

Hizballah in Latin America

How financial ties have contributed to the success of the organisation¹

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Introduction

Ever since the attacks that occurred on September 11 2001, the United States has been highly involved in the 'War on Terror'. This refers to a campaign led by the United States which was primarily established to destroy al-Qaeda, but also focusses on other terrorist organisations, such as Hizballah, Hamas, and IS. The U.S. has been trying to establish an international campaign by establishing alliances with other Western countries to form a strong, international front against terrorism. Every organisation that is on the foreign terrorist organisation list of the United States will be submitted to the counter-terrorism measures of the War on Terror.

Hizballah is an organisation that has been active in Lebanon, fighting against Israel under the umbrella of the Palestine-Israel conflict. However, in 1983, Hizballah widened its scope by attacking barracks of the United States in Lebanon and killing 241 Americans. In addition to the attack, in its manifesto in 1985, Hizballah announced that it had an anti-U.S. rhetoric, because of the U.S.'s support for Israel in the Palestine-Israel conflict. Ever since then, the U.S. has designated the organisation as a foreign terrorist organisation, and has been closely watching the organisation's movement and activity. In 1992, Hizballah's presence in Latin America became known after an investigation was conducted because Hizballah claimed the responsibility for the attacks on the Israeli embassy in Argentina. The United States grew nervous, with Hizballah operating in their backyard causing them to fear that the organisation would start planning more attacks against them. However, even though more links between Latin America and Hizballah came to light years after the attacks on the Israeli embassy, there has been no evidence of Hizballah wanting to attack the U.S. The fear for Hizballah attacking however, still exists among U.S. officials today.

The goal of the War on Terror is to reduce the success of terrorist organisations and to ultimately destroy them. The success of a terrorist organisation is perceived differently by many scholars in the field of terrorism studies. Some have argued that looking at the achievement of short-term goals is what defines the success, and that spreading fear is one of the main short-term goals of terrorist organisations. Some authors would thus argue that Hizballah can be perceived as successful because it has created fear in the U.S. This thesis stresses however, that this fear is not what makes Hizballah successful as a terrorist organisation. In this work, the success of a terrorist organisation will be measured according to the longevity of the organisation, which is a perspective offered by the natural systems

model in terrorism studies. Hizballah's operations in Latin America have not been evolved around planning attacks on the U.S. Instead, they have been focussed on raising funds that are sent back to Lebanon to support the organisation. This thesis will thus argue that the fund-raising activities that Hizballah has established in Latin America contribute to the survival of the organisation, and according to the natural systems model thus contribute to the success. This will be done by describing the financial activities conducted by Hizballah operatives in Latin American countries, and examining how the movement of the money generated from these activities in Latin America has contributed to the survival of the terrorist organisation in Lebanon.

As stated, there are different perspectives in the field of terrorism studies as to what the success of a terrorist organisation might be. Some scholars examine whether actions executed by terrorist organisations have resulted in the achievement of their stated political goals. They thus perceive actions leading to this achievement as successful. In the book "*Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge*", Alan M. Dershowitz argues that terrorism is a successful strategy because some terrorist organisations have managed to achieve their political objectives by using terrorism (2). Dershowitz supports his argument by giving the example of Palestinian terrorist organisations. He claims that the West rewarded these organisations by making certain concessions after terrorist attacks (103). Thus, he argues that since these concessions made were achievements of the goals of Palestinian terrorist organisations, terrorism is therefore now perceived as an effective tactic. Max Abrahms analysed the goals of twenty-eight terrorist organisations stated by the terrorists themselves as an indicator of the political goals of a terrorist organisation (2006, 47). He researched whether attacking civilians in a target country led to target governments making policy concessions, and whether that conformed to the stated goals of the organisations. Robert Pape researched the impact of suicide terrorism on the policy objectives of terrorist organisations (2003). Pape argues that the strategic logic of suicide terrorism is to coerce governments into making concessions (2003, 344), and thus he analysed all 188 suicide attacks from 1980 to 2001 to see whether they coerced the target governments into making significant policy changes toward the terrorists' major political goals (2003, 351).

Other scholars have looked at the more short term goals of a terrorist organisation as an indicator for its success. They have done so because, "when you look at the success of terrorism on the basis of achieving their political goals, you will almost always see that terrorism is likely to fail" (Lutz and Lutz 2009, 4). These scholars have looked at the success

of terrorism from the viewpoint of the consequences of their actions, which mostly presents itself as strategies that are intended to bring about a desired future. Edwin Bakker and Beatrice de Graaf have looked more closely at the definition of terrorism to discover how the success of terrorism should be perceived. They argue that, even though many scholars are still debating on the definition of terrorism, many would probably agree that terrorism is an instrument that - by way of threats and attacks - aims to create fear and anxiety and wants to intimidate people in order to achieve certain political goals (Bakker and De Graaf 2014, 2). They thus argue that spreading fear is one of the short-term goals of terrorist organisations (2014, 2), and the success can be measured according to the level of fear that is present in a target country after a terrorist attack. However, Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter argue that “terrorism works not simply because it instils fear in target populations, but because it causes governments and individuals to respond in ways that aid the terrorists’ cause” (2006, 50). They analyse the way governments and individuals have responded by examining five strategies of terrorism (Kydd and Walter 2006). Reactions that governments and individuals give that are conform to what the terrorist organisation desire on a shorter term, is what Kydd and Walter describe as the success of terrorism. Another scholar that examined the strategies of terrorism as an indicator for its success is Christopher C. Harmon. He argued that the strategies adopted by terrorists include forms of construction; that is, the actions yield some form of progress for the group in its drive for greater power (Harmon 2001, 39). He argues that the argument that terrorism does not succeed is false, and proposes that the accompanying strategies should be the criteria for the success of terrorism (Harmon 2001, 46). Eric D. Gould and Esteban F. Klor (2010) have looked at territorial concessions made by the target country after a terrorist attack. They have researched whether local terrorist attacks in Israel from 1988 to 2006 have caused the Israeli citizens to become more willing to grant territorial concessions to the Palestinians (Gould and Klor 2010, 1460).

