	Journalist	Via telephone, Tariq al-Jdideh
133.	25 July 2020	Regional Expert	Boston, MA

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*All interviews were conducted face-to-face except where noted.*

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## **Appendix II**

### List of Interview Questions:

1. How is the current security situation in Lebanon?
2. How is the current security situation in your neighborhood?
3. Do you think security in your neighborhood is better or worse than the rest of the country?
4. If something happened to you, what would you do? For example, if someone stole your car, where would you go for help?
5. Would you do the same thing no matter the crime? What if you were robbed?

### Potential Additional Questions:

6. Do you think that state institutions, such as the Internal Security Forces, are doing a good job at managing security?
7. Do the political parties play any role in providing security? How and where?

8. Do you think the political parties only manage certain types of security problems, such as preventing suspicious individuals entering the neighborhood, or do they provide other security means?

1. كيف هو وضع الأمن حالياً في لبنان؟
2. كيف هو وضع الامن حالياً في منطقتك؟
3. هل تعتقد ان الأمن في منطقتكم هو افضل ام اسوأ من باقي المناطق في البلد؟
4. اذا حدث شيء لك ماذا تفعل، مثلاً ، اذا سرق شخص ما سيارتك ، الى اين تلجأ للمساعدة؟
5. هل ستفعل الشيء نفسه في كل المشاكل الاي تتعرض لها؟
6. هل تعتقد ان مؤسسات الدولة مثل قوى امن الداخلي تقوم بعمل جيد في ادارة الامن؟
7. هل تلعب الاحزاب السياسية اي دور في توفير الامن؟ كيف وأين؟
8. هل تعتقد ان الاحزاب السياسية تعمل على المشاكل الامنية الخاصة بها حصراً، منع الافراد المشبوهين من دخول احيائهم، او انها توفر خدمات امنية اخرى؟