

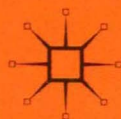
# HEZBOLLAH

## THE STORY OF THE PARTY OF GOD

FROM REVOLUTION TO INSTITUTIONALIZATION



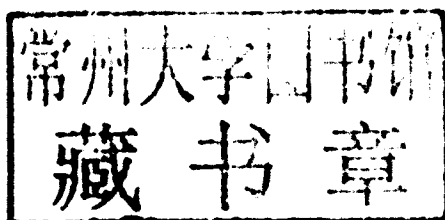
EITAN AZANI



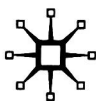
# Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God

From Revolution to Institutionalization

Eitan Azani



palgrave  
macmillan



HEZBOLLAH: THE STORY OF THE PARTY OF GOD  
Copyright © Eitan Azani, 2009, 2011

All rights reserved.

First published in hardcover in 2009 by PALGRAVE MACMILLAN® in the United States – a division of St. Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN: 978-0-230-10872-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Azani, Eitan.

Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization / Eitan Azani.

p. cm.—(Middle East in focus)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-230-60588-5

1. Hizballah (Lebanon)
2. Lebanon—Politics and government—1975–1990.
3. Lebanon—Politics and government—1990–4.
- Shiites—Lebanon—Politics and government.
5. Islam and politics—Lebanon.
6. Geopolitics—Middle East. I. Title.

JQ1828.A98H6225 2008

324.25692'082—dc22

2008029179

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by MPS Limited (a Macmillan Company)

First Palgrave Macmillan paperback edition: January 2011

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

# **Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God**

## THE MIDDLE EAST IN FOCUS

The Middle East has become simultaneously the world's most controversial, crisis-ridden, and yet least-understood region. Taking new perspectives on the area that has undergone the most dramatic changes, the Middle East in Focus series, edited by Barry Rubin, seeks to bring the best, most accurate expertise to bear for understanding the area's countries, issues, and problems. The resulting books are designed to be balanced, accurate, and comprehensive compendiums of both facts and analysis presented clearly for both experts and the general reader.

**Series Editor:** Barry Rubin

Director, Global Research International Affairs (GLORIA)  
Center Editor, *Middle East Review of International Affairs* (MERIA)  
Journal Editor, *Turkish Studies*

*Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands*  
By Ersin Kalaycıoğlu

*Eternal Iran: Continuity and Chaos*  
By Patrick Clawson and Michael Rubin

*Hybrid Sovereignty in the Arab Middle East: The Cases of Kuwait, Jordan, and Iraq*  
By Gokhan Bacik

*The Politics of Intelligence and American Wars with Iraq*  
By Ofira Seliktar

*Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God: From Revolution to Institutionalization*  
By Eitan Azani

*Lebanon: Liberation, Conflict, and Crisis*  
Edited by Barry Rubin

*The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Islamist Movement*  
Edited by Barry Rubin

*Nabih Berri and Lebanese Politics*  
By Omri Nir

# Preface

The last three decades of the twentieth century showed signs of the rise of the Islamic movements in the Middle East as they became a leading power factor in the resistance to the existent social and political order. The Islamic wave is prominent in its scope and strength and placed in the radical margins owing to its violence. Movements such as Hezbollah and Hamas are clear examples of this phenomenon. The growth of revolutionary movements has employed and still employs many researchers and regimes. The nature and characteristics of these movements differ across societies and eras. They are influenced by the relations between the state and the society; by the social, economic, and political conditions within a country; by the regional system; and by the international arrangement. These movements uphold internal dynamics characterized by a transition from spontaneous and informal patterns of activity toward a structure of institutions and organization based on formal norms and rules.

