Non-Western Strategic Studies:

An Islamic Way of War?

Nicky Verver

S1365444

Master Thesis

Dr. Prof. Isabelle Duyvesteyn

Leiden University

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Introduction

"…[M]odern Islamism is not really a return to anything, but represents a politically new phenomenon." (Robinson 140)

Islamist terrorism is seen as one of the biggest threats to international security that we face today. The religious character of this form of terrorism is often emphasized and seen as a mystical and incomprehensible element. In our efforts to understand religion, and especially religiously motivated violence, we fall into a vacuum where analytical and rational research seems impossible. So, what if, as the citation above suggests, this religious nature can be categorized as a political instrument? Will it be easier to study *jihadi* organizations if we detach the religious nature and see it as one that is political instead?

Contemporary international politics deems Islamism as one of the most prominent sources of terrorism, particularly after the attacks of 9/11 and the global war on terror that followed. Terrorism is a concept that is difficult to define, and scholars have not reached consensus on what this definition should exactly entail. Scholars seem to agree to a certain extent that terrorism is composed of roughly four elements; a) it involves violence or the threat thereof; b) that it is political; c) it is unpredictable; and d) that it aims to create fear among the target audience (Schmid and Jongman 5). For the purpose of the thesis, terrorism is defined as; "…the intentional use of, or threat to use, violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims" (Ganor 294). This definition holds the four main elements specified earlier but does not denote exactly *who* is involved in terrorism and what methods are used.

Religion is another concept which scholars found difficult to define. One of the reasons for this difficulty is the variety of differing religious beliefs that exist today. In the thesis, religion will be defined as "…a system of beliefs and practices related to an ultimate being, beings, or to the supernatural" (Haynes "Religion" 4). When analyzing religion in a political context, social movement theory provides an interesting view. This theory regards religion as a 'frame' that is chosen for a particular purpose, most prominently that it provides a group a large set of cultural symbols and traditions that can be used to attract a significant number of people for its support base (Schleifer "Psychological Warfare" 41, 42; Childs 363). Additionally, religion serves two specific interests; one, it is a familiar theme that appeals to a large group of

people, and second, its use has a dynamic effect, inciting action among its practitioners in case of wrongdoing (Schleifer "Psychological Warfare" 42).

In this research the focus will be on social movements adopting Islam as their frame. Dunning's article, Islam is described as "a self-engine …against oppression and occupation, and against all the features that oppress people and offend them …Islam is a strong engine for people to refuse oppression, occupation, discrimination and so on" (Dunning 284). The type of oppression that is meant here is not of a local kind, but rather a global one in which the West oppresses the Middle East and its traditional culture and identity (Dunning 284).

Jihadi Strategy

Literature on terrorism is vastly growing, and among the discipline an increasing interest is given to the notion of strategy in terrorism. Lawrence Freedman defines strategy as a connection between ends, ways and means. The ends are the set political objectives, the ways are the methods through which these political objectives are to be achieved, and the means is the actual application of these methods (Freedman xi; Gray, *Strategic Thoughts* 167). Dima Adamsky claimed that with the rise of Islamist terrorist organizations, similarly a new type of strategy arose; *jihadi* strategy (Adamsky 9; Brooke 201; Lia and Hegghammer 355; Stout 876). This field of study aims to show that terrorist organizations do establish some form of strategy to obtain their ultimate goals. Research on *jihadi* strategy seeks to detach the religious element from terrorist organizations and instead analyze religion as a specific political ideology (Adamsky 9). Adamksy claims that an 'Islamic Way of War' exists that is a product of analytical assessments rather than the mystical idea of religion. This research will be an effort to show whether such a notion of *jihadi* strategy is an actual and relevant object of study.

The main hypothesis that the research will set out is that certain analogous principles or characteristics exist among the strategies of *jihadi* organizations. The main research question this thesis sets out is: to what extent do analogous elements exist among the military strategies of *jihadi* organizations? This will be done on the basis of a close analysis of three case studies, and subsequently a cross comparison of these analyses. Through this exercise I hope to find whether similarities exist and to what extent *jihadi* strategy is an actual phenomenon.

Method of Analysis

The thesis is based on a qualitative research effort, focusing on existent literature and theories. The thesis researches the existence of analogous elements in military strategies of three different case studies; Al Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas. The three case studies are selected because of their common *jihadist* ideology. To measure the analogy between the three cases, the cases will be studied on the three categories of strategy highlighted by Lawrence Freedman; the ends, ways and means. These categories provide the research a theoretical framework that can be applied to the three case studies, which allows for the verification of the existence of analogous elements the three cases. The structure of the thesis is based on chronology, starting with Hezbollah, then Hamas, and finally Al Qaeda.

Jihadi terrorist organizations are used as the main object of study to gain additional knowledge on non-Western notions and ideas about strategy, for most research currently focuses on Western concepts. Moreover, these organizations provide an interesting view on strategy because of their identification as non-state actors, since strategy is often associated with state actors such as governments or military leaders (Liddell Hart 333, 334). Given the limited scope of this thesis it is not possible to say whether these similarities actually form *universal* principles, to be able to make such generalizations a larger number of cases should be studied. This is an effort that could be in the future.

This research is relevant for it aims to better understand non-Western non-state actors and their way of thinking about strategy and the use of military means. It is new in that it cross-references the strategies of several *jihadi* organizations in order to find analogous principles, rather than analyzing individual, delineated cases. It is relevant for its focuses on *jihadi* organizations, which increasingly pose a threat to regional and international security. By gaining knowledge on the strategies and methods these organizations apply to gain certain objectives, we can further our knowledge on how to stop these groups from using violence in the future. This thesis attempts to discard the religious component from contemporary terrorist organizations in order to reveal its political nature.

The thesis will be structured as follows; in the first chapter an overview is presented of the current field of strategic studies and the limitations that it bears, followed by a conceptual analysis of the Islamic Way of War and the theoretical conception of *jihad*. Chapters two, three and four will each focus on one of the case studies, first Hezbollah, then Hamas and lastly Al Qaeda. Each chapter analyzes the case studies on the three categories of strategy; ends, ways and means. In chapter five, these analyses of the case studies are cross-compared to see whether

analogous elements exist. Lastly, the thesis will provide a conclusion answering the main research question of the thesis.

