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A Three-Dimensional Analysis of the Role of Popular Resistance in Strengthening National Sovereignty in Light of Imami Jurisprudence and the International Legal Order: Proposing a Novel Conceptual Model

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide a three-dimensional analysis of the role of popular resistance in strengthening national sovereignty, with a focus on Imami jurisprudence, the domestic legal system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and international law. The research methodology is descriptive–analytical and is based on documentary and library research. In the jurisprudential dimension, the foundations of the legitimacy of popular resistance are examined on the basis of Qur'anic verses, the conduct of the Infallibles (peace be upon them), and rational principles such as the obligation to avert harm and the principle of the reprehensibility of punishment without prior declaration. Defensive jihad, as an obligation of collective duty (wājib kifā'ī) even during the Occultation, occupies a central position in conferring legitimacy. In the domestic legal dimension, Articles 150 and 151 of the Constitution and the Law on the Basij of the Oppressed demonstrate that the individual jurisprudential duty has been integrated with a collective institutional mechanism. In the international dimension, capacities such as Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations (the right of self-defense) and the right of peoples to self-determination, on the one hand, and constraints arising from the principle of the state's monopoly over the use of coercive force and the requirements of international humanitarian law, on the other hand, are analyzed. The findings indicate that despite logical–normative differences among Imami jurisprudence (individual-oriented), domestic law (a hybrid individual–state-oriented system), and international law (state-oriented), it is possible to establish a linkage among these three domains. The proposed conceptual model of “general popular agency” explains this linkage by conceptualizing the delegation of defense by the people to the state as a general agent, while simultaneously emphasizing active popular participation and public oversight of the execution of the defensive duty. This model, while enjoying jurisprudential and political support at the domestic level, also possesses the capacity for legal defensibility within the framework of international law. In addition to its theoretical contribution, the present study has practical implications, including the enhancement of military deterrence, the strengthening of social cohesion, and the promotion of governmental legitimacy. The limitations of the study include the lack of quantitative data, the difficulty of aligning jurisprudential concepts with international law, and the challenges of comparative studies. Accordingly, it is recommended that future research pursue field-based approaches, the design of quantitative indicators, and the expansion of comparative analyses.

Keywords: *popular resistance; national sovereignty; Imami jurisprudence; international law; general popular agency*



Introduction

Geopolitical developments in the twenty-first century have fundamentally transformed the equations of security and national sovereignty—transformations driven by the emergence of new patterns of security threats that no longer occur solely in the form of conventional interstate wars, but rather manifest within asymmetric, transnational, and hybrid security challenges (1). These threats—ranging from proxy occupations, intelligence penetration, and hybrid and attritional warfare to the use of economic and media pressure instruments—have rendered traditional defensive and security structures inadequate and have pushed states toward the search for innovative and flexible defensive capacities (2).

Under such conditions, *popular resistance* has emerged not merely as a reactive measure, but as a form of strategic social capital and a complementary pillar of national sovereignty; a capital endowed with historical, cultural, and ideological foundations that has, at critical junctures, succeeded in altering the course of political and military developments (3). The experience of resistance movements in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq demonstrates that this phenomenon—relying on organized collective agency, popular legitimacy, and the intelligent use of threat balancing—has been able to function as an effective actor at both regional and international levels (3).

Nevertheless, a fundamental question in academic and policy-making arenas concerns the sources of legitimacy for popular resistance across different normative systems and the manner in which these sources may be integrated into a coherent framework. Three principal normative domains are relevant in this regard. First, Imami jurisprudence, as a religious norm-generating source, articulates doctrines such as defensive jihad in response to enemy aggression (4) and the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil, even within the international sphere (5). The works of jurists such as Imam Khomeini, notably *Tahrir al-Wasilah* (6) and *Kitab al-Bay'* (7), provide a clear jurisprudential foundation for popular defense. Likewise, classical sources such as Najafi's *Jawahir al-Kalam* elaborate the theory of jihad in the face of external threats (8).

Second, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes independence, territorial integrity, and the shared responsibility of the people and the state in defending the country, thereby institutionalizing popular resistance through organized mechanisms. This constitutional framework transforms individual jurisprudential obligations into a collective and organized legal structure, reinforcing the state–society nexus in matters of national defense.

Third, public international law addresses the inherent right of self-defense and the normative status of sovereignty, while also grappling with the role of non-state actors within the international legal order. Contemporary international legal scholarship has examined the tensions between state-centric sovereignty and emerging forms of organized popular resistance, particularly in contexts of occupation and asymmetric conflict (2, 9). At the same time, theoretical critiques of sovereignty underscore its contingent and constructed nature, opening conceptual space for alternative forms of collective agency in defense of national integrity (1).