The background, the conditions, and the procedures that allowed for the development of Hezbollah are similar, in certain aspects, to those that influenced the directions of development of other revolutionary movements. Altogether, the model that developed in Lebanon is unique and different due to the Lebanese ethnic sectarian structure, Lebanon's unique geopolitical condition, and the movement's Shiite Islamic nature. Hezbollah was established at the peak of a crisis in the Lebanese system. It was clearly a product of internal Lebanese social and political as well as regional procedures from the 1970s onward—they all prepared the groundwork on which the radical elements of the Shiite sect began to flourish.

In late 1982, Iran's delegates in Lebanon succeeded in helping those radical groups get organized under the umbrella of Hezbollah (God's party) around the pan-Islamic vision and harnessed them for violent activity against the West in general and against Israel in particular.

The movement broke into international awareness in 1983, after a series of terrorist attacks against the multinational forces (MNFs) and the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) in Lebanon, and remained there for about a decade due to terroristic activities such as kidnapping Western citizens in Lebanon, hijacking airplanes, and organizing terrorist attacks abroad. These attacks were characterized by innovation and extreme violence. They caused the withdrawal of the MNFs from Beirut (February 1984), the withdrawal of the IDF into the Security Zone (May 1985), and the "succumbing" of the Western governments to the demands of the Iranians in the negotiations for the release of the hostages.

During the 1990s Hezbollah handled three significant challenges: first, the end of the civil war and the strengthening of the Lebanese regime; second, the establishment of Syrian hegemony in Lebanon; and third, the peace process in the Middle East. A sharpening of the tension between the Lebanese identity, which the movement wished to promote, and its Jihadist identity occurred during those years. The movement adopted a pragmatic Lebanese policy and diminished

its revolutionary characteristics and pan-Islamic approach. Decisions were translated into activities. The movement's delegates were elected to the 1992 parliament and from 2005 even served in the Lebanese government.

They acted in order to promote the resistance and the movement's interests. The revolutionary elements were removed from the movement and its institutions. The movement's leaders and spokesmen conducted a campaign in order to settle for its crowd of followers the tension that was created between the movement's objectives, as they appeared in its platform and its pragmatic approach, which obviously contradicted these goals. With the entry of its candidates into the parliament in the election of 1992, a new era in the history of Hezbollah commenced, ensuring it, as far as it could see, better chances of survival as a political movement, even if peace agreements with Israel were signed and it were to be disarmed.

The IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 opened a new chapter in the reciprocal relation between the players of the regional and the Lebanese system and new opportunities for the movement in the political and the operative arenas. The occurrence of significant procedures and events in the international arena at the beginning of the current century influenced the ongoing in the regional arena.

The September 11 terrorist attacks spurred an American retaliation and entry into Iraq, alongside a reexamination of the international policy facing the terrorist organizations and terror-supporting countries, such as Iran. During this time, Hezbollah managed to survive and expand its activity in Lebanon while rejecting the demand for disarmament. The death of Hafez al-Assad and the policy of his successor, Bashar al-Assad, toward Hezbollah only benefited the movement. Hezbollah was equipped with advanced means of warfare and with the professional knowledge required for their operation; the movement constructed a significant military array in southern Lebanon and positioned itself as the "defender of Lebanon" against possible Israeli aggression. Even the Second Lebanon War (July 2006) couldn't create a process that would lead to its disarmament. The manifesto of the Second Unity Government of Lebanon (November 2009) aptly expresses how Hezbollah is coming closer to achieving its goal of taking over the Lebanese political system from within, as a preliminary step to the Islamization of Lebanon in the long run.<sup>1</sup> Iran and Syria's substantial support with weapons and funding – which are helping to turn Hezbollah into a military force and a strong economic player in Lebanon – enabled the movement to leverage this power into political power.

The basic assumption of this study is that Hezbollah is a revolutionary Lebanese social movement that has been through procedures of change from a pan-Islamic revolutionary movement to a pragmatic Lebanese movement, which uses a combination of open activity within the Lebanese political system and confidential, violent terroristic activity outside this system. Hezbollah operates in the environment of three different systems: the Lebanese, the regional, and the international. These systems uphold complex and dynamic reciprocal relations between themselves that influenced and still influence the movement's directions of development.