Chapter 1
The Study of Strategy and *Jihad*

An Islamic Way of War, what does this actually entail? And what is *jihadi* strategy? These questions are central to this study and form the basic conceptual framework for the thesis. First, a short overview of classical strategic studies scholars is given. Then, the works of the influential Islamist scholars Sayyid Qutb and Abu Mus'ab al-Suri are analyzed to find their conceptions of war and *jihad*. Given the fact that the three case studies belong to different streams of Islam, Al Qaeda and Hamas being Sunni, and Hezbollah being Shia, a passage will be devoted to the differences in conceptions of *jihad*.

1.1 *Classic Strategic Studies*

In order to create a relevant overview of the classical notions of strategic studies, it is essential to look at what scholars regard as 'strategy'. Scholars in the field differ in their definitions of strategy, Lawrence Freedman for example defined it as connecting the ends, ways, and means, in which the ends are the political objectives to be achieved, the ways represent the manner in which these objectives are to be achieved, and the means are the actual execution of the ways (Freedman xi; Gray, *Strategic Thoughts* 167).

Clausewitz, a well-known scholar in the field of strategic studies emphasizes the distinction between on the one hand 'tactics' and 'strategy'; "… tactics teaches the use of armed forces in the engagement; strategy, the use of engagements for the object of the war" (Clausewitz 128). He described war as "an act of violence to force the enemy to do our will" and deems war as "merely a continuation of policy by other means" (Clausewitz 90; 87). Additionally, Clausewitz's famous idea of the existence of a paradoxical trinity as part of the nature of war remains an important mode of thinking in strategic studies until today. In this trinity, Clausewitz argues that there are three forces at play in war; first, there is the motivation of war, which derives from a primordial human hatred. This hatred or passion is a force that comes from the people. Second, there is a force of chance and probability, which Clausewitz ascribes to the armed forces. Third, a force that is subject to reason, the domain of the government (Clausewitz 89). Several scholars have cited the trinity merely as the people, the army and the government, and have criticized Clausewitz for being obsolete due to his state-centric approach (van Creveld 36; Liddell Hart quoted in Mearsheimer 49; Kaldor 11; Keegan

3-5). However, when reading Clausewitz closely, he gives this expression of the trinity as a mere suggestion, a practical example to guide the reader (Bassford 321; Schuurman 94; Villacres and Bassford 15).

Another important aspect of Clausewitz' *On War* is his notion of military genius, through which he highlights the subjective nature of war, the means by which war has to be fought. War deals with living human beings in a dangerous context, and Clausewitz argues that in such a context, courage is a key characteristic (85). Clausewitz claims that there are certain characteristics that make the prospects of victory more likely, which he calls military genius. This individual is capable of keeping the right balance between intellect and temperament, and possesses certain characteristics: courage, strength of will, and strength of mind (Clausewitz 100, 101-104). An individual who possesses a combination of these characteristics and who has experience in times of war can be considered a military genius.

Thus, while no consensus has been reached on a universal definition of the concept 'strategy', the definitions mentioned above seem to coincide that strategy is a process in which we think of actions in advance with a certain effect on our goals (Freedman x). The definition of Lawrence Freedman in which strategy is seen as a connection between ends, ways and means is used as the analytical framework for the thesis. This definition is selected for it provides a comprehensive structure that can be applied to the case studies to find similarities.

1.2 *Non-Western Strategic Thinking*

An important scholar in Eastern strategic studies is Sun Tzu came up with the idea of a 'bloodless victory', for "to subdue the enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence" (105). He claims that one of the core features of an effective military strategy is to "know the enemy and know yourself" (Tzu 106), a general should use the enemy's strengths and weaknesses to his own advantage. This idea of using the enemy's strengths to your own advantage is also emphasized by Edward Luttwak in his book *Strategy: the logic of war and peace*, describing maneuver as "paradoxical action that seeks to circumvent the greater strengths of the enemy and to exploit his weaknesses" (5). This demonstrates that Sun Tzu remains a relevant scholar in strategic studies and should not be disregarded for its antiquity.

Besides the writings of Sun Tzu, there is another interesting view on Eastern military strategy from Mao Tse-tung, leader of Communist China. He created a scientific plan for the conduct of war, a blueprint of strategy, within an ideological frame (Katzenbach and Hanrahan

322, 323). Mao's work was based on the idea of war as "the midwife of revolution", a notion that he borrowed from Lenin. According to Katzenbach and Hanrahan, Mao's writings are considered to be relatively free of Western influences on strategic thinking and is mainly based on Sun Tzu's notion of war. They go on by stating that Mao Tse-tung, like Clausewitz, did not present something completely new to the strategic studies scholarship, but that he provided new combinations of formerly unrelated objects of study (Katzenbach and Hanrahan 324). Through his writings, Mao provided a universally applicable strategy for other Communist nations or groups, known as the People's War. For a long time, non-Western strategic thinking has been neglected, however, since the early 2000's the field of *jihadi* strategic studies arose, showing that there is growing interest in understanding non-Western strategic thinking in the current field of strategic studies.

1.3 *Limitations of Strategic Studies scholarship*

In the current field of strategic studies, there are two aspects that are neglected as objects of study. Firstly, classic strategic studies lack a genuine non-Western perception on strategy. If strategic studies as an academic discipline wants to remain relevant, the field's perspective should not be a narrow one focusing merely on the West, but rather that it should broaden its view by gaining a more global position (Duyvesteyn and Worrall 350). According to Handel, the current knowledge on Eastern strategic thought, derived from writings of Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-tung, shows that a universal logic exists based on the similarities he found between these Eastern strategists and Western strategists such as Clausewitz (Handel 3).

Secondly, the current research in the field of strategic studies focuses on conventional warfare between states. Another important actor involved in conflict, non-state actors, remains relatively understudied (Duyvesteyn and Worrall 349; Hoffman 35). Some researchers argue that current and future forms of conflict can be classified as "multi-modal" or "multi –variant", for it involves both state and non-state actors that employ a combination of strategic approaches, be they conventional or irregular (Azani 899; Hoffman 35). This is not to say that strategic studies are a state-centric field, rather that non-state actors have not fully been incorporated yet.