A review of the existing literature indicates that although valuable studies have been conducted within each of these domains—such as Ahmadi's analysis of the jurisprudential foundations of the Sacred Defense (10), Sharqi's examination of the evolution of popular resistance in the Middle East (3), and Dinstein's comprehensive treatment of the right of self-defense in international law (9)—most lack a three-dimensional and comparative approach. This gap has resulted in insufficient recognition of both the convergences and the points of tension among these normative systems, particularly in areas where national and international levels intersect.

Accordingly, the present study adopts an integrative and analytical approach to address the following central question: *How can the role and position of popular resistance in strengthening national sovereignty be explained on the basis of Imami jurisprudential teachings, and what is its relationship with the frameworks of international law?* The central hypothesis is that popular resistance, supported by religious doctrines such as defensive jihad (4) and transnational enjoining of good (5), as well as by domestic legal backing, can attain legitimacy within international law, provided that a dynamic and expansive interpretation of concepts such as self-defense and sovereignty is adopted (1, 9). The experiences of resistance movements in Lebanon and Palestine further offer empirical support for the plausibility of such an approach (3).

The research method employed in this study is descriptive–analytical and is based on documentary and library research. The research corpus consists of a purposive selection of argumentative jurisprudential texts, Iranian statutory laws, and key works in international legal theory. Data collection relies on systematic scholarly note-taking from primary and secondary sources, and data analysis is conducted through qualitative content analysis using an inferential approach, enabling the simultaneous utilization of jurisprudential principles, legal institutions, and international norms.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

In analyzing the role of popular resistance in strengthening national sovereignty, the first step is to provide a precise conceptual clarification of the key terms that constitute the theoretical framework of this study. In contemporary political and legal literature, *popular resistance* refers to a set of organized or spontaneous actions that may be armed or unarmed and are carried out by non-state actors—namely, the citizens of a country—with the aim of repelling foreign aggression, confronting occupation, responding to transnational security threats, or defending territorial integrity and national sovereignty (2). What fundamentally distinguishes this concept from phenomena such as “militias” or “terrorism” is its objective and motivation: popular resistance does not seek to destroy the existing order or to conduct non-defensive attacks against others; rather, its function is confined to the sphere of legitimate defense, the protection of political, cultural, and territorial existence, and the preservation of societal dignity (3).

At the level of international law, *self-defense* is recognized as an inherent right and a peremptory norm, forming a cornerstone of the contemporary security order. Legal doctrine emphasizes that this right is activated in response to an armed attack and is subject to conditions such as necessity, proportionality, and temporal limitation until the threat is removed (9). Although classical formulations of self-defense are state-centered, contemporary analyses allow for the interpretation of popular resistance actions as falling within state self-defense when such actions operate under the effective direction, coordination, or control of the state (9). This interpretive flexibility is particularly relevant in contexts characterized by occupation, asymmetric warfare, or hybrid threats, where the rigid separation between state and society becomes increasingly untenable (2).

In Imami jurisprudence, *defensive jihad* is defined as resistance against any form of aggression targeting life, property, honor, territory, or Islamic values, and it is clearly distinguished from *offensive jihad*, which is aimed at the expansion of Islamic governance. Jurisprudential sources classify defensive jihad, in situations of external aggression, as a collective obligation (*wājib kifā'ī*), meaning that once a sufficient number of individuals undertake defense, the obligation is lifted from others (4). Classical jurisprudential works, as well as the legal opinions of later

jurists, consistently emphasize the collective dimension of preparedness and deterrence as an integral element of defense, grounding popular participation in both scriptural and rational foundations (8).

The historical conduct (*sīra*) of the Infallibles—from the defensive campaigns during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad to the uprising of Imam Husayn—has played a decisive role in shaping the normative and symbolic foundations of popular resistance. Although the uprising of Karbala did not constitute a conventional war, it became an enduring symbol of resistance against illegitimate and oppressive authority and a source of inspiration for popular movements throughout Islamic history (11). In addition, rational principles such as the obligation to repel harm and the prioritization of public interest reinforce the conclusion that defending life, honor, and territory is not merely permissible but obligatory (8).