The Lebanese system is divided into three subsystems. The interorganizational system (relating to the movement) includes the movement's leadership and its

activists. The sectarian system includes within it the members of the Shia sect living in Lebanon and abroad. The Lebanese political system, this goes for the framework of the Lebanese state, suffers from shocks and instability since its inception.

The changes in the strength, status, and characteristics of the Lebanese system, through the years, have influenced the patterns of activity as well as the direction of development of the internal Lebanese forces and the activity traits of the regional players.

The second system is the regional system, which includes within it four players, each of which has directly and indirectly influenced the procedures of change within the Hezbollah movement. Each player's level of influence upon the changes in the movement is derived from the nature and the quality of the relations between the player and the movement and from the stage of development that it is at (establishment, consolidation, expansion, or institutionalization). The regional system is composed of two subsystems: the "Israeli system," meaning the state of Israel, and the "Arab regional system," which includes Syria, Lebanon, and Hezbollah (as a nonstate player). Iran was included in the Arab regional system due to the fact that it is a player with influence upon the system in general and upon Hezbollah in particular. The common denominator for all the above-mentioned players is the struggle against Israel. Iran and Hezbollah share between them an additional common denominator: a Shia-Islamic one.

The struggle between these two subsystems of the regional system takes place on two axes: the axis of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the axis of the Shiite-Islamic conflict. The Hezbollah movement, which operates as a player on both the axes, took advantage of its connections with Syria and Iran in order to expand its activity and become established as a weighty regional and internal Lebanese player. At the same time, it exploited its relations with Iran in order to decrease Syrian pressures or to thwart Syrian moves that jeopardized its status.

The third system is the international system, whose involvement in the Middle Eastern arena is influenced by regional and international restraints and limitations that make it difficult to minimize or restrain Hezbollah's power.

In the absence of basic consent over defining Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, the influence of the international system upon the Hezbollah is very minor.

This study is based on a great deal of diversified information from primary sources, with an emphasis on the Arab and the Lebanese media. It includes statements, speeches, and interviews (published in local newspapers or broadcast over the radio or television channels) of Lebanese officials and Hezbollah and Israeli leaders. The primary sources further include manuscripts and articles by senior officials of Hezbollah and influential Shia clerics in Lebanon. The study is also based on my nonmediated, in-depth familiarity with the Lebanese experience derived from many years of service in Lebanon and from many conversations, meetings, and discussions that I have had with numerous Lebanese figures from all sects. In order to get a complete picture and also clarifications in this field, I have interviewed rehabilitated ex-South Lebanon Army soldiers who have been absorbed in the Israeli society.

# Contents

Preface	ix
1 Social Protest Movements—Theoretical Framework	1
Introduction	1
Social Movements and Their Target Audiences	2
The Principal Theoretical Approaches	3
The Conditions for the Development of a Social Movement	4
Explications for Recruitment to Protest Movements	7
The Influence of Reciprocal Relations between Protest Movements and Their Opponents on the Direction of Their Development	15
Protest Movements, Religion, and Ethnicity	18
The Development of Protest Movements	21
2 Development of Social Movements in Muslim Society:	
The Phenomenon and Its Characteristics	23
The Idea of "Umma" and the Means to Realize It: Dawa and Jihad	23
Research Approaches in the Analysis of the Phenomenon of Radical Islam	24
Explanations for the Emergence of Islamic Social Movements	28
Exploitation of Political Opportunities	32
Islamic Movements—Typology and Main Similarities	32
The Islamic Discourse	36
Islamic Thought—Central Motifs, Directions, and Trends of Evolution	39
Khomeini—the Father of Shiite Radicalism	40
Islamic Movements in Processes of Change	41
Summary	45
3 The Shiite Community in Lebanon and the Background for Hezbollah's Emergence	47
Introduction	47
The Shiite Community in Lebanon—from Passivity to Revolutionary Activity	48
The Emergence of the Hezbollah Movement—Organizational Infrastructure and Action Strategies	59
The Crystallization of Hezbollah and Its Expansion in Lebanon	65
Summary	73
4 Expansion and Institutionalization of the Movement— Constraints and Adaptation	75
Introduction	75
The 1988–1990 Amal-Hezbollah Struggles—A Sign of the End of the Movement's Expansion Period	76