1.4 *An Islamic Way of War?*

Historically, the Muslim World has faced numerous threats to their security and solidarity, which in the past century stemmed specifically from Communist and Imperialist ideologies

(Malik 3). The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan op 1979 is one of the main Communist threats that the Muslim World has endured, which resulted in a call to all Muslims to protect the *ummah* and fight for Islam (Brachman 3). The struggle between Islam and Imperialist ideologies is an older one and came out of the penetration of the West through European expansionism halfway through the 19th century. The imposed global order based on nation-states forced the Middle East to participate in an international community led by the 'civilized' Western societies, replacing the World of Islam. To the Islamic community, Western conduct of this period posed a threat to their existence, giving rise to Islamic thinkers who called for *jihad* with an anti-Western notion (Tibi 225). The struggle of *jihadi* movements today rests upon the incompatibility between Islamic universalism, or Islamism, and the modern nation-state system.

This idea of Islamism appeals to various different social groups that can be mobilized as a support base, and it allows for the transformation of local problems into global ones (Robinson 132). An interesting aspect of Islamism is that its leaders are often embedded in modernity, while many often assume that its leaders are traditional conservatives. Many of its leaders, for example Osama Bin Laden, are not religiously educated but were in fact educated in modern and secular environments such as Europe or the US. Followers of the Islamist ideology are often from similar backgrounds, young and highly educated people (Robinson 132). The challenges between Islamists and secularists show that there is a significant gap between their ideologies and their views of the rightful way to rule a state. *Jihadi* organizations often adopt similar Islamist views to and anti-Western beliefs to substantiate their cause and signify 'Islam's predicament with modernity' (Tibi 226). The adoption of *jihad* provides *jihadi* organizations with a large support base and an instrument to legitimize their actions.

1.5 *Jihad in theory*

In order to research *jihadi* organizations, it is important to look at the theoretical notion of *jihad*. In Arabic, the word means 'to strive' or 'to exert oneself' and is interpreted as a struggle for the sake of God (Burki 234, 235; Donner 46; Mir 114; Moghadam 126; Musallam 179; Peters 1). This religious component distinguishes *jihad* from other forms of struggle, that are often fought for personal gains (Moghadam 126). There exist two forms of *jihad;* that of 'greater *jihad*' and 'smaller *jihad*'. 'Greater *jihad*' is regarded as the peaceful struggle within oneself, a form of inner struggle (Burki 238; Moghadam 126; Nasr "Jihad" 277). 'Smaller *jihad*', also

known as '*jihad* of the Sword', portrays the violent struggle for the sake of God (Burki 234, 235; Moghadam 126; Peters 1). This type of *jihad* is built on a collective nature rather than individual encompassing the Islamic community, or *ummah*. 'Smaller *jihad*' exists in two forms; defensive and offensive (Burki 236; Gerges 3). Defensive *jihad* presents the struggle against nonbelievers that have invaded Islamic territory and has to be fought by the entire Islamic community (Burki 236; Musallam 180; Nasr "Jihad" 276). In the Quran, participating in defensive *jihad* is deemed the mandatory duty of every Muslim (Burki 236; Nasr "Jihad" 276). Unlike defensive *jihad,* offensive *jihad* is deemed voluntary and does not require every Muslim to respond. This form of *jihad* aims to enlarge the Islamic community by conquering new territory and through conversion (Burki 236).

The classical doctrine of *jihad* envisages a political order in which there is Islamic hegemony that guides all humans. As long as this hegemony is not obtained, *jihad* is waged (Mir 114). While classical Islam emphasizes defensive *jihad,* modern ideologies stress the importance of offensive *jihad* based on the belief that the Islamic community and territory is being occupied by outside forces, in which the US is often seen as the main enemy (Gerges 3). Furthermore, these modern notions of *jihad* blur the lines between collective and individual duty by claiming that defending the Islamic community is the duty of all Muslims (Gerges 4).

An important source in understanding strategic thinking in *jihadi* organizations are the writings of influential Islamist thinkers. One such well-known theorist is Sayyid Qutb, who argued that *jihad* is not merely the protection of the Islamic homeland, but rather that it is the "defence of the Islamic beliefs, the Islamic way of life and the Islamic community" (Rej 6). To Qutb, *jihad* is a necessary struggle to establish an Islamic state system, which in turn is the only way of achieving God's rule on earth (Musallam 180). *Jihad* is deemed to be sole method for the Islamic state system to gain worldwide dominance (Musallam 181). However, Qutb differs from the classical doctrine of *jihad* by claiming that defensive smaller *jihad* is merely the protection of the Islamic community. Qutb adds another dimension to this form of *jihad* by arguing that preaching is an important part of creating an Islamic hegemony (Musallam 181).

Qutb's way of thinking about *jihad* has been taken up by fellow Islamist thinkers, among whom is Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, who is considered to be the leading strategist of Al Qaeda (Cruickshank and Ali 1; Rej 2; Zackie Masoud 1). Al-Suri provided prominent critical intellect to radical Islamists since the beginning of the 1990s (Lia 1). He was a scholar, who considered *jihad* not through religious rhetoric but instead viewed it through a realist, secular lens (Lia 4).

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The writings of al-Suri are seen as one of the most important sources of *jihadi* strategic thinking, although he remains quite unknown to Western scholars (Adamsky 8; Lia 17, 20). Departing from earlier notions of jihad, Al-Suri perceives the objective of *jihad* to be the following: " … liberating the Islamic world from direct and indirect occupation, and overturning non-Islamic governments" (Lia 3). Al-Suri claims that an essential element of *jihad* is 'individual action', by which he meant "acts of violence carried out by individuals without any organizational adherence" (Lia 104). This idea of individual action as one of the modus operandi in *jihadi* strategy links to offensive smaller *jihad*, in which Muslims do not travel to the conflict theater but instead bring the struggle to their own territory. In this sense, *jihad* is used as a banner, a common ideology, under which people are mobilized to fight the opponents in their own countries and equip and train themselves (Adamsky 9; Lia 316). According to al-Suri, previous *jihadi* organizations failed because they did not follow common intellectual and strategic guidelines (Springer, Regens and Edger 115). Through his writings, al-Suri aims to provide *jihadi* organizations with such guidelines. When looking closely at the writings al-Suri, their ideas about the character of an individual are similar to Clausewitz's idea on military genius. Even though jihadists can learn certain skills in training, al-Suri argued that a talent or gift is an important component to make an operation effective (Adamsky 10).