Finally, there are a few scholars that have taken the longevity of terrorist organisations as an indicator for the success of terrorism. Max Abrahms, in a later work, criticizes the strategic model – the paradigm in terrorism studies that proposes that terrorists are rational actors who attack civilians for political ends, and thus join terrorist organisations because they perceive it as a method to achieve political goals (Abrahms 2008, 78). This is the paradigm he conducted his own previously mentioned research in. However, that research states that terrorist organisations rarely reach their political goals and thus, Abrahms argues, the current model fails to explain why exactly people join terrorist organisations (2008, 94). He proposes a new model – the natural systems model – which states that people join terrorist

organisations for social goals (Abrahms 2008, 95). Terrorists are often people that were isolated from society and joined an organisation because of solidarity: when friends and family are in an organisation, people are likely to join a terrorist organisation as well. For terrorists, the survival of this almost familial-like institution is the main goal and every action that contributes to the survival can be perceived as success (Abrahms 2008, 103). Bruce Hoffman is referring to the survival of terrorist organisations as staying one step ahead of the counterterrorism curve (2002, 313). In order to do so, he argues, changes such as adjusting and adapting their tactics, modus operandi and weapons systems need to be implemented to overcome the barriers designed to counter the organisations activities (Hoffman 2002, 313). Hoffman states that the success of terrorist organisations is based on whether they are able to overcome these barriers and survive (2002, 313).

In this thesis, the success of a terrorist organisation will be perceived according to its survival, and especially the natural systems model proposed by Max Abrahms. The activities that Hizballah are conducting are aimed at raising funds and in an indirect fashion, these activities can help the organisation achieve their goals by contributing with more money. However, the overlapping dimension between funds and political or short-term goals is too hard to examine, because money does not directly fulfil these goals, and so there are always other contributions to this achievement. In addition, the achievement of political or short-term goals would have led the focus of this thesis to be more national, since Hizballah's goals are primarily focussed in Lebanon. The natural systems model however, has allowed this thesis to have a transnational dimension and look at overseas networks that support Hizballah.

This thesis aims to relate to methodological transnationalism, which is the reclassification of existing data, evidence, and historical and ethnographic accounts that are based on bounded or bordered units, so that transnational forms and processes are revealed (Levitt and Khagram, 2). Transnationalism is an approach that provides a different perspective to certain phenomena. History as an academic field grew up alongside the nation-state (Beckert in AHR Conversation 2006, 1446) and was characterised by 'methodological nationalism': the tendency to accept the nation-state form and even its contemporary borders as given (Levitt and Khagram, 6). Transnational history abandoned this approach by breaking out of the nation-state as a category of analysis (AHR Conversation 1441, Levitt and Glick Schiller 285). It broke out of the nation-state by providing an approach that focussed on a whole range of connections that transcend politically bounded territories and connect various parts of the world to one another (Beckert in AHR Conversation 2006, 1446).

Transnationalism is a perspective that provides movement, circulation and interpenetration (Bayly in AHR Conversation 2006, 1441).

The transnational perspective has also been applied to the concept of networks. The increased interconnection of social and political actors involved in networks has become the center of attention in social sciences (Sangiovanni 2005, 7). A network can be understood most simply as a series of nodes that are connected through links of communication and/or exchange of resources (Sangiovanni 2005, 8). A transnational network thus operates on a transnational level and has different nodes across different parts of the world that are connected with each other. Nodes can include various actors such as individuals, organisations, firms or even computers. Recently, the concept of transnational networks has been moved from social and environmental movements to networks used for criminal purposes, among them terrorist organisations. Domestic terrorist organisations, such as Hizballah, create transnational dimensions by establishing overseas support networks aimed at raising finance, recruiting, getting weapons and other resources for the terrorists that are fighting the battle at home (Wilkinson 2011, 6). Combining the transnational elements of both a network and a terrorist organisation have led to perceiving Hizballah as a transnational terrorist network that has established nodes in foreign countries and that remains connected to these nodes by engaging in activities that transcend politically bounded borders.

The fund-raising activities that are conducted by Hizballah's overseas network in Latin America are part of the transnational perspective. In order to give a transnational meaning to these activities, Arjun Appadurai's framework of 'global scapes' will be used. Appadurai argues that the new global cultural economy can no longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (1990, 296). He argues that it needs to be understood as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order; the disjuncture's can be examined by looking at the relationship between five dimensions of global cultural flows. These five dimensions, or 'scapes', represent movement and circulation that together create the current global cultural economy. The dimension that will be applied to give a transnational meaning to Hizballah's financial activities in Latin America is finanscapes, or complex fiscal and investment flows that link economies through a global grid of currency speculation and capital transfer (Appadurai 1990, 298).

In the next section, the transnational dimension of terrorism and Hizballah will be explained in order to provide the necessary understanding for the argument made in this thesis. This will be done by outlining the concept of transnational terrorism, describing the history and characteristics of Hizballah, and the overseas network that Hizballah created in

Latin America. Thereafter, the financial activities of Hizballah in Latin America that are known to the public will be described in detail, where after the theory of finanscapes will be applied to prove the transnational dimension of the fund-raising activities. Then, the finanscapes created by Hizballah will be linked to the survival of the organisation. This thesis will then conclude by stating that the contribution to the survival has led, according to the natural systems model, to a contribution to success.

Chapter 1: Hizballah as a Transnational Terrorist Organisation

Hizballah's goals have been primarily focussed on Lebanon. The organisation came into existence in that country and has been a representative organisation of it ever since, by having a political and social wing that have infiltrated in the Lebanese society. Besides this domestic aspect however, the organisation also developed transnational dimensions. In order to understand Hizballah as a transnational terrorist network, this chapter will elaborate on both transnational terrorism and Hizballah in detail, to reveal the overlapping dimensions of both phenomena. In order to provide the reader with the right understanding, the concept of terrorism will first be elaborated on, where after transnational terrorism and Hizballah will be mentioned in detail.