Fighting Words alongside Mediation and Dialogue—the Leading Strategies in the War for Public Opinion	82
Hezbollah and the Shiite Community—from Expansion to Institutionalization and from the Old Order to the New Order in Lebanon	84
Hassan Nasrallah—a New Pattern of Leadership	91
Integration into the Lebanese Political System—the Reasons, the Explanations, and the Justifications	94
Summary	102
<b>5 Political Institutionalization and Public Discourse—Adaptation and Legitimization</b>	105
Introduction	105
The Political Purview—the Campaign for the Shiite Community’s Public Opinion between the 1992 and the 1996 Elections	105
Emphasis of Achievements from Parliamentary Activity as a Means of Establishing the Conceptual Change among Its Audiences	106
The Military Purview—Security of the Inhabitant of the South as a Determining Factor in the Decisions of the Movement	110
Extraorganizational Political Struggles	117
The 1996 Election Campaign—Marking False Expectations	123
The Municipal System as a Means of Strengthening the Connection between the Movement and the Shiite Community	125
The Movement in Processes of Internal Change	126
The Revolution of the Hungry as an Expression of Processes of Change and Internal Struggles	131
Conclusion	134
<b>6 Hezbollah as a Player in the Lebanese Political Arena—Mutual Influences</b>	137
Hezbollah and the Lebanese System—Mutual Influences since the Foundation of the Movement (1982) to the Ta’if Agreement (1990)	137
Hezbollah and the Lebanese System—Mutual Influences during the Movement’s Establishment	138
Hezbollah and the Lebanese System—Mutual Influences during the Movement’s Consolidation	140
The Hezbollah and the Lebanese System—Mutual Influences during the Movement’s Expansion	142
Hezbollah and the Lebanese Militias	145
The Hezbollah and the Lebanese System—Mutual Influences from the Ta’if Agreement (1990) On	146
Hezbollah and the Lebanese Government—between Rivalry and Reciprocity	149
From Inclusive Oppositional Activity to Constructive Oppositional Activity	151
Hezbollah and the Lebanese Parties—Dynamic Relations	156

Hezbollah as a Political Body—from Activity Devoid of Restraints, to a Partially Restrained and Controlled Activity Policy	158
Summary	172
7 Hezbollah as a Regional Player	175
Introduction	175
The Shiite Community and the Arab Regional Front—Mutual Influences on the Eve of the Hezbollah's Establishment	175
The Shiite Community and Israel on the Eve of Hezbollah's Establishment	176
Hezbollah and the Arab Regional System—Mutual Influences from the Establishment of the Movement (1982) until the Ta'if Accord (1990)	177
Hezbollah and Israel—Mutual Influences from the Movement's Establishment (1982) to the Ta'if Accord (1990)	182
Hezbollah and the Regional Front—Summary of Mutual Influences during the Eighties	185
Hezbollah and the Regional Front—Mutual Influences from the Ta'if Accord (1990) Onward	187
Hezbollah and the Arab Regional Front—Mutual Influences from the 1990s On	187
Hezbollah and Israel—Mutual Influences from the 1990s On	195
Summary	199
8 Hezbollah as a Player in the International Arena	201
Introduction	201
Hezbollah—a Terrorist Movement with Presence and Activity in the International Arena	202
Principles and the Dispersion of Hezbollah's Network of Terrorism in the International Arena	203
Hezbollah and the International System—Reciprocal Relations between the Years 1980 and 1985	205
Hezbollah and the International System—Reciprocal Relations between the Years 1985 and 1990	207
Hezbollah and the International System—Reciprocal Relations during the 1990s	209
The Attempts to Cause the Movement's Disarmament via Syria	218
Summary	221
9 Hezbollah between the IDF's Withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 and the Second Lebanon War in July 2006	223
Introduction	223
Hezbollah and the Lebanese System—Mutual Influences Resulting in the Withdrawal of the IDF (2000)	223
The Struggle in the Internal Lebanese Arena Concerning the Continuation of the Resistance—the Shebaa Farms as a Case Study	225