1.6 *Jihad as political instrument*

> "The concept of *jihad* has the potential of being used as an instrument of politics"
> (Mir 123)

The notion of *jihad* as a political instrument is important because it allows for the dissociation of the religious component that blurs the concept's concrete meaning. "Although divine factors inform the Quranic war fighting doctrine, the Clausewitzeanism in the Islamic way of war is manifested in a strategic-analytical approach toward the opponent and in the regulatory relationship between ideological ends and military means" (Adamsky 9). In this passage, Adamsky suggests that while the idea of war in the Quran is built upon religious principles, religion has a limited influence on the way in which wars are fought. He suggests that there exists an analytical approach to waging war in what he calls 'the Islamic Way of War', which can be studied outside the realm of religion. Thus, this seems to suggest that the heavy reliance

on religion in understanding *jihadi* organizations is dispensable. Stripping *jihadi* organizations off of this religious focus allows us to study such movements more analytically and rationally.

1.7 *Different conceptions of jihad*

In this research, three case studies were selected that follow a different branch of Islam, either Sunni or Shia. This necessitates a close analysis of the differences in their interpretation of *jihad* in order to be able to compare the military strategies of each case. Overall, Sunni and Shia Islam share a similar view of *jihad* and its conduct, however there do exist some differences. The first is that the Shia conception of *jihad* emphasizes the historical grievances and myths that shaped the Shia identity (Moghadam 1). In this historical identity oppression is a central theme, represented by the martyrdom of Hussein and the murder of the eleven Imams (Esposito 56; Moghadam 5). Therefore, suffering is a central theme to the Shia conception of *jihad*, and often addresses an occupational rule deemed illegitimate (Esposito 56; Moghadam 5).

Secondly, the focus on the Imamate in Shia Islam addresses the legitimacy of *jihad*. This belief deems the Twelfth Imam, who God has taken into occultation in 941 A.D., as the only rightful authority of Shia Islam. Shia Islam believes that he will return to guide humanity to justice and equity (Halm 37; Mir 122; Moghadam 2; Momen 165; Nasr "The Shia Revival" 67). Without his presence, no lawful *jihad* can be fought. However, not all Shi'ites follow this interpretation. The dominant view among Shi'ites today is that the authority of the Twelfth Imam may fall upon 'lesser souls'. This strand of Shia deems a substitute authority lawful and considers *jihad* to be legitimate in absence of the Twelfth Imam (Moghadam 3). The only form of *jihad* that this strand of Shia Islam deems illegitimate is offensive *jihad*, merely *jihad* fought in order to defend the *ummah* against outsiders is lawful (Moghadam 3). What is important is that there is not only one interpretation of *jihad* in Shia Islam, but there are multiple interpretations prevailing (Moghadam 5).

1.8 *Different conceptions of the Islamic State*

Th notion of Islamic State entails a state-system that embraces Islam in all its facets and is built around *Shari'a*, Islamic Law, to guide both public and private lives of the inhabitants (Esposito 54; Vaezi 12, 36). Both Sunnism and Shia Islam view the Islamic State as entailing this system headed by either a Caliph or Imam (Donner 51). An important difference between Sunni and Shia conceptions of the Islamic State is the appointment of the head of state (Vaezi 64). In the

Sunni conception of the Islamic State, the state is ruled by a Caliph, who presents a temporary head of state and is elected by consensus of the people (Momen 147). The Shi'i conception on the other hand regards the Imam as the rightful leader of the Islamic State and is not dependent on general consensus but on divine installation; they are appointed by God (Momen 147; Vaezi 56). Because of this divine installation, the Imam holds both the religious and political authority in the Islamic State. This is a central difference between Sunnism and Shia Islam; the extent to which they uphold the belief that people could still be guided towards God after the death of the Prophet. Sunni's believe that this guidance ended with the death of the Prophet, whereas Shi'ites believe that this guidance is maintained through Imams (Momen 147). Hence the importance lain on the Imamate in Shia Islam, and the conception that the Imam is the rightful leader of the Islamic State.

Additionally, there exists a difference in nature of leadership between Sunnism and Shia Islam. In Shia Islam, the Imam holds both political and religious authority, and must exemplify moral and intellectual supremacy in similar fashion to the Prophet (Vaezi 65). To Sunni's however, the Caliph forms the political authority and head of state and is not deemed to be flawless; in some cases, his rule need not even be just (Vaezi 65).

Thus, while the Sunni and Shia conceptions of the Islamic State differ on some points, mainly on the appointment of the head of state and the extent of his authority, the essential elements of the Islamic State system are similar. Both Sunnism and Shia Islam regard the Islamic State system as a way of guiding the Islamic community through Islam together with the implementation of *Shari'a*.

1.9 *Conclusion*

This chapter focused on the current field of strategic studies and the limitations that it faces. One such limitations is that it lacks a sufficient non-Western orientation. Additionally, most studies focus on state actors rather than non-state actors as their research subject, which makes this research a valuable addition for it focuses on non-state actors. Furthermore, the chapter focused on the growing interest in *jihadi* strategy and the notion of an Islamic Way of War. This type of war is characterized by the use of *jihad* as a way of translating and carrying out military strategies in a conflict theater. Modern-day forms of terrorism frequently employ smaller *jihad,* a form that involves the use of violence to obtain certain objectives. Smaller *jihad* can be employed in two forms; defensive and offensive. Where in defensive smaller *jihad* the

main aim is to protect the Islamic community from an outside attack, offensive smaller *jihad* aims to enlarge the Islamic community by conquering territory and through preaching. This use of *jihad* serves for *jihadi* organizations as a political instrument intended predominantly to enlarge the support base and legitimize their cause. Additionally, this use of *jihad* as a political instrument provides the research with the opportunity to rationally analyze the military strategies of *jihadi* organizations with a smaller focus on the religious nature of the organizations. In turn, this provides the research with the possibility to study to what extent a separate field of *jihadi* strategic studies is relevant and even existent.