Terrorism and Transnationalism

In the field of terrorism studies, there is lack of agreement on a clear and well-known definition of terrorism. According to Alex Schmid, there are four reasons why it is notably difficult to come to a definition (2004). First, he argues that terrorism is a contested concept: "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter". Some might want to include certain aspects in the definition, while others wish to not do so. Second, terrorism has many different forms and manifestations, and it is a struggle to find a definition that includes all of them. Third, the nature of terrorism has changed in the past 200 years. Finally, using a definition will delegitimize and criminalize certain groups, which can lead to unwanted association with terrorism. It is difficult for groups to lose the classification of terrorism once received, and it can thus unintentionally harm those groups. The absence of an agreed-upon definition of terrorism has indeed led to terrorism being applied to a variety of acts of violence which are not strictly terrorism by definition (Jenkins 1980, 1). If there would be an agreement on a definition, this would facilitate communication between researchers, their organisations and their contribution to society's counter-terrorism measures (Bruce 2013, 27).

As a result of having no agreement on a definition of terrorism, most people have a vague idea or impression of what terrorism is (Schmid 2004, 378). In order to avoid conceptual confusion, the definition of terrorism chosen in this thesis will be briefly outlined. In his book "*Terrorism versus Democracy*", Paul Wilkinson describes different definitions of terrorism proposed, among which the definitions according to the UK legislation in the Terrorism Act, and by the US Government. Wilkinson manages to give a thorough description of the different aspects of the concept of terrorism and comes to the following

definition himself: “terrorism is the systematic use of coercive intimidation, usually to service political ends. It is used to create and exploit a climate of fear amongst a wider target group than the immediate victims of the violence, and to publicise a cause as well as to coerce a target to acceding to the terrorists’ aims. Terrorism may be used on its own or as part of a wider unconventional war. It can be employed by desperate and weak minorities; by states as a tool of domestic and foreign policy, or by belligerents as an accompaniment in all types and stages of warfare” (Wilkinson 2010, 17).

Terrorism as a violent strategy has manifested itself in different ways throughout history. According to David Rapoport, modern terrorism emerged in the 1880s and from then on manifested itself in four waves (2002). Each wave reflects terrorism’s most dominant features, as terrorism has a continuously changing nature. The Anarchist wave, the first wave, lasted from the 1880s until the 1920s, and characterized itself by assassinations against political figures. The Anti-colonial wave lasted until the 1960s, and groups in this wave operated more on a guerrilla, underground basis against colonial powers. The New Left wave was dominated by groups in the developed world that saw themselves as vanguards for the masses in the Third World. It was during this wave that the abandoned term “international terrorism” revived (Rapoport 2002, 58). The Religious wave began in 1979 and characterizes itself by terrorist groups that are driven by religion and use suicide bombing as a tactic. In addition, terrorist groups in the Religious wave use globalization even further to a point where almost every terrorist organisation can be called international, or transnational.

The history of transnational terrorism is parallel to that of international terrorism. Even though in the 1980s, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported that there was a slight difference between transnational and international terrorism (Jenkins 1980, 4), the two terms are now used intertwined. Transnational terrorism emerged in the late 1960s, early 1970s (Selth 1987; Cronin 2002/3), when at the same time in different parts of the world a number of terrorist movements emerged that executed international attacks or aimed for international goals (Selth 1987, 68). As some of these organisations achieved international successes, other groups were encouraged to follow the same path. This caused an enormous growth in terrorism: between 1968 and 1981 more than 670 different groups claimed responsibility for at least one international terrorist incident (Selth 1987, 69). Transnational terrorism describes terrorism conducted with the support of a foreign government or organisation, directed at foreign nationals, institutions or governments, or which other ways directly transcends national boundaries (Selth 1987, 66). As mentioned before, domestic terrorist organisations can create transnational dimensions by creating overseas support

networks aimed at raising finance, recruiting, getting weapons and other resources for the terrorists that are fighting the battle at home (Wilkinson 2011, 6).

The differences between the more traditional forms of terrorism (the national groups such as the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) in Colombia) and the transnational terrorist groups (such as Al Qaeda) are evident in some central aspects of terrorism. First of all, the transnational terrorist organisations adopted mass killing in foreign countries as a party of their strategy, while the more traditional, terrorist organisations generally attacked in one country or region (Wilkinson 2011, 8). Second, most of the transnational terrorist organisations desire to change the entire international system, while the more traditional organisations had more national interests and goals (Wilkinson 2011, 8). Third, transnational organisations also use terrorism as a form of theatre: “terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people listening, not a lot of people dead” (Jenkins 1975, 158). The amount of news coverage the international media grants to certain organisations after an attack, gives the organisations attention. By doing this, the international media portrays organisations stronger as they really are, and this spreads fear and alarm among populations (Jenkins 1975, 158). Finally, while traditional organisations only had funding and recruitment networks abroad, transnational terrorist organisations tend to have affiliates, cells and support groups in foreign countries (Wilkinson 2011, 8). Often these cells or networks execute attacks, in addition to recruiting and raising funds in the name of the terrorist organisation.