Contemporary jurists, most notably Imam Khomeini, have articulated these foundations with greater clarity and institutional relevance. In his jurisprudential writings, he explicitly affirms that when Islamic lands are attacked or face imminent aggression, defense becomes obligatory upon Muslims and requires collective preparedness to the fullest extent possible (6, 7). Similarly, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution has characterized resistance as a “public culture” and a “fundamental pillar of the system,” emphasizing its continuity until the complete removal of aggression (12). The duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil, when extended to the social and international spheres, further provides a normative basis for confronting foreign domination and occupation (5).

Within Iran’s domestic legal system, the Constitution integrates jurisprudential principles with considerations of sovereignty, transforming resistance from a purely individual duty into a legal–security institution. Constitutional provisions emphasize public participation in defense, the institutional role of revolutionary and popular forces, and the safeguarding of independence and territorial integrity, thereby establishing a structured framework for organized popular defense. This legal architecture reflects a deliberate effort to harmonize religious obligations with modern state institutions.

In international law, despite the primacy of states as legal subjects, there remain significant normative capacities for recognizing and supporting organized popular resistance. Scholarly analyses of non-state actors demonstrate that when such forces operate within a structured chain of command and adhere to the fundamental principles of humanitarian conduct, they may be treated as an extension of state defense rather than as unlawful combatants (2, 9). Moreover, critical theories of sovereignty highlight that sovereignty is neither absolute nor static, but rather a contested and evolving concept shaped by political realities and social agency (1).

A comparative examination of these three normative systems—Imami jurisprudence, Iran’s domestic law, and international law—reveals that despite differences in their primary addressees (the individual in jurisprudence and the state in international law), they converge on a shared principle: the necessity of defense against aggression. The core divergence lies in the normative orientation of individual-centered jurisprudence versus state-centered international law. To bridge this gap, the present study proposes the *model of general popular agency*, according to which the people, by virtue of their religious duty and the social covenant embodied in the Constitution, delegate authority to the state to organize defense while simultaneously participating under state guidance and oversight.

The Basij institution represents the concrete manifestation of this model, generating a three-layered legitimacy—religious, national, and international—for popular resistance. As such, it offers a viable conceptual framework that can be utilized in policy-oriented analyses and comparative studies concerning the role of popular participation in national defense.

Analysis of the Study Findings

Following an examination of jurisprudential sources, domestic laws, and international legal instruments and practice, the findings of this study indicate that there are significant areas of overlap among these three normative systems regarding the legitimacy of popular resistance under conditions of threat or foreign aggression; nonetheless, each system employs a distinct approach and legal language. In Imami jurisprudence, the individual and collective religious duty to defend occupies a primary justificatory position (7). In Iran's domestic legal order, this duty has been institutionalized within statutory and organizational structures. In international law, the legitimacy of popular resistance is contingent upon effective state control and oversight and compliance with the requirements of international humanitarian law; where popular forces operate under effective direction, their conduct may be interpreted within the framework of state self-defense (9).

Comparing the Three Bases of Legitimacy for Popular Resistance

The table below provides a comparative summary of the bases of legitimacy for popular resistance across the three domains under study.

Table 1. Comparative Bases of Legitimacy for Popular Resistance in Imami Jurisprudence, Iran's Domestic Law, and International Law

Normative system	Primary source of legitimacy	Primary addressee	Key condition/constraint	Legitimate instrument
Imami jurisprudence	Scriptural and rational foundations; norms of defensive jihad; duty to repel harm; collective obligation	Individual and community (<i>umma</i>)	Actual aggression or imminent threat	Any means constrained by necessity and proportionality (4)
Iran's domestic law	Constitutional framework and institutionalization of public defense	State and citizens	Action within a centralized command-and-control structure	Organized popular forces integrated into the lawful armed-defense structure
International law	State self-defense doctrine; sovereignty-centered legality; regulated use of force	State	Effective state control; conformity with humanitarian constraints	Organized and accountable forces operating under state responsibility (9)

This table shows that all three normative systems accept the general principle of the "necessity of defense," yet they diverge regarding the basis of legitimacy and the primary addressee. Imami jurisprudence directly addresses the obligation to the individual and the community and constrains defensive means by the parameters of necessity and proportionality. Iran's domestic law concentrates this duty within institutional mechanisms that carry both religious and legal legitimacy. By contrast, international law—given its inherent state-centrism—recognizes the legitimacy of popular resistance primarily when it operates under state control and responsibility and when humanitarian constraints are observed (9).

Indicators of the Effect of Popular Resistance on Strengthening National Sovereignty

In the field-conceptual analysis, five principal indicators were identified which, based on the findings, play the most significant role in strengthening national sovereignty through popular resistance.