The structure of the thesis will be as follows; chapters two, three and four focus on the three case studies separately and study them in detail on the three categories of strategy identified by Lawrence Freedman; ends, ways and means. The fifth chapter encompasses the larger analysis build on a cross comparison of the strategies of the case studies in order to see whether similarities exist.

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Chapter 2
Case Study 1: Hezbollah (1985-2005)

In May 2000, Hezbollah achieved their main objective; withdrawal of Israeli forces from the southern territory of Lebanon. For fifteen years, Hezbollah had carried out attacks against the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in order to regain control over south Lebanon, as well as attacks against Western forces, especially those from the US (Norton 22). To the Arab world, Hezbollah became known as a Shia militia operating under Ayatollah Khomeini's wings, Iran's Supreme Leader. To the rest of the world, Hezbollah became mostly known as a terrorist organization that took Westerners hostage (Saouli 71).

This chapter focuses on Hezbollah as the first case study of the research. It analyzes the ends, ways and means of Hezbollah's military strategy, in order to map out distinctive elements of each category. The chapter will start off with a short overview of the foundation of the organization, followed by a detailed analysis of the three categories of strategy; ends, ways and means. When applicated to the case study, these three categories can be translated as political objectives, the form of *jihad* employed, and the modus operandi.

2.1 *Foundation*

In the late 1950s, Shia cleric Imam Musa Al-Sadr became the leader of the Shia awakening in Lebanon. The awakening led to the creation of the Amal movement, an Islamic militia that represented Shia interests in the Lebanese government (Karagiannis 365, 366). The successful experience of Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the subsequent foundation of the Islamic State led to the resurgence of the Shia movement in Lebanon at the beginning of the 1980s and provided the movement with a religious framework (Meier 98). Together with the Syrian army, and Palestinian and Lebanese fighters, the Amal movement, fought Israeli forces after they invaded south Lebanon in 1982. However, the loose character of this Islamic movement made coordination of military activity difficult, which made them realize that a more unitary structure was needed to operate effectively (Qassem 19; Kargiannis 366). This organization became the foundation for Hezbollah.

Hezbollah, the "Party of God", was officially created in 1982 as a result of a combination of circumstances that occurred in the late 1970s and in the beginning of the 1980s; first, the Iranian Revolution of 1979, second, the ratification of the Camp David Accords, a

peace agreement between Egypt and Israel, and third, the Israeli invasion of 1982 (Wiegand 670; Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 4; Saouli 72; Qassem 19; Kargiannis 365, 366). Hezbollah came forth out of the Amal movement that had diverted from its former Islamic character into a more pragmatic and politicized organization. Supported by Shia Iran, Hezbollah promised to lead that part of the Shia population who desired a more conservative and religious approach to end the Zionist occupation in Lebanon (Saouli 72).

The Shia population comprised of 40% of Lebanon's citizenry and hence formed the largest community in Lebanon (Wiegand 671; Saouli 71). During the 1980s, the Shia population of Lebanon was very poor, and the government was unable to provide them with the services that they needed. Hezbollah aimed to address this gap and focused on the creation of educational and social services, hoping it would later increase their recruitment attempts (Azani 904; Karagiannis 365). The Shia character of Hezbollah was the reason for Iran's support of its activities. The religious connection together with their mutual dislike for Israel, led to military and financial support from Iran to Hezbollah to fight Israeli forces in the southern part of Lebanon. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) trained Hezbollah's military wing, the Islamic Resistance, and transformed it into a well-functioning guerrilla force (Wiegand 671; Saouli 72; Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 4). With Hezbollah's creation, a manifesto was published containing its main objectives concerning the role of Islam in Lebanon and the presence of Israeli forces in the south (Karagiannis 365; Wiegand 670).

While focusing its efforts mainly on Israeli presence in Lebanon, Hezbollah also opposed the Lebanese government. The Lebanese government represented the Phalangists, a Christian Democratic Party, which has supported by Israel and the US. The Lebanese government did not provide the Shia population with the necessary services, and thus Hezbollah has taken up this role to provide for its supporters by installing social and educational services (Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 7).

2.2 *Hezbollah's political objectives*

Hezbollah published its Open Letter in 1985, containing a description of their four main objectives (Alagha 43). Its first objective was to expel Israel from Lebanon, preamble of its total annihilation, and the liberation of Jerusalem and its holy cities from occupation. Second, expel American, French and their allies from Lebanon, evading any colonial influence. Third, submit Phalangists to just rule, make them stand trial for the crimes they have committed

against Muslims and Christians. And four, allow our populace the right of self-determination; to freely choose the political system that they aspire to.

Hezbollah speaks of the bond with its allies for they seek the same strategic goals; "the necessity of breaking chains of American hegemony in Lebanon… ridding our country from the despicable Israeli occupation… and frustrating Phalangist endeavors to exercise hegemony over politics and administration" (Alagha 44). This citation comprises the first three objectives and classifies them as the primary strategic goal for the organization. The fourth objective is directed at the creation of a system, of the people's choosing, to govern the state. Hezbollah here proposes the Islamic system as the most viable option, which follows Sharia as its main doctrine of justice. This objective is a hint at the creation of an Islamic State in Lebanon, after the current government is overthrown. However, the organization does not provide a specific answer to the question what design of Islamic State they aspire to establish. In its Manifesto, Hezbollah mentions that it sees the Iranian Revolution as an inspiration; proof of what can be accomplished when guided by Islam (Alagha 39, 40; Khatib 64; Harb and Leenders 179). Nonetheless, Hezbollah does not state specifically whether they aspire to establish an Islamic Republic, *Wilayat al Fakih,* in Lebanon, merely that they are inspired by it (Norton 38, 39). Hezbollah affirms the conviction of Islam as "a doctrine, political system, intellectual foundation. And mode of governance" (Alagha 44). Based on two standpoints Hezbollah challenges the existing regime; first, it is the product of world arrogance and oppression, second, it is an unjust regime in its very foundations (Alagha 45). Therefore, Hezbollah claims that when a new regime is to be established, this would preferably be an Islamic one, for it is deemed the 'just' option.