Hizballah: ‘the Party of God’

‘Hizb Allah’, which means the ‘Party of God’ in Arabic, is a terrorist organisation that has its origin in Lebanon and consists of members of the Shi’a (Shiites) Muslims. The Shi’a Muslims are the second largest denomination of Islam, behind the Sunni Muslims, which are thus often in a majority. In Lebanon, however, the Shi’a Muslims were the largest sect by the 1960s (Jaber 1997, 11). But, while the rest of Lebanon flourished economically, the Shiites lacked the basic necessities of modern life and had no political representation since they were neglected by the Lebanese government (Jaber 1997, 11). The organisation came into existence when the fight between the Palestinians and the Israelis moved beyond the borders of Israel and reached the habitat of many Shiites; the South of Lebanon.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) began making the region its base from where it made raids into Israel (Jaber 1997, 12). The PLO became a state-within-a-state in the South of Lebanon and its officials were accused of rape, robbery and extortion (Jaber

1997, 14). So at first, when Israel invaded the South in 1978 with the primary goal of driving the PLO out, the Shiites showed their gratitude towards the Israelis (Jaber 1997, 14).

However, when Israel invaded for the second time in 1982, and was reluctant to leave despite having achieved its primary goal of driving the PLO out, a change in attitude occurred among the Shiites (Jaber 1997, 15). In 1985, young Shiite men and clerics announced the existence of Hizballah and the formation of its military wing, the Islamic Resistance, by claiming the responsibility of the attack by a young man who drove a red pick-up Chevrolet containing 900 kilograms of explosives into a military Israeli convoy (Jaber 1997, 24).

In 1985 Hizballah presented its manifesto in which the norms, values, and goals of the organisation were stated. The manifesto described its anti-Israel discourse, and explained that the organisation was against all oppressors, and for all oppressed (Alagha 2011, 15). Its grievances against the United States were based on their support of the Israeli invasion in 1982, and its aim was to unite all Muslims and to create an Islamic State in Lebanon (Alagha 2011, 17). They would defend these goals by executing the smaller military jihad: fighting against all enemies of Islam (Alagha 2011, 21). In 2009, Hizballah introduced a new manifesto, but the main principles remained the same.

After 1989, Hizballah made a transition from a predominantly militant movement that fought Israel to greater participation in the formal institutions of the Lebanese state. First of all, Hizballah started participating in the political system of Lebanon. One of Hizballah's objectives was to create an Islamic State, and it was believed that a revolutionary transition to Islamic rule and an Islamic state was impossible in the diverse Lebanese society. Gradual reformation was thus necessary, which required participating in the political system (Norton 2007, 99). The idea of Hizballah participating in the political system was widely supported by the Shi'a community, since they always lacked a certain form of political representation. In the 1992 elections, Hizballah captured twelve seats in the Lebanese parliament and has maintained almost always 10 percent of all parliamentary seats in elections ever since (Norton 2007, 102).

Secondly, Hizballah has created a large social wing in order to help Lebanese citizens. When the Shiites fled the South of Lebanon because of the invasion of the PLO to the North, they mostly settled in suburbs of Beirut (Jaber 1997, 145). The living conditions were poor and the government did not undertake anything to improve the situation. In the meantime, the suburbs of Beirut had become a Hizballah bastion, where its leadership lived and worked (Jaber 1997: 146). As the years passed, and the government still refused to improve the living condition of the refugees in the north, Hizballah decided to tackle the

situation itself (Jaber 1997, 147). With the financial help of Iran, Hizballah established Jihad al-Binaa, Construction Jihad, in 1984. This social wing of the organisation set up various public services, such as schools, hospitals, infrastructure, community centers, mosques and other public assistance facilities. At first, the social programs were created for the Shiite Muslims that lived in the north of Lebanon. However the programs are now available to the poor of other religious sects, which has improved the position of Hizballah in the political sphere and increased popular support (Jaber 1997, 148).

Hizballah as a Transnational Terrorist Organisation

In addition to becoming a more political and social institution, Hizballah became a transnational terrorist organisation that has created ties in various countries. These ties are mainly aimed at raising funds, which can be related to state sponsorship that Hizballah receives from Iran. According to the country Reports on Terrorism, Iran has been sponsoring Hizballah from the beginning of its existence with training, weapons, explosives, as well as political, diplomatic, monetary and organisational aid (2012, 260). But even though Iran's sponsorship is probably the largest source of funding, with an estimated amount of 200 million U.S. dollars, the organisation leaves itself accountable to the wishes of the sponsor state (Philipponne 2008, 18). Thus, whenever Hizballah's actions are not in accordance with Iran's desires, there is insecurity that either Iran can stop the sponsorship, or might force Hizballah to follow another course (Philipponne 2008, 18). In addition to that, the War on Terror has led the West trying to persuade state sponsors of terrorism to stop. Hizballah likely wants to ensure that even in the event that Iran were to ever strike a grand bargain with the West, the group would continue to be able to exist and function on its own.

The ties that Hizballah created are mostly in two regions: Africa and Latin America. In the former, Hizballah has made millions of dollars from the illicit sale of diamonds (Arena 2006, 467). In Sierra Leone, Hizballah has a network of rebel groups operating that mine the diamonds for them (Arena 2006, 467). In the Congo, Hizballah is reported to take a direct role in the market by purchasing diamonds from miners and local merchants at a fraction of the market value and selling them in Antwerp, Bombay and Dubai (Arena 2006, 468). However, it remains unclear how much revenue Hizballah is generating from the diamond trade.

In Latin America, Hizballah has mostly been present in the Tri-Border Area (TBA). The TBA consists of three cities in a 40-square-kilometer triangle: Ciudad del Este in Paraguay, Foz do Iguazu in Brazil, and Puerto Iguazú in Argentina. One of the main

attractions is the Iguassú Falls, which attract many tourists every year. In the early 1970s, when Brazil and Paraguay were seeking to exploit the energy-generating and tourist potential of Iguassú Falls and promote regional trade, government planners established a free-trade zone in the rapidly growing city of Ciudad del Este, thereby allowing Argentines and Brazilians to purchase cheap electronic products (Hudson 2003, 6). Because of this, the region became duty-free and almost lawless, from which organised crime groups, terrorist organisations and corrupt officials profit. It is estimated that Islamic fundamentalist groups in the TBA send between 300 million and 500 million U.S. dollars a year in profits from drug trafficking, arms dealing, and other illegal activities, including money laundering, contraband, and product piracy, to radical Islamic groups in the Middle East (Hudson 2003, 4). Hizballah has been using the area as a safe haven for fundraising, money laundering, recruitment, training, plotting and other activities ever since. By 2005, an estimated 460 operatives worked for numerous Hizballah cells in the TBA (Noriega and Cárdenas 2011, 1). A 2009 study by the RAND Corporation estimated that Hizballah earns about 20 million U.S. dollars a year from illicit activities in the region (Knott 2014, 53).