The Internal Argument in Lebanon Concerning the Disarming of Hezbollah	226
Hezbollah and the Political System in Lebanon	228
Hezbollah and the Regional System—Reciprocal Influences since the IDF's Withdrawal	232
Hezbollah and the International System—Reciprocal Influences since the IDF's Withdrawal (2000)	237
10 Summary and Conclusions	241
Epilogue	249
Notes	259
Bibliography	299
Index	303

# Social Protest Movements— Theoretical Framework

## Introduction

*The emergence of social movements is not a new phenomenon; it has occupied and still occupies researchers and numerous governments. Social movements and revolutions are complex social phenomena that do not work according to one model. Their nature and characteristics differ across societies and eras. They are influenced by the relationship between the state and the society; by the social, economic, and inner political situation; and by the international system. The inner dynamics of these movements are characterized by a transition from spontaneous and informal action patterns, usually based on the charisma of the leader or group, to an established structure and organization based on formal norms and rules.*

A social movement is defined as a social framework that is usually organized—acting outside the established system, possessing characteristics of collective action, and making use of certain levels of organization and action that create continuity—for the sake of promoting or preventing changes in the existing social order.<sup>1</sup>

J. McCarthy and M. N. Zald defined social movements as an accumulation of views and beliefs within the population that represent priorities for changing some of the elements of social structure or of the distribution of social welfare.<sup>2</sup>

This definition, like most definitions that relate to social movements, contains elements of collective action, structural characteristics (continuity, basic organization), objectives, organization, and action outside the establishment. Social movements generally bear a social message. They differ from one another in the nature of the message and in its power. Neil Smelser (1962) claimed that there are two main kinds of messages: normative and ideological. Movements with a normative message are generally aimed at making limited and specific changes (social reforms) within the existing social order (such as changing the laws regarding the employment of children, outlawing drugs, etc.). In contrast, movements bearing an ideological message intend to create deep, fundamental changes in the existing social order to the point of destroying it and building a new social order by means of a revolutionary act.<sup>3</sup>

These movements are a product of social protest and operate outside of the existing system. Some conspicuous examples are the movements that led the

French and Russian revolutions, fundamentalist revolutionary movements, and militant movements for the attainment of civil rights.

In the fundamentalist movements carrying an ideological message, the individual is the key to social change; therefore, their actions are centered, first and foremost, on the formation and rebuilding of the individual's world of beliefs and values as a basis for changing the existing social structure and establishing a new social order. Social movements differ from one another in their objectives, in the nature of their actions, and in the public that supports them. With this, similar characteristics can be found that associate certain types of social movements with one another. All movements operate to advance the interests of the groups that comprise them.

### Social Movements and Their Target Audiences

A social movement operates within an environment of various target audiences; its actions, the direction of its development, and its messages are derived from the reciprocal relationships and influences between and within them. As a generalization, these target audiences can be divided into three groups: those who support the movement and its actions (supporters), those who oppose it (opponents), and those who avoid taking a stand of any kind, the indifferent ones (bystanders).