2.3 *Hezbollah's jihad*

Hezbollah deems *jihad* as a defensive concept, aimed at defending the *ummah* against outside forces and addresses it as a collective duty of the *ummah.* The outside forces against which the Muslim community must be protected are the US, France, Israel and the Phalangist party of Lebanon. Hezbollah claims that these groups have treated the Shia population of Lebanon unjust, and have humiliated them by attacking their territory and supporting for Israel (Alagha 41; Norton 38). Hezbollah created the narrative of the "World Oppressors", in which the US and Russia play the lead (Alagha 47; Norton 38). Hezbollah's view of the US as the main aggressor builds on the claims of Imam Khomeini of Iran. The Imam repeatedly declared that

the US was the source of all evil in the world, and that they should therefore be fought (Norton 37). Hezbollah accuses Israel of embodying the "spearhead" for American influence in the Islamic World and endangers the *ummah* with its expansionist policies in Palestine and Lebanon (Alagha 47). Hezbollah believes that Israel was created at the expense of Muslim rights, more specifically those of the Palestinians, and sees total annihilation of Israel as the only way to stop this struggle (Alagha 48). This narrative of the oppressors is an inherent part of the Shia interpretation of *jihad*, which is shaped through the historical experiences of Shi'ites of oppression.

Additionally, the quote cited above from the Open Letter addresses a political doctrine and cornerstone of Shia Islam. The last part of this citation refers to *Wilayat al Fakih*, the Rule of the Jurist (Saouli 72; Khatib 63). This was a doctrine supported by Ayatollah Khomeini, in which the *Fakih* represented the leader that was most knowledgeable and was able to issue rulings, or *fatwas*, that Shiites should obey. During his rule, Khomeini held the position of *Fakih*, and provided Hezbollah and its supporters religious and political guidance (Saouli 72). Hezbollah pointed out that its fighters were non-trained supporters of the organization, responding to a call of *jihad* to fight with the "legitimate and religious responsibility" (Alagha 41). Due to the fact that the fighters come from different backgrounds with different levels of military training, Hezbollah claims that this prevents enemies from estimating the strength of its military capabilities, which it deems an advantage to its military strategy.

2.4 *Hezbollah's modus operandi (1982-2005)*

Hezbollah's military activity in south Lebanon can be deemed as following a strategy consisting of two components; guerrilla and psychological warfare (Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 5; Childs 367). While the psychological dimension is an inherent element of guerrilla warfare, several authors highlight the significance of psychological warfare as a separate component in Hezbollah's military strategy. As stated in its Open Letter, Hezbollah's main objective was to eliminate Israeli forces from south Lebanon, combining (suicide) attacks at Israeli soldiers with hostage takings. Additionally, Hezbollah made use of psychological warfare methods, such as the media, to attack Israel and legitimize its own actions (Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 5, 6).

Guerrilla Warfare

The guerrilla component was carried out through minor actions, targeting only small portions of Israeli forces. Schleifer argues that Hezbollah did not attack Israeli forces to achieve a certain goal, such as conquering territory, but rather that the attacks were an end in itself (Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 5).

Hezbollah's military activities of the 1980s are deemed strategically innovative for they introduced a new type of warfare; it performed suicide attacks against the IDF and the South Lebanese Army. Throughout the 1990s, Hezbollah continued its guerrilla tactics against Israeli forces in south Lebanon (Childs 367). Hezbollah fought against Israeli forces through a war of attrition, focusing not on conquering territory, but on manipulating Israel to withdraw from the region (Gabrielsen 258, 259). They did this not only by fighting Israeli soldiers, but also by targeting Israeli human and economic resources, such as training centers. In the Open Letter, Hezbollah states that the Islamic Resistance will continue to employ this strategy and will grow in numbers in the future, drawing from Muslim support (Alagha 49; Gabrielsen 258). Hezbollah calls upon all Muslims for direct or indirect support of the mujahedeen, which they consider as its freedom fighters. Members of the Islamic Resistance are not solely male; also women, children and elderly are represented. In the Open Letter, Hezbollah uses this character of the Islamic Resistance as a way to advertise its diverse nature and appeal to a larger base of support. During the 1990s, Hezbollah became part of the political system of Lebanon. In May 2000, Israeli forces withdrew from south Lebanon, which Hezbollah deemed as a victory, however this also temporarily undermined Hezbollah's legitimization as its main goal was the expulsion of Israeli forces from south Lebanon, in which it succeeded (Karagiannis 367, 368).
33-day war in 2006, result of an attack by Hezbollah on Israeli patrol on the Israeli-Lebanese border. Israel retaliated with a campaign against Hezbollah in south Lebanon. On 14 August 2006, a ceasefire was declared in accordance with the United Nations Security Council (Karagiannis 368).

Thus, one of the major military strategies of Hezbollah is military resistance. The resistance of Israel is one of the organization's major military objectives, aiming at the total annihilation of Israel. To Hezbollah, "Israel" is illegitimate, and it does not acknowledge its existence, which can be seen by the avoidance of the name in the Open Letter. Israel is only addressed as the "Zionist Entity", not as "Israel" (Saouli 73).

Psychological Warfare

According to Schleifer, not only the physical aspects of war are employed by Hezbollah, also psychological warfare is amongst their methods. Psychological warfare "consists of delivering messages by nonviolent methods, to target audiences, domestic and neutral as well as among the enemy, with the aim of furthering the war effort" ("Psychological Operations" 2). He continues by arguing that psychological warfare is based on three components; target audiences, messages and themes, and channels of communication. Target audiences in itself can then be divided into three distinct groups; home audience, enemy audience, and neutrals. In times of war, the home audience is most important for it addresses the support base from which fighters must be drawn, to Hezbollah, the most important home audience is the Lebanese Shia population (Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 2, 7). The enemy audience needs to be manipulated in believing that there is no chance of winning and that it will ultimately lose the war. The neutral audience is of lesser importance; however, it is necessary to appeal to them in order to persuade them to support your cause rather than the enemy's (Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 2, 3).