Besides this area, Hizballah has been establishing support networks in various other countries in Latin America. It is for example known that in Colombia, Hizballah has been establishing connections with the FARC because of Colombian cocaine. It appears as if Hizballah is trying to get in on the well-established drug trafficking practices of the FARC. In Mexico, connections between Hizballah and the drug cartel Los Zetas have come to light. Similar to its connections with FARC, it appears as if Hizballah is trying to cooperate with Los Zetas in order to use their drug trade routes that cross the Mexico-U.S. border. In addition to establishing fund-raising activities with the help of their drug-trade routes, it also appears that Hizballah is recruiting members of the Los Zetas gang to participate in activities that support Hizballah. Both links with the FARC and Los Zetas will come to light in the next section. In Argentina, a large recruiting network known as the Rabbani network has been spreading its influence into other countries, such as Venezuela, Brazil and Chile (Noriega and Cárdenas 2011, 4). Especially Brazil, where some 1 million Muslims live, has been very attractive for the recruitment practices of the network. On Margarita Island, an island 60 kilometres off the coast of Venezuela, Hizballah established paramilitary training camps whence Venezuelans that were recruited were sent back to Lebanon after completing the training programme (Noriega and Cárdenas 2011, 3).

Conclusion

Transnational terrorism emerged in the late 1960s, when a number of terrorist movements executed international attacks or aimed for the achievement of international goals.

Transnational terrorism can either be terrorism conducted with the support of a foreign government or organisation directed at foreign nationals; institutions or governments, or which other ways directly transcends national boundaries, or it can be a domestic terrorist organisation that creates overseas support networks. Hizballah, which came into existence when the fight between the Palestinians and the Israelis moved towards the South of Lebanon, has been a domestic terrorist organisation since it has been participating in the formal institutions of the Lebanese state. Hizballah has been participating in the political system of Lebanon and has created large social wings in order to help poor Lebanese citizens. However, Hizballah also developed itself as a transnational terrorist organisation. First of all, Hizballah has been receiving support from Iran since the beginning of its existence in the form of material, political, diplomatic, monetary and organisational aid. Secondly, the organisation has established foreign support networks that have contributed to the organisation in the form of raising funds and attracting recruits. Hizballah can thus be perceived as a domestic terrorist organisation that has developed into a transnational terrorist network by having both state sponsorship of a foreign country and overseas support networks in foreign countries.

Chapter 2: Hizballah's Financial Ties with Latin America

As concluded in the foregoing chapter, Hizballah is a transnational terrorist organisation because it has established overseas support networks. Even though some activities that have been established by Hizballah operatives in Latin America are aimed at recruitment, most of them are aimed at raising funds for the organisation. This chapter will argue that these fund-raising activities are part of the transnational world by being finanscapes and that they contributed to the survival of the organisation. First, some of Hizballah's fund-raising activities in Latin America will be described in detail, where after the relation between them, finanscapes and the survival of Hizballah will be assessed.

Hizballah's Financial Activities

In the following section, the financial activities that Hizballah has established with the help of Latin American citizens will be described. This will give insight into how these people and networks have operated and what kind of activities they were involved in. The cases that will be described are made public due to arrests and investigations. This means that there might be more cases of financial activities conducted by Hizballah in Latin America that are not known to the public. In addition, there is also the possibility that there might be activities aimed at gaining weapons or other sorts of materials that could contribute to the survival of the organisation. This link will remain unexplored since there is no information available. This thesis recognizes that the cases that will be described below are not fully responsible for the survival of the organisation, but rather contribute to a part of it.

The Tri-Border Area

The largest network operating in the TBA is the Barakat network. Assad Ahmad Barakat immigrated to Paraguay at the age of 17 with his father to escape the Lebanese civil war (Arena 2006, 460). A couple of years after Assad Ahmad Barakat immigrated to Paraguay, he opened an electronics wholesale store in a stall at the Page shopping gallery in Ciudad del Este called Casa Apollo, and an import-export business called Barakat Ltd. He used both these as front companies to operate a variety of illegal fund-raising operations (Arena 2006, 460). Barakat used his shop in the Page gallery to sell huge quantities of pirated software smuggled into the region from Hong Kong. Paraguayan authorities learnt that Barakat had set up shipment routes by sea and by air, when they found 5,000 pirated Nintendo video games worth 160,000 U.S. dollars in Bolivia and Paraguay, through which he moved the

merchandise from the Chilean port city of Iquique to his shop in Ciudad del Este (Arena 2006, 460).

Together with family members and trusted contacts, Barakat set up an extensive network of legal and illicit financial ventures and became the chief fund-raiser for Hizballah in the TBA (Constanza 2012, 197). Barakat's cousin, Bassam Naboulsi, was arrested in 2003 in Brazil for having ties with a group of drug traffickers. His brother, Hassan Naboulsi, owned Hassan Internacional which was located in the Page shopping gallery in Ciudad del Este, where Barakat also operated. In 2003, Hassan Abdallah Dayoub, Barakat's other cousin who lived in Ciudad del Este, was arrested at Asunción's Silvio Pettitrossi Airport, while in possession of 2.3 kilograms of cocaine hidden in an electric piano. More recently, the New York Times reported that Barakat's brother, Hamzi Ahmed Barakat was arrested in Brazil under suspicion of operating a fraudulent scheme in the clothing industry (2013). He used the identities of newly arrived Lebanese immigrants in Brazil to set up front companies that helped him legitimize his funding for Hizballah.