Table 2. Indicators of the Effect of Popular Resistance on Strengthening National Sovereignty

Indicator	Conceptual explanation	Practical illustration
Military deterrence	Generating defensive capacity and deterrent credibility against external threats	Nationwide readiness and coordinated mobilization
Social–national cohesion	Reinforcing solidarity among societal groups	Consolidation of collective identity around sacrifice and defense narratives
Enhanced state legitimacy	Demonstrating the state’s capacity to protect territory and core values	Coordinated state–society defense performance under threat
Security–military self-reliance	Reducing dependence on external powers in security provision	Domestic development of defense capabilities
Legitimate regional influence	Diffusion of a resistance model and reinforcement of external standing	Emulation of organized popular-defense models in parts of the region (3)

Source: *The study’s analytical data and historically documented instances* (3, 4).

The analysis indicates that when popular resistance operates within an official structure and with state support, it not only increases social cohesion domestically but also generates deterrent capability and a form of legitimate influence externally. In such conditions, the external signal transmitted is twofold: a broad societal resolve to defend and the capacity to sustain an attritional defensive posture—both of which contribute to reinforcing sovereign authority and political legitimacy.

Challenges and Capacities of Compatibility with International Law

A key finding of the study is the duality between supportive capacities and constraining challenges within international law regarding the legitimization of popular resistance.

Table 3. Opportunities and Challenges for Popular Resistance under International Law

Category	Instance	Explanation
Opportunity	Self-defense doctrine	Legal space for defensive action when an armed attack occurs (9)
Opportunity	Self-determination (conceptual)	A normative basis for resistance against foreign domination and occupation (as developed in doctrine and practice)
Challenge	State monopoly over coercion	Limits recognition of independent non-state armed action (1, 2)
Challenge	Humanitarian constraints	Risk of violations and consequent international criminal and political repercussions (9)

Source: *Analytical synthesis of international legal doctrine on use of force, sovereignty, and non-state actors* (1, 2, 9).

The findings suggest that, contrary to a common assumption, international law has considerable potential capacity to support organized popular resistance—provided that it is situated under state command-and-control and aligned with humanitarian constraints. Otherwise, the state monopoly over the use of force constitutes a major obstacle to international legitimacy, and independent armed action becomes vulnerable to characterization as unlawful organized violence with substantial political and criminal consequences (9). For this reason, the concept of “general popular agency” proposed in this study can function as a solution by creating an organizational linkage between the people and the state, thereby mitigating the structural state-centrism of international law.

The overall analysis demonstrates that the phenomenon of popular resistance, across the three normative systems of Imami jurisprudence, Iran’s domestic legal order, and international law, despite linguistic and structural differences, carries a shared core: the necessity of defense against threat or foreign aggression as an inherent right and, in the religious dimension, a divinely grounded duty. This convergence—while seemingly self-evident—contains substantial complexity, primarily arising from disagreement over the position of the “agent of defense” and the degree of its independence from, or dependence on, the state structure (9).

In Imami jurisprudence, the point of departure is the individual and the community: the community is conceived as bearing a direct defensive obligation that is not conceptually contingent on governmental institutions, and it is framed through collective duty reasoning and the imperative of preparedness (4, 8). Contemporary jurisprudential and political formulations, however, increasingly stress the importance of legitimate organization and leadership so that the duty of defense is translated from dispersed action into structured collective capacity (12).

By contrast, Iran's domestic law develops an institutional model that integrates individual duty into a formal organization under centralized command, thereby acting as a mediating mechanism between jurisprudential individual-orientation and the state-orientation of international law. In this way, a legal–military structure is formed that is simultaneously anchored in jurisprudential legitimacy and constitutional–legal authorization.

Within international law, although the primary bearer of the right of self-defense is the state, the treatment of organized popular forces is not conceptually foreclosed when those forces operate under state responsibility and within regulated constraints. Yet the compatibility of popular resistance with international legality remains conditioned on effective state control and on the avoidance of conduct that would trigger the legal and political consequences associated with unlawful organized violence (2, 9).

From a policy perspective, the most important implication of these findings is the necessity of strengthening the formal and legal linkage between popular resistance forces and state command structures. This linkage increases both domestic and international legitimacy while reducing the potential for conflict between spontaneous popular action and binding international constraints. In this regard, the theory of “general popular agency” advanced by this study can operate as a conceptual–operational bridge: the people, as a collective principal, mandate the state as a general agent to organize defense, while also participating under that mandate. The Basij model is presented as institutional evidence for the practical viability of this approach, activating multiple layers of legitimacy—religious, national, and international—within a single structured framework.