For the psychological part, Hezbollah relied on techniques to persuade Israel to devote more time, resources and effort to secure the Lebanese border region than initially calculated. Additionally, these efforts aimed to delegitimize Israel's cause and legitimize their own actions (Karagiannis 366). However, this military strategy was not likely to succeed on its own, an additional element to this strategy was necessary, a political one (Palmer Harik 3). The objective of such a political strategy was to maintain popular support during the period in which Hezbollah attacked Israel. Hezbollah needed this popular support to counteract its image as a terrorist organization, which was being strengthened by its links with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian government (Palmer Harik 3).

Hezbollah's psychological warfare methods were built around two main narrating themes; "from asset to liability", and "winning hearts and minds" (Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 6; Childs 367). The first theme focuses on the message that the enemy's actions will affect him negatively, and that this will outweigh its potential gain. For Hezbollah, this narrative focused on the loss of human life and military equipment, and the disruption of IDF training and its ability to prepare for battle. This narrative mainly aimed at undermining the IDF's confidence and the government's deterrence policies. The second theme, "winning hearts and minds", focused on the home audience by addressing particular needs, such as security or poverty (Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 6, 7). This theme focused mainly on the promise

of a better future, convincing the home audience that their suffering is only temporary, and things will be better after the war is over (Schelifer "Psychological Operations" 7). An important aspect of Hezbollah's military strategy became the creation of propaganda in the field, cameramen following military units around to capture frames that could enhance Hezbollah's image to the home audience. The creation of propaganda became part of military operations in itself, as an object of operation (Schleifer "Psychological Operations" 6; Gabrielsen 259).

2.5 *Conclusion*

The aim of this chapter was to map out Hezbollah's military strategy based on the three elements of strategy; ends, ways and means. With regard to the ends, Hezbollah is a *jihadi* organization established in the late 1980s that addresses the struggle of the Shia minority in Lebanon. The organization follows four political objectives; one, the elimination of Israeli forces from Lebanon and the liberation of Jerusalem from Israeli occupation; two, the removal of Western influence from Lebanon; three, upheaval of Phalangist rule in Lebanese local politics; and four, regain self-determination for the inhabitants of Lebanon, allowing them to choose the state system they see fit. While Hezbollah promotes an Islamic State as the just political system for Lebanon, the organization does not specify what this system would actually entail.

With regard to the 'ways' in Hezbollah's strategy, the organization pursues a form of smaller defensive *jihad* against Israeli and Western influence and occupation in Lebanon and on the Palestinian Territories. Additionally, Hezbollah draws on the oppression the Shia minority endures within Lebanon, which emphasizes the Shia historical identity of suffering as a context for *jihad*. This focus on oppression legitimizes the call for *jihad* in absence of the Twelfth Imam, strengthening Hezbollah's narrative and cause.

Lastly, the 'means' employed, or modus operandi, build on two types of warfare; guerilla and psychological. Guerilla warfare comes forward in Hezbollah's strategy through the use of attrition, using minor attacks targeting components of the Israeli forces that are essential to its effectiveness and conduct. These components are mostly human and economic resources, such as military bases. A tactic employed in such attacks are suicide attacks, aimed at the demoralization of Israel and to instill fear in the Israeli population. The second type of warfare, psychological, are directed at the image of Israel, manipulating the opponent into believing that

victory is unlikely. With the use of propaganda, Hezbollah carried out this psychological domain in order to delegitimize Israel and its objectives. Additionally, Hezbollah used propaganda to enlarge its own legitimacy.

The following chapter focuses on the second case study in this research, Hamas. The same theoretical framework is applied to map out Hamas' strategy, analyzing the organization's political objectives, use of *jihad* and modus operandi.

Chapter 3
Case Study 2: Hamas (1987-2006)

The creation of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948 marked the beginning of a conflict that has lasted for 70 years today. While there have been periods of quietness, these 70 years are also characterized by nationalist sentiments and violent conflict over who is the rightful party to hold this territory (Robinson 142). While the conflict is internationally recognized, a successful solution is still not in place. The peace process initiated during the 1990s has been an important attempt at peace, however it did not succeed. Under supervision of the US, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, represented by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), came to an agreement later called the Oslo Accords. These Accords showed the Palestinian population that the PLO, a secular political party, recognized the state of Israel and was willing to agree to a two-state solution (Bishara 19). This led to a lot of resistance among Palestinians, particularly from the Islamist organization Hamas. In response to the Israeli occupation and secular nature of the PLO, Hamas has risen up as a *jihadi* organization fighting for the liberation of Palestine (Sen 205).

This chapter analyzes the military strategy of the second case study of the research, Hamas. It will apply the three categories identified, ends, ways, and means, in order to see which elements exist within Hamas' military strategy. The time frame for the analysis starts at the beginning in 1987, when Hamas was established. The end of the time frame, 2006, is chosen for it marks the period in time when Hamas ultimately changed its character from a non-state actor participating in violent conflict to a legitimate political party in the Palestinian elections for the PA (Long 131). The chapter will begin with a short overview of the establishment of Hamas as an organization and the political context that it operates in, followed by an analysis of their political objectives, use of *jihad* and modus operandi.