A RAND Corporation report noted that Barakat and his network raised a substantial amount of money for Hizballah through counterfeiting, piracy, racketeering, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, weapons trafficking and document forgery services (Constanza 2012, 197). On 12 September 2001, a Paraguayan SWAT team raided Casa Apollo. Even though Barakat managed to escape arrest, the SWAT team found financial statements that added up to a quarter of a million dollars in monthly money transfers sent to the Middle East (Constanza 2012, 197). Among the statements was a letter from Hizballah leader Hassan Nasrallah congratulating Barakat on his fund-raising efforts while acknowledging a receipt of over 3.5 million U.S. dollars for the year 2000 (Constanza 2012, 197).

Two other cases in the TBA concern Ali Khalil Mehri and Moussa Ali Hamdan. Mehri is a businessman of Lebanese descent that lived in Ciudad del Este. He was charged with piracy of computer software and compact disks, selling millions of dollars' worth of counterfeit software, and funnelling the profits to Hizballah (Arena 2006, 460). Mehri had exploited the weak and corrupt Paraguayan intellectual property rights laws in 1998 by registering the brand Play Station, which was manufactured legitimately by Sony (Meehan 2004, 30). Merchants that wanted to sell the registered product Play Station then needed to pay for it, and this money went straight to Mehri, who funnelled it back to Hizballah in Lebanon. Hamdan is a Lebanese national that operated from Ciudad del Este and was arrested by Interpol in 2010. He was arrested for transporting and trafficking stolen goods in

addition to making false statements to government officials (Constanza 2012, 198). Together with his accomplices, Hamdan sold fraudulent passports and counterfeit money to raise funds that were used in an attempt to buy 1,200 M4 Colt machine guns for Hizballah (Constanza 2012, 198).

Colombia

The largest network operating from Colombia is the Joumaa network. Ayman Joumaa, or “Junior”, is a Lebanese-Colombian criminal that has established a drug trafficking network that is based in Colombia but links South America to Mexico, the U.S., West Africa and Europe (Knott 2014, 54). The network is mainly involved in selling thousands of kilograms of cocaine to the Mexican drug cartel Los Zetas, and for laundering millions of dollars in drug money from Mexico, Europe and West Africa to Colombia and Venezuela. The network uses bulk cash smuggling and Lebanese exchange houses to launder the illicit profits made from the drug trafficking. The Lebanese Canadian Bank and other financial institutions served as conduits for money laundering and the funding of Hizballah (Knott 2014, 54).

Within the Joumaa network, more Lebanese immigrants engaged in activities that supported the network. The Treasury Department of the United States sanctioned Lebanese, Colombian and Venezuelan individuals and businesses that laundered money for Joumaa, including numerous front companies that hid the profits’ true destinations (Knott 2014, 56). Ali Mohamad Saleh was the leader of a support cell in Colombia that raised funds for transfer to Hizballah. According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Saleh solicited donations for Hizballah from business owners and residents, and coordinated the transfer of checks and U.S. dollars by courier from Colombia via Venezuela to Hizballah in Lebanon (2012). In addition to that, Saleh is a former Hizballah fighter and thus had significant knowledge of Hizballah operation plans due to his contact with Hizballah authorities in Lebanon (U.S. Department of the Treasury 2012). In 2012, the Treasury Department designated Kassem Mohamad Saleh, who is a dual citizen of Lebanon and Venezuela for running front companies for Joumaa; Abbas Hussein Harb, who is also a dual citizen of Lebanon and Venezuela for owning a Colombia- and Venezuela-based organisation that launders money for Joumaa via the Lebanese financial sector, and Ibrahim Chibli, only a citizen of Lebanon for using his organisation to launder money for the network (Knott 2014, 56). Kassem Mohamad Saleh’s brother, Ali Mohamad Saleh, is a Lebanese-Colombian national who also engaged in fund-raising activities for Hizballah in the Joumaa network.

As mentioned before, Hizballah has been creating ties with the FARC because of its large share in the Colombian cocaine market. This link was revealed after Operation Titan, a two-year drug trafficking investigation in 2008 conducted by U.S. and Colombian investigators that dismantled an international cocaine smuggling and money-laundering network that ranged from Colombia to Panama, Mexico, the U.S., Europe and the Middle East (Constanza 2012, 200). Colombian and U.S. agents arrested 130 people and seized 23 million U.S. dollars. Among those arrested in Bogota, Colombia, was Chekry Harb, a Lebanese man who used the alias “Taliban”. He was a world-class money launderer whose hub of South American cocaine traffickers and Middle Eastern militants laundered hundreds of millions of dollars per year for various criminal organisations and Middle Eastern radical groups (Constanza 2012, 200). His organisation supposedly paid some 12 percent of their profits to Hizballah.

Venezuela

In addition to the TBA and Colombia, a large network was also present in Venezuela: the Nassereddine Network. Ghazi Atef Salameh Nassereddine was born in Lebanon but became a Venezuelan citizen in 2001. Soon after he immigrated, he became Venezuela’s second-ranking diplomat in Syria (Noriega and Cárdenas 2011, 3). He was the most prominent Hizballah supporter in Venezuela because of his diplomatic role and his close relationship to Justice and Interior Minister of Venezuela at that time, Tarik El Aissami. Together with his two brothers, Nassereddine manages a network that aims to expand Hizballah’s influence in Venezuela and throughout Latin America.

Within the Nassereddine network, Ghazi Nassereddine has built and consolidated relationships with Hizballah officials in both Lebanon and Syria (Noriega and Cárdenas 2011, 3). His brother, however, has been more concerned with fund-raising activities. Abdallah runs various money-laundering operations and manages much of the business dealings of Hizballah in Latin America. He operates from Margarita Island, a small island 60 kilometres off the coast of Venezuela, housing a large Shi’a population (Constanza 2012, 199). He has been using his position as the former Vice President of the Federation of Arab and American Entities in Latin America to maintain ties with Islamic communities throughout the region (Noriega and Cárdenas 2011, 3).