Overall, the findings indicate that when popular resistance is situated in a context that draws upon jurisprudential foundations, is organized through domestic law, and is aligned with international legal constraints, it can not only repel threats but also deepen and enhance national sovereignty by generating sustainable deterrence. The principal future challenge lies less in theoretical legitimization and more in operational governance and coordination across the religious, domestic-legal, and international levels—an issue that will require layered strategies, shared training, and the refinement of mechanisms for engagement with the international legal order.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to provide a three-dimensional analysis of the role of popular resistance in strengthening national sovereignty, in light of Imami jurisprudence and the international legal order, and to propose a novel conceptual model. Using a descriptive–analytical approach grounded in jurisprudential sources, domestic law, and international instruments and practice, this multi-layered framework enabled a simultaneous assessment of capacities, challenges, and points of overlap, thereby offering a comprehensive account of the position of popular resistance across different normative levels.

The results show that Imami jurisprudence—particularly in the doctrine of defensive jihad—grounds the legitimacy of resistance in a divine and rational duty to defend against aggression; a duty that does not lapse even during the Occultation of the Infallible Imam and is characterized as a collective obligation. Drawing on Qur'anic directives, the conduct of the Infallibles such as the uprising of Imam Husayn, and rational principles including the

duty to avert harm and the principle that punishment without prior declaration is reprehensible, this normative system addresses the collective body of Muslims as the bearer of defensive responsibility and does not impose a conceptual limitation on the agent of defensive force, except insofar as proportionality, legitimate purpose, and legitimate leadership are required to prevent disorder.

Within the domestic legal system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, these jurisprudential foundations have been institutionalized through the Basij of the Oppressed. Constitutional provisions, together with statutory enactments, not only assign the duty of defense jointly to the state and the people, but also clarify the mechanisms for organizing and directing popular resistance forces. This synthesis reconciles the individual-oriented duty in jurisprudence with the state-oriented requirements of modern legal order and transforms resistance into a strategic instrument of national defense policy.

At the level of international law, despite its normative state-centrism, certain capacities—such as the right of self-defense and the right of peoples to self-determination, including as affirmed in the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the Wall—provide a conditional pathway for legitimizing popular resistance in specific contexts. Provided that organized resistance operates under effective state control and complies with humanitarian constraints such as distinction between civilians and combatants, proportionality, and the prohibition of unnecessary suffering, it may be interpreted either as a form of lawful defense or as a liberation struggle.

Synthesizing these three domains shows that while Imami jurisprudence confers legitimacy directly upon the individual and the community, and international law tends to confine such legitimacy to the state, Iran's domestic law has been able—through the creation of an intermediary institution—to connect these two logics. This linkage is conceptually articulated through the “general popular agency” theory proposed in this study: the people, as a collective principal, delegate the defense of the country to the state as a general agent, while themselves actively participating in the realization of defense under the guidance of that mandate. Such a model enjoys jurisprudential legitimacy, is compatible with the domestic legal framework, and possesses defensibility within international fora.

From an applied perspective, the study indicates that popular resistance is not merely an instrument for repelling external threats, but also a factor that strengthens key elements of national power, including military deterrence, social cohesion, political legitimacy, security–military self-reliance, and legitimate regional influence. However, the sustainability of these gains depends on the intelligent management of challenges such as compliance with humanitarian constraints, the prevention of unauthorized action, and the preservation of an effective linkage to centralized command authority.

Ultimately, effective popular resistance requires the integration of three layers: the duty-based and belief-based foundations of Imami jurisprudence that provide motivational and value resources; the institutional and legal mechanisms of domestic law that ensure organization and national legitimacy; and the legitimating frameworks of international law that enable effective action in the global arena. The “general popular agency” model, as the final product of this study, has the capacity—at both theoretical and practical levels—to resolve the apparent tension between the individual-orientation of jurisprudence and the state-orientation of international law, and to provide a sustainable basis for strengthening national sovereignty through popular resistance.

Research Limitations

Despite the study's effort to present a comprehensive three-dimensional analysis of the role of popular resistance in strengthening national sovereignty in light of Imami jurisprudence and the international legal order, it faces several limitations that may affect certain aspects of the findings.

