Determinants of Non-State Governance Success: Hezbollah in Lebanon

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Abstract

Why are some non-state governance actors highly successful while others are bound to fail? Hezbollah, a Shia Islamist political party and militant group headquartered in Lebanon, is widely accepted as one of the world's most premier non-state violent actors. As a highly capable organization, it is exemplary of the extent to which non-state governance can function and develop in a parallel manner to its respective state entity. So, what accounts for Hezbollah's widespread success? **I argue that Hezbollah's success in Lebanon is due to its political legitimacy, which is obtained and consolidated through its welfare provision scheme, political power, and organizational characteristics**. I define success as political legitimacy. I aim to contribute to our understanding of what predicts non-state governance success, and challenge traditional notions of statehood and governance.

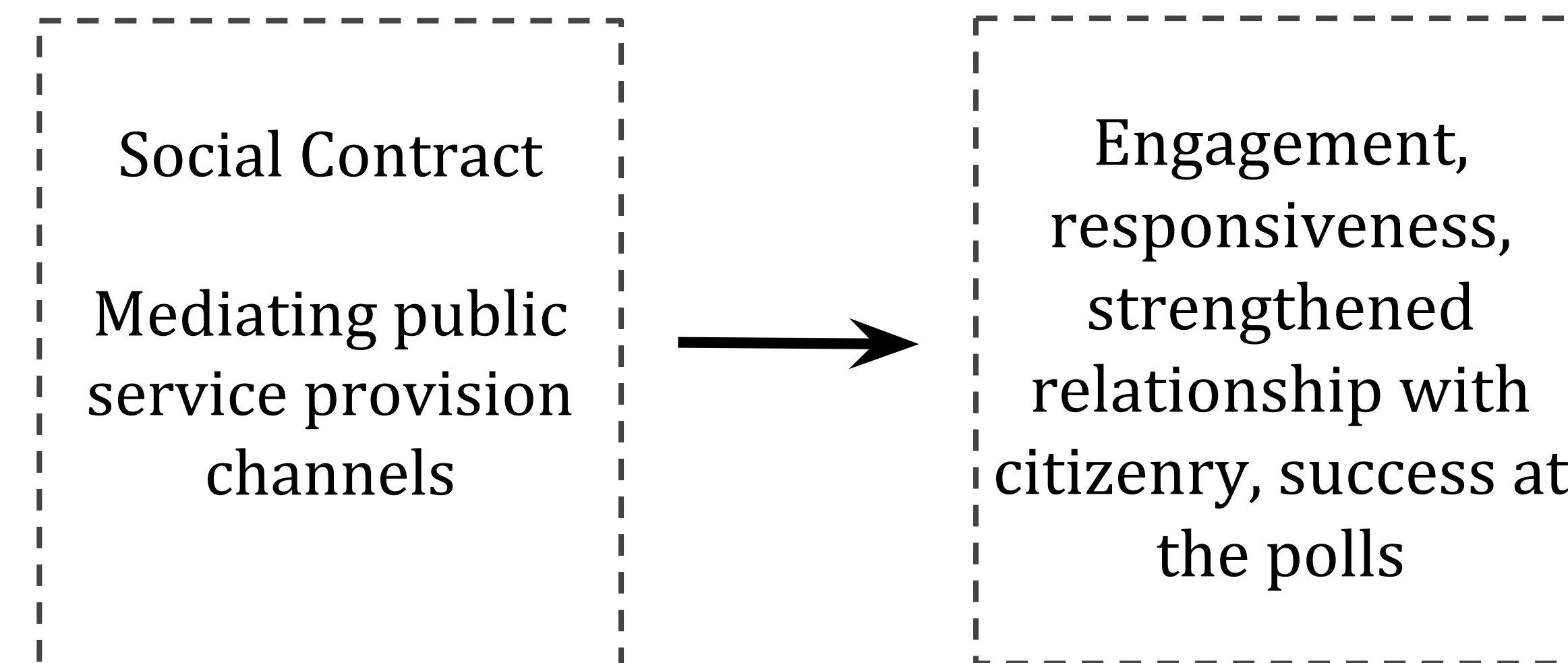*Shia Muslims show ardent support for Hezbollah in Lebanon*
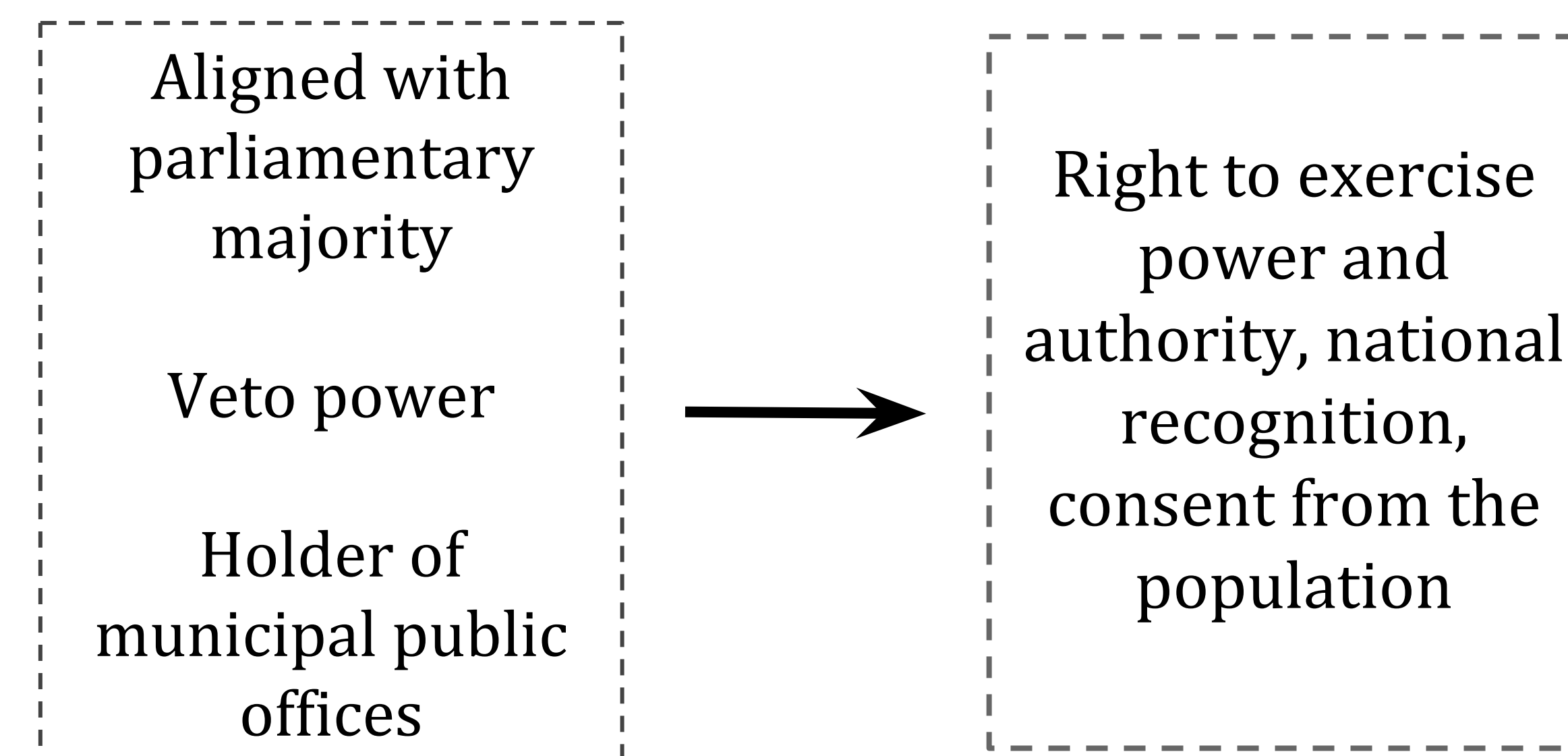
Hezbollah's areas of control

Objectives & Research Question

This research seeks to determine the factors that predict and contribute to non-state governance success by examining the case of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Question: What accounts for Hezbollah's success in Lebanon?