The movement supporters comprise the main target audience upon which every social movement is based. This audience includes a number of groups that are differentiated from each other by the extent of the connection and by their activity within the framework of the movement. All of them support the movement in one way or another, or their interests are represented by it. These groups have reciprocal connections, and individuals move between the groups. The intensity of the connection between the group and the movement determines its place in relation to the other groups as follows:

- A. *Movement activists*: This is a label given to the group of people found in the first circle of movement supporters. They belong to the core group of every social protest movement. This group is made up of groups of activists possessing a common identity, shared goals, and a readiness to sacrifice for the sake of advancing the aims of the movement. This group is the motivating force of the movement, and from within it emerges the charismatic leadership.
- B. *Adherents of the movement*: This is a label given to the group of people found in the second circle of movement supporters. They are found in close proximity to the core of the movement. They support the key ideologies and the goals of the movement and occasionally join collective actions carried out by the movement, but they are not active members within its framework.
- C. *The constituency*: This is a label given to the group of people found in the third circle of movement supporters. They support the movement and its messages, but avoid joining it actively. This group comprises a manpower

pool for both the adherents of the movement and the activist core group and therefore constitutes an important layer for enlistment activity.

- D. *The passively interested*: They constitute the fourth circle. This label is given to the group of people who have a clear interest in the accomplishment of the movement's goals, since they will benefit from it, but do not take any active steps within the framework of the movement.

Opponents of the social movement are derived from its aims and character (revolutionary or reform). When it challenges the government institutions, the opponent is the state. Revolutionary movements embody, by their nature, a high level of potential danger for their opponents, since they are uncompromising and tend to work through violence (usually against an existing established system). Therefore, one of the clear signs of a conflict between a revolutionary movement and its principal opponent (government, foreign conqueror, competing movement) is extreme violence. In this connection, it is fitting to emphasize that the rise of a social protest movement encourages the appearance of opposing movements that resist either the nature of its activity or some of its aims or both and work to neutralize its power.

Bystanders are included in the category of those who are indifferent both to the movement and its goals, as well as to the responses and actions of its opponents. This group stands on the sidelines as long as its basic interests are not harmed. Hurting these interests may cause the members of this group to take a stand and join one of the two sides.<sup>4</sup>

There is a continual system of dynamic reciprocity and influence between these three groups (supporters, opponents, indifferent bystanders). This system is central in influencing the nature of dialogue between the groups and within them, the level of support or lack of support of the movement, its traits, and the pace of its development. Every movement draws its strength from its size in relation to its opponents and competitors. The greater the number of people who are mobilized to join the movement, the more the legitimacy of the opponent is brought into question.<sup>5</sup>

### The Principal Theoretical Approaches

In the research literature, there are four main theoretical approaches that explain the formation and action of the phenomenon of social movements. They differ by identification and in accounting for the causes of the social movements' development, and mainly in the weight ascribed to the influence of one of the various factors in the process, owing to differences in the point of view of the researchers. Adherents of the psychological discipline consider psychological traits and changes at the individual and general level as the principal explanation for the formation of movements. In contrast, researchers from the social-economic school claim that the social position and the distribution of resources are the primary explanations for the shaping and activity of social revolutionary movements.

The *theory of relative discrimination* is based on psychological approaches and maintains that individuals will establish protest movements or will join them when they feel deprived in relation to other groups in the population. For them,

joining a movement constitutes a means of improving social status and restoring justice to its rightful place.<sup>6</sup>

Critics of this theory argue that this is only a partial explanation for the establishment of social movements. In their opinion, discriminatory condition is neither a mandatory nor a sufficient stipulation for founding a movement. This theory does not deal in any way with the contribution of social resources and processes causing the formation of a protest movement.

According to the *mass society theory*, social movements appear following a process of societal disintegration. They comprise people who are socially and personally disconnected and feel worthless as individuals. Joining a social movement provides a sense of belonging and social affinity. According to this approach, people with a strong social connection will less frequently join social protest movements.