Two other cases in Venezuela are those of Ghazi Nasr al Din and Fawzi Kan’an. Ghazi Nasr al Din is a Lebanese-Venezuelan diplomat and was president of Caracas’s Shi’a Islamic Center. He served as Venezuela’s Chargé d’Affaires in its embassy in Syria until

2008 and as the Director of Political Aspects at its embassy in Lebanon (Knott 2014, 58). He was identified in 2008 by the U.S. Department of the Treasury as a Hizballah supporter who used his position to provide financial support to the organisation (Constanza 2012, 200). Al Din also used built up relationships with Hizballah officials in Lebanon. From there, he facilitated the travel of two Hizballah representatives to Caracas so that they could raise funds in Venezuela (Constanza 2012, 200). These representatives additionally helped him with opening a Hizballah-sponsored community center and office in Venezuela (Knott 2014, 58). As the president of the Islamic Center in Caracas, al Din used his position to facilitate fundraising by counselling Hizballah donors on fundraising efforts and providing them with specific information on bank accounts where the donors' deposits would go directly to Hizballah (Knott 2014, 58). Fawzi Kan'an is a Lebanese-Venezuelan businessman, who moved to Venezuela from Lebanon in 1986 to escape the fighting of the Lebanese civil war. He set up two travel agencies in Venezuela: Biblos Travel Agency and Hilal Travel Agency and according to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, he has used both companies to courier funds raised in Venezuela to Lebanon and to facilitate the travel of Hizballah members to Venezuela (Constanza 2012, 200).

Other Countries

In 2005, an international drug ring was dismantled in Ecuador under Operation Damascus. The ring trafficked cocaine to Europe, Asia, and South American countries. The ring was led by Rady Zaiter, a Lebanese man who used his restaurant in the capital city as a front for the operation. The cocaine was transported in shipments of 1 million U.S. dollar a piece, by hiding it in suitcases equipped with false bottoms and in the stomachs of drug couriers (Arena 2006, 463). According to an internal police report, evidence collected in the case indicated up to 70 percent of the drug ring's profits were funnelled to Hizballah (Arena 2006, 463).

In Brazil, Hizballah has been approaching the Shi'a community of 20,000 that live in the capital, São Paulo. Hizballah is reportedly supporting some of these immigrants by staking them 50,000 U.S. dollars to establish businesses in exchange for a percentage of sales (Constanza 199). The businesses established will thus serve as front companies that will support Hizballah by moving money from Brazil to Lebanon.

Hizballah's Finanscapes

The networks that Hizballah has created in various Latin American countries have been engaged in different fund-raising activities. There have been cases of piracy, for example in

the Barakat Network and Ali Khalil Mehri both in the Tri-Border Area. Some have been engaged in drug trafficking, for example the Barakat Network in the TBA, the Joumaa Network in Colombia, Chekry Harb as the leader of a South American cocaine traffickers hub and Rady Zaiter that led the international drug ring that was dismantled in Ecuador. Others have solicited donations, among others Ali Mohamed Salah, who solicited donations for Hizballah from business owners and residents, and Ghazi Nasr al Din, who used his diplomat position to counsel Hizballah donors on fundraising efforts. Some others were engaged in fraud, weapons trafficking, document forgery services and transporting and trafficking of stolen goods.

The money these networks have generated is sent back to the leadership of Hizballah in Lebanon. Creating this movement of money has been executed in a few steps. At first, the money gained from illicit activities needs to be laundered. This is often done with front companies, such as Casa Apollo and Barakat Ltd in the Barakat network, Lebanese exchange houses and the Lebanese Canadian Bank in the Joumaa network, travel agencies Biblos Travel Agency and Hilal Travel Agency set up by Ghazi Nasr al Din and a restaurant used by Rady Zaiter, the leader of the Ecuadorian drug ring. Second, after laundering the money, it would be funnelled to Hizballah in Lebanon. This could be done by transferring the money into bank accounts that were directly associated with Hizballah, for example by using the Lebanese Canadian Bank, by gaining donors that transferred money directly into those bank accounts, or by using human couriers that smuggled certain amounts of money across the border to Lebanon. The front companies would often be used to transfer the money so that authorities would have difficulties in finding the true origin of the money.

This movement of money from Latin America to Lebanon is what Arjun Appadurai calls a finanscape: a fiscal flow that links economies together through capital transfer. The money that Hizballah generates in Latin America can be depicted as finanscapes because of two reasons. First of all, the money is transferred from a Latin American country to Lebanon. This means that the money creates a tie between two countries, and thus there is a form of financial connectedness that links economies together. Secondly, the money is being moved from one place to another and thus represents a capital flow that transcends the border of a nation. The movement of the money from one place to another is, according to Appadurai, a contribution to the global cultural economy that is made up of flows. Hizballah thus contributes to the transnational world by creating finanscapes from Latin American countries to Lebanon.

Hizballah's Survival

The positive relationship between terrorist financing and the survival of a terrorist organisation is acknowledged by political entities in the world. In 1999, The United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. This Convention was aimed at enhancing international co-operation among states in devising and adopting effective measures for the prevention of the financing of terrorism, as well as for its suppression through the prosecution and punishment of its perpetrators (Abeyratne 2011, 58). After September 11, George W. Bush put new emphasis on countering terrorist financing under the umbrella of the War on Terror in order to shut down terrorist organisations. It was revealed after investigations that the money trail leading from the hijackers who were involved in the attacks on September 11 not only helped establish their political origins but also served to expose all too clearly the vulnerabilities of the international banking system to terrorist fund generation, money laundering and general financial logistics (Navias 2002, 57). Countering terrorist financing is called 'finance warfare', or the form of economic warfare whose context is the global financial markets and whose aim is to constrain the enemy's capability both to generate funds and to shift monies across borders for the purposes of supporting and sustaining international operations (Navias 2002, 57). It has been put on the forefront of countermeasures because it is believed that if all financial support for a network can be disrupted, the network will shut down through an inability to operate (Knott 2014, 62). Terrorist financing is thus perceived as the motor of a terrorist organisation: without it, an organisation would not be able to buy weapons, plan attacks, travel, establish foreign networks and maintain various wings. Having no funds will 'dry-out' an organisation, and shut down its ability to operate. Funds thus contribute to the survival of a terrorist organisation, since without money, it would be hard for an organisation to maintain its existence and operate.