First, the theoretical–documentary nature of the research meant that the focus was placed on written sources, legal texts, and jurisprudential opinions, while field-based and experiential measurement of popular resistance in real defense or security-crisis settings was not feasible due to security considerations and the confidentiality of relevant information. This limitation was particularly evident in examining operational instances of resistance forces in crisis conditions, restricting access to field data and operational archives and increasing reliance on officially published reports, which may—due to political or security reasons—be selective or incomplete.

Second, aligning jurisprudential concepts with the terminology and practice of international law constituted one of the most complex parts of the study. This difficulty stems from the fact that Imami jurisprudence is structured around duty-based norms and individual–social address, whereas contemporary international law operates around the state and binding international rules. Although the “general popular agency” concept provides a theoretical response to this gap, limitations remain in practical comparison and real-world exemplification, because international legal practice toward popular resistance—particularly where the “parent state” lacks international recognition—has not fully developed and may exhibit limited flexibility.

Third, within Iran's domestic legal context, the absence of quantitative data and precise indicators for measuring the effects of popular resistance on national sovereignty led the analysis to rely primarily on qualitative indicators and historically documented evidence. Although an indicator table was developed in this study, the quantitative measurement of each indicator (such as the percentage increase in deterrence or improvements in international legitimacy) was not possible due to the lack of official statistics and standardized evaluation methods.

Fourth, comparative analysis with other “Axis of Resistance” countries (such as Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq) encountered obstacles including differences in governmental structure, the complexity of security conditions, and limited access to those countries' domestic legal materials. Consequently, comparisons were based largely on international documents, public reports, and secondary analyses, which may be distant from empirical realities or affected by bias.

Fifth, the dynamic and changeable nature of the international environment in the domains of security, defense, and international law may require future updating of certain analyses presented here. For example, developments in the interpretation of self-defense doctrine or shifts in international adjudicative practice could alter the scope of legal legitimacy for popular resistance—an evolution that could not be fully anticipated within the fixed frame of this study.

Overall, these limitations suggest that while the study sought to provide a coherent account based on the systematic examination of three bodies of sources and to propose a new theory to bridge jurisprudence, domestic law, and international law, future enrichment of the findings will require field research, the use of quantitative data, and the expansion of comparative analysis across a wider range of countries and legal systems. Such a path could elevate the proposed “general popular agency” model from a conceptual level to an operational–applied level and enable its empirical testing.

Research Recommendations

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, clear pathways emerge for expanding and deepening research on the legitimacy and effectiveness of popular resistance in strengthening national sovereignty—pathways that can both address the absence of quantitative data and facilitate practical testing of the “general popular agency” model.

First, conducting field studies and comprehensive surveys in regions and communities with experience of organized popular resistance can generate valuable data to measure the impact of indicators such as military deterrence, social cohesion, and political legitimacy. While such research will involve security considerations, indirect methods—such as elite interviews, local media content analysis, and coded questionnaires—can partially compensate for existing gaps.

Second, there is a need to design and validate precise quantitative indicators for assessing popular resistance. These indicators may include measurable scales such as reductions in successful enemy attacks, increased public participation in defense programs, or changes in a country’s international standing in security-related indices. Collaboration among research centers, universities, and defense institutions can localize and standardize these indicators.

Third, cross-national comparative studies should not be limited to “Axis of Resistance” countries; rather, popular defense movements in other world regions—such as Latin America, East Asia, or Africa—should also be incorporated. Such comparisons can clarify how differing cultural, religious, and legal contexts shape legitimizing patterns and the extent to which the proposed “general popular agency” model has global adaptability.

Fourth, it is recommended to conduct practical testing of the “general popular agency” model in simulated environments or through joint projects between governmental and popular institutions. Such implementation may include designing command structures, communication rules, and monitoring procedures for compliance with humanitarian constraints, enabling evaluation of the model’s operational coherence and effectiveness.

Fifth, given the evolving nature of international law, future research should monitor normative and practical developments in this domain. Any shift in the interpretation of self-defense doctrine, conceptual expansion of self-determination, or changes in the policies of international bodies toward non-state resistance could affect the legal position of popular resistance and necessitate revision of the proposed model.

Finally, it is recommended that future research proceed through an interdisciplinary approach connecting jurisprudence, political science, sociology, and international law. Such scholarly synergy can enhance the rigor of theoretical analysis while also improving the design and implementation of effective applied models and policies. This integration can help ensure that popular resistance remains not only a theoretically defensible concept but also a legitimate and effective instrument for strengthening national sovereignty in practice.

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Authors’ Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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