Critics of this theory argue that it ascribes an exaggerated importance to the influence and weight of the psychological aspect on the micro level (individual) to the point of absurdity. From this, it can be deduced that social movements are a product of defective people and not of a defective society. Furthermore, the research findings of Doug McAdam, John James Whalen, and Richard Flacks, who analyzed the personal profiles of those who joined social movements in the United States during the 1960s, clearly contradict the social isolation approach that supports the theory. They found that people who entered social movements had, in fact, a strong social and political affinity.<sup>7</sup>

The *theory of structural tension* was developed in the 1960s by a researcher named Smelser. It emphasizes the social dimension and its influence on the development of movements. According to this approach, six factors encourage the growth of movements: a high level of social tension, a sense of relative discrimination, the presence of agitating factors, the development of leadership and organizational structure, readiness to join collective action, and the way the governmental system reacts. Critics of this theory argue that it ignores the role and the value of resources in the explanation of the formation of movements.<sup>8</sup>

*Resource management theory* adds a central dimension to the explanation of the formation of movements. It maintains that the success of movements does not depend merely on the sense of frustration ensuing from relative discrimination, but also on the presence of resources. The existence of resources such as money, manpower, means of recruitment and distribution, and accessibility to communication media is essential for the emergence of movements. A movement must enlist internal or external resources to finance its activities, which is particularly critical in the initial stages. At this point, supporters of this theory emphasize the important factors in the development of a movement: the availability of resources and the existence of a formal organizational infrastructure.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Conditions for the Development of a Social Movement**

*Demographic and social* changes were and continue to be among the central factors in the emergence of social protest movements. Rapid demographic changes cause two main processes to occur: one, accelerated urbanization, and two, the development of new administrative and professional elites, proletarianization, new social stratification, and alternation in the structure of social identities.

The processes of urbanization and industrialization have influenced social structures, particularly community structure. In developing nations, they generated the transition from a rural society to an industrialized society and have caused far-reaching changes in the traditional social structure.<sup>10</sup> These processes were characterized by competition, struggle, and bureaucratic relationships that stood in complete contradiction to the qualities of the traditional community and those of close interpersonal relationships. The city became a political and economic center, drawing to it youth from the peripheries who were seeking work and economic opportunities. In most places across the world, and particularly in developing nations, the accelerated urbanization process was faster than the governmental systems' ability to provide basic and vital services for these populations. As a result, slums and refugee camps grew on the peripheries of the large cities, offering fertile ground for the growth of feelings of frustration and alienation and for the emergence of protest movements.

This combination of an economic crisis on the one hand and the development of an inner social conflict on the other, alongside the rise in importance and influence of ideologies (especially religious ones—symbolizing a return to the old clear and known dictates), caused the undermining of the existing social order and the development of various social protest movements.<sup>11</sup>

### *Political Opportunities*

The concept of “political opportunities” is directly connected to the governmental system and its ability to govern the country's affairs. The nature of this system's inner structure, its strength and coherence, and the relationships among the elites are factors that influence the formation of political opportunities. Political and social conditions influence, to a great extent, the birth and success of a social movement while providing an explanation for the causes of the appearance and nature of its actions.

As early as the 1970s, researchers of political movements defined the term “the structure of political opportunities” as a situation in which a certain group decides to act and challenge the existing political system. It follows that a weak governmental system will provide more political opportunities for the growth of protest movements, which will operate to exploit the weakness of the system, build themselves at its expense, or even capture authority or rule. The Lebanese and Palestinian cases (the rise of the Hamas movement) are clear proof of the existence of this phenomenon. A particularly weak governmental system facilitates the growth of local militias on the basis of a common factor (familial, communal, or local). These local militias struggle among themselves for the existing public good, for control of cellular areas, and for political power. The actions of the Lebanese militias during the 1980s or the actions of the Palestinian militias in a number of areas in Gaza, Judea, and Samaria (2003–2008) in the “twilight period” of the Palestinian Authority can be seen as examples.

A number of social revolution researchers have sought the reasons for revolutions in the processes that preceded them, in the character of the groups that made up the society, and in the state of the ruling institutions (bureaucratic and