Hizballah has been able to create a steady stream of finanscapes that have contributed to the survival of its political, social and military wing in Lebanon. These wings are the core of the organisation's existence, and the networks in foreign countries have been established to maintain these. The amount of money sent back to Lebanon differed per network. Some networks have sent only a certain percentage back to Hizballah, such as the hub of Chekry Harb, who payed some 12 percent of their profits to Hizballah, and the drug ring led by Rady Zaiter in Ecuador, who funnelled up to 70 percent of the profits to Hizballah. Either way, the amounts of money that are sent back are of a substantial amount; the Barakat network alone raised over 3.5 million U.S. dollars for the year 2000. These

amounts have thus greatly contributed to the maintenance of Hizballah's political, social and military wing. The money generated in Latin America has contributed to the survival of these wings by making it able to run political programmes and campaigns, to afford the establishment of social programmes and public services, and to buy weapons and establish training camps. The amounts of money generated in Latin America are of such substantial proportion that without it, the organisation would have more trouble maintaining the existence and the ability to operate of its wings.

Conclusion

The cases of financial activities that are known because of arrests and investigations have displayed the variety of methods that Hizballah operatives have used to raise funds for the organisation. The amounts of money raised were of substantial amount, and this money is (partially) sent back to Lebanon with the help of front companies and couriers. The movement of money across national borders, and the interconnection it creates between multiple economies, have resulted in these fund-raising activities becoming a part of the transnational world as finanscapes.

Terrorist financing is acknowledged to have a positive relationship with the survival of a terrorist organisation, because it is believed that if an organisation does not receive any financial support, it will shut down through the inability to operate. The finanscapes created by Hizballah have caused the money generated in Latin America to travel to Lebanon, where it has supported the three main wings of the organisation. Since the finanscapes are of a substantial amount of money, it facilitated the maintaining of existence of its wings and its ability to operate. Thus, the finanscapes created with Latin American countries have contributed to the survival of Hizballah.

Conclusion

Hizballah can be perceived as a domestic terrorist organisation because it has established military, political and social wings that are focussed on the development of Lebanon. Especially the latter two have caused Hizballah to be more integrated in the formal institutions of the state. However, the organisation has also established transnational dimensions when it received state sponsorship from Iran and when it started establishing foreign support networks in Africa and Latin America. The support networks in Latin America have mostly been focussed on generating funds, and this has been done by using various methods such as drug trafficking, piracy, trading in stolen goods and others. The funds generated in Latin America would then be sent back to the leadership of the organisation in Lebanon. This is often done with the help of front companies that launder the money and legitimize the money trail. The money would either be transferred to bank accounts in Lebanon, or would be smuggled across borders by using human couriers. The movement of the money from across national borders, and the financial interconnection it creates between multiple economies, is why these fund-raising activities have turned into finanscapes. The creation of these finanscapes has led Hizballah to be a contributor to the transnational world.

The finanscapes created by Hizballah have caused the money generated in Latin America to travel to Lebanon, where it has supported the three main wings of the organisation. The money raised with these activities are not as large as the 200 million U.S. dollar that the organisation received from Iran. However, the 20 million U.S. dollars generated from the Tri-Border Area and the 3.5 million U.S. dollars generated from the Barakat network in one year are good examples that show that the amounts are definitely of substantial size. Even though the amounts are not the same as the Iranian sponsorship, the money is of substantial size that without it, the organisation would have had more trouble maintaining the existence and the ability to operate of its wings in Lebanon. The finanscapes that Hizballah has created in Latin America thus contribute to the survival of the organisation.

The natural systems model in terrorism posits that people join terrorist organisations for social reasons. They see the organisation as a familial-like institution and their main goal is to maintain the survival of the organisation. According to the model, every action that contributes to the survival can be perceived as success. Thus, according to the

natural systems model, the financial activities that Hizballah has established in Latin America, and that have contributed to the transnational world by being finanscapes, have contributed to the success of Hizballah, because they can be perceived as actions that have contributed to the survival of the organisation.

The War on Terror's main aim has been to reduce the success of terrorist organisations and to ultimately destroy them. Hizballah's ties with Latin America have undermined these objectives because the evidence provided in this thesis proves that the organisation's financial activities have contributed to the success of the organisation ever since its presence in Latin America became known in 1992. Transnational terrorism emerged when a number of terrorist organisations started executing international attacks or aimed for international goals because they have seen other organisations achieving international success with these methods. Terrorist organisations can thus copy other organisation's behaviour, and since the network structure of Hizballah has increased the success of the organisation, others might want this too. This would mean that more terrorist organisations will be able to undermine the War on Terror, and especially the finance warfare that has been implemented to stop financial activities of terrorist organisations. It is thus suggested that the United States should look beyond its fear of Hizballah attacking American soil. It should rather fear the increasing contribution to its success that the organisation has established by creating financial ties with Latin America. In this case, the source of the success of Hizballah should be countered by establishing a new framework within the already existing finance warfare to give off a signal to other terrorist organisations that raising funds will no longer be as successful. However, further research into the framework of finance warfare and Hizballah is needed to come up with an effective countermeasure. But it is evident that the financial ties are of influence to the success of a terrorist organisation and thus need more intense monitoring.

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