Argument & Empirical Analysis

Hezbollah's success is due to its political legitimacy, which is obtained and consolidated by:

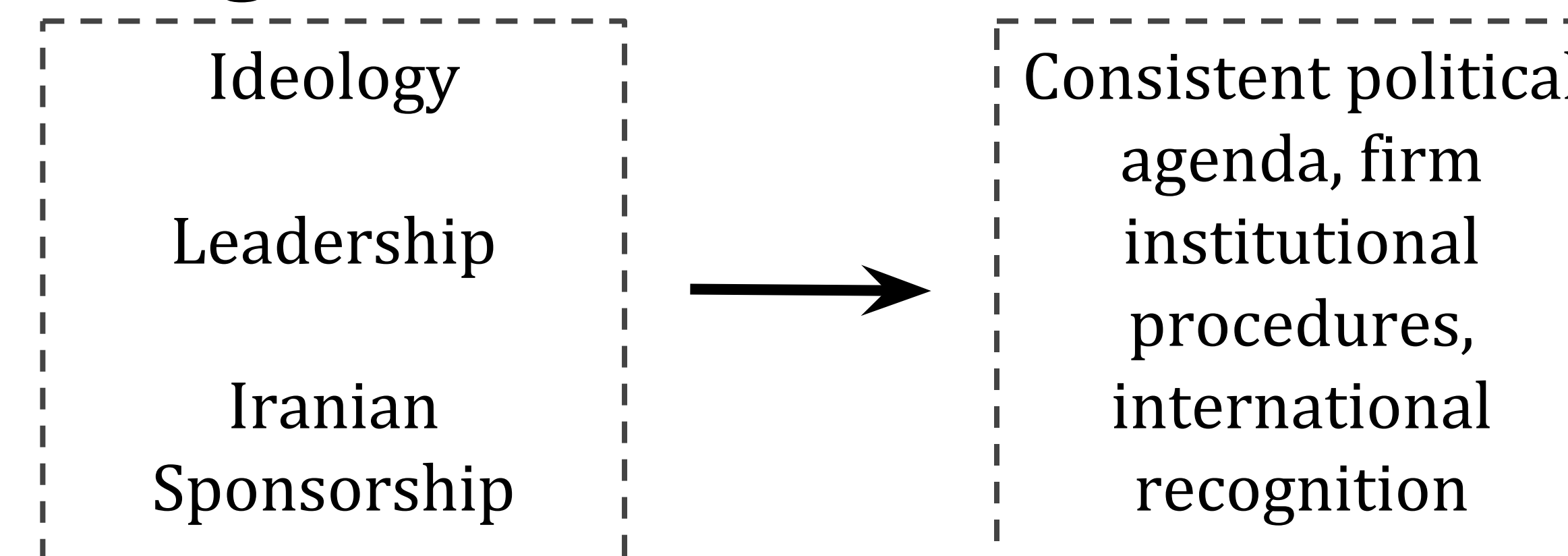### 1. Welfare provision

Social Contract
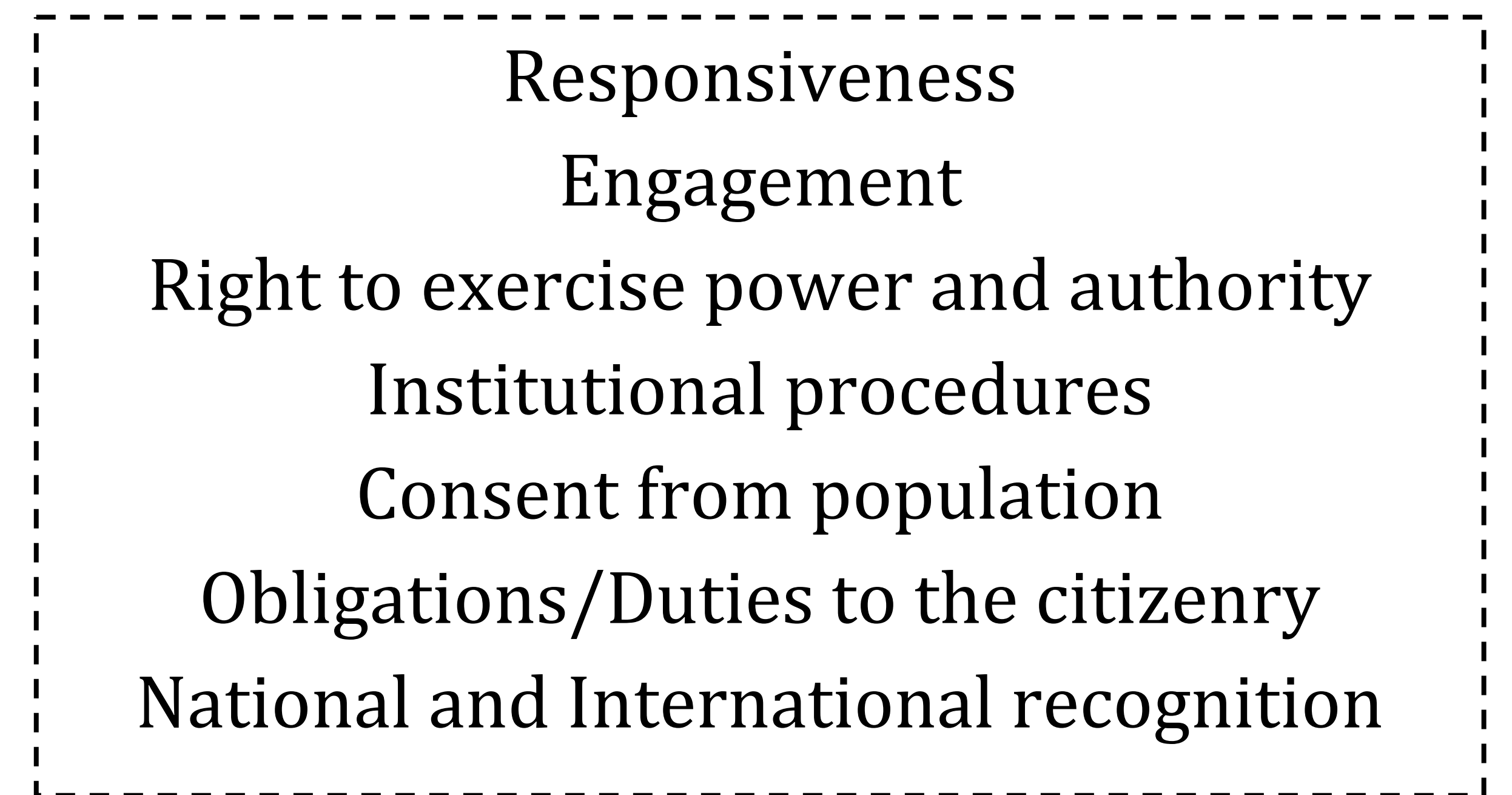
Mediating public service provision channels

→ Engagement, responsiveness, strengthened relationship with citizenry, success at the polls

2. Political Power

Aligned with parliamentary majority

Veto power

Holder of municipal public offices

→ Right to exercise power and authority, national recognition, consent from the population

3. Organizational Characteristics

Ideology

Leadership

Iranian Sponsorship

→ Consistent political agenda, firm institutional procedures, international recognition

Structure
Seats 128

128
Political groups   Government (68)
- FPM: 22 seats
- Amal: 16 seats
- Hezbollah: 13 seats
- Marada: 3 seats
- ARF: 3 seats
- Dignity Movement: 2 seats
- Al-Ahbash: 1 seat
- Union Party: 1 seat
- LDP: 1 seat
- Ba'ath: 1 seat
- Independence Movement: 1 seat
- Independent: 4 seats

IRAN

Hezbollah's Service Sector

Executive Council

Social Unit | Islamic Health Unit | Education Unit

Jihad Construction Foundation | Foundation for the Wounded

Martyrs Foundation | Khomeini Support Committee

3 hospitals
12 health centers
20 infirmaries
10 dental clinics
10 civil defense departments
Social health programs

Provides financial aid and scholarships
Operates numerous primary, secondary and technical schools

Adapted from Hezbollah brochures and interviews with Hezbollah staff (2004)

Discussion

These three components contribute to Hezbollah's political legitimacy by reflecting key components of legitimacy:

Responsiveness
Engagement
Right to exercise power and authority
Institutional procedures
Consent from population
Obligations/Duties to the citizenry
National and International recognition

Conclusions

An in-depth exploration of Hezbollah's welfare provision, political power, and organizational characteristics reveals the contribution of these to Hezbollah's political legitimacy and their predictive power regarding non-state governance success.

The findings further reveal that non-state governance success cannot be attributed to one single factor, but is rather predicted by a multiplicity of them. The studied factors are generalizable to other cases and can aid in predicting levels of legitimacy and success of existing and/or newly emerging non-state governance actors.

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