3.1 *Foundation*

Hamas, its full name *al-Harakat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya*, "The Islamic Resistance Movement", is a product of the First Intifada, a Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory in December 1987 (Abu Amp 11; Freedman 6; Litvak 717. The outbreak of the Intifada can be linked to several factors; first, the decreasing political influence both regionally and internationally of the PLO after their defeat during the Israeli invasion of

Lebanon in 1982; second, upcoming movements of significant numbers of Palestinian activists opposing the Israeli occupation; and third, increasing economic instability in the Occupied Territories due to restrictions on movement of people and products, and restrictions on employment imposed by the Israeli government (Freedman 6; Litvak 717). During the uprising, Hamas was founded to address the deteriorating situation for the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

Members of the Muslim Brotherhood of Palestine established Hamas on the foundations of *Mujamma' al-Islami*, transforming it from a social movement into a military and political one (Litvak 716; Mishal and Sela 40, 41; Robinson 141). To legitimize their political and religious agenda, Hamas drew upon the call for *jihad*, which simultaneously enlarged their support base (Litvak 716; Mishal and Sela 36; Saarnivaara 424; Satloff 5). Hamas emphasized the importance of armed struggle to fight Israel and liberate Palestine. Through this notion of *jihad* as a means to liberate Palestine, Hamas became the Islamic nationalist organization, opposing the secular PLO (Mishal and Sela 15; Saarnivaara 424; Mishal 569). Hamas described its own motivations for resistance as "struggles against Israel because it is the aggressing, usurping and oppressing state that day and night hoists the rifle in the face of our sons and daughters" (Hroub 18). Its inspiration comes forth from Islamism and serves as its main ideological framework (Hroub 18).

Through the liberation of Palestine, Hamas aims to become an "exemplary vanguard" to the rest of the Arab and Muslim World against Zionism and imperialism (Mishal and Sela 42). Earlier Arab nationalist organizations made use of Islamic symbols to appeal to the masses; Hamas extended this use of Islam by re-appropriating the secular elements and symbols of Palestinian nationalism, offering an alternative religious narrative for Palestinian nationalism. Hamas thus translated its means of violence and strategic goals through Islamic symbols, calling for *jihad* and the establishment of an Islamic State in Palestine, distinguishing itself from the secular goals of the PLO (Mishal and Sela 15, 16; Baracskay 521). According to Roy (17), the support of Islamist organizations is strongest in times when political progress is absent, this substantiates the strengthening of popular support for Hamas during the Intifadas and at the end of the 1990s when the Oslo Accords were slowly being seen as a failed attempt at peace.

Political context

The political debate that arose in Palestinian politics in the 70s and 80s represents the balance between secularism and Islamism. From this period on, secularism was increasingly viewed as having failed to produce the equality and wealth that it aimed to generate. Islamism rose in reaction to this assumed failure, further strengthening its ideology by highlighting the dominance of Israel within the Middle East and more specifically the loss of Palestine (Robinson 135). To many, Islamism was a way to address the collective discontent of the Palestinian people with the prevalent situation in the Occupied Territories (Long 132).

Another factor that strengthened the Islamist groups among Palestinians is the rise of the Likud Party in Israeli politics. This political party adopted a "strong Jewish messianic ideological component", similar to the Islamists, which turned the Israel-Palestine conflict into a religious rather than nationalistic one (Robinson 135). This focus on religion from the Israeli side strengthened the Islamists groups for it no longer focused solely on the acquisition of territory, but now also encompassed a cultural component, one of the most important ones to their daily lives (Robinson 135). This solidification among Islamists resulted in an increase in expressions of Islamic traditions, through clothing, public praying, and symbolism, to show the world that they presented a united front towards Israel. For Islamists, it was important that Islam penetrated the entire society, which is why groups like Hamas focused a great share of their efforts on the establishment of an institutional network of social organizations, to help rebuild Palestinian social life (Robinson 136). In the 1970s and 1980s a clear rise in the number of mosques in Palestinian territory can be seen, as well as in the number of Islamic schools and universities. The goal was to build "a viable Islamic alternative to the secular nationalism of the PLO through a process of religio-political socialization at all levels of society" (Robinson 137).

3.2 *Hamas' political objectives*

Hamas was created as a response to the gap between Palestinian nationalism and Islamism and adopted both the need for a national territory for Palestine, as well as the need for armed struggle as a means to obtain this territory, articulated in a religious fashion (Mishal and Sela 42). In the Covenant published in 1988, Hamas states that they fight against those that are 'false', referring to the state Israel that has been unrightfully established on Palestinian land (The Hamas Covenant 5). These lands are important to Muslims because they are deemed sacred in the Quran (Abu Amr 12; The Hamas Covenant 5; Milton-Edwards 51). Especially Jerusalem is of

great importance to Islam, for the next generations of Muslims are destined to live here till the end of time. Hamas states that nationalism is only of secondary importance, stressing that the more important reason for their resistance is the religious meaning of the territory (The Hamas Covenant 6, 7). After ending the occupation, Hamas aims to establish an Islamic State to rule the freed territories justly (Abu Amr 12; Milton-Edwards 53).

While Hamas is often referred to as a terrorist organization, Long argues that it is important to note the organization's gradually changing ideology as the conflict elapsed. Initially, Hamas states that it wants to liberate Palestinian territory to pursue its main goal, the creation of an Islamic State, however this was of decreasing prominence over the years (Long 132). While establishing an Islamic State was mentioned specifically in the Covenant, it has only been mentioned on rare occasions by Hamas over the years (Long 132; Hroub "Hamas" 20). Rather, the focus is put on the short-term goals that positively affect the Palestinian population, such as the strengthening of Palestinian religious and social institutions (Hroub "Hamas" 21; Saarnivaara 424, 425). However, Hamas maintains the wish to liberate Palestine from Israeli occupation but claims that the state that comes after the liberation is to be chosen by the Palestinian people (Saarnivaara 424, 425). While Hamas does promote a state with an Islamic character, they do not impose this idea on the people.

3.3 *Hamas' jihad*

In the Covenant of 1988, Hamas explicitly states that it is allied to Allah, and that it strives to unite the inhabitants of Palestine through Islam (The Hamas Covenant 3). The organization's call for *jihad* comes forward when mentioning its slogan: "Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes" (Hamas 4). The form of *jihad* that Hamas employs is a form of defensive smaller *jihad* (Milton-Edward 51). The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories represents the invasion of Islamic territory by an outside force (Milton-Edward 51). Hereby Hamas calls upon the Islamic community to fulfill its religious duty and participate in the struggle against Israel (Abu Amr 12). In order to succeed in the liberation of Palestine, Hamas deems *jihad* as the only viable solution, however they claim not to restrict themselves to smaller *jihad*, but also to greater *jihad* (Abu Amr 12; Hamas 7). Hamas states that "Jihad is not confined to the carrying of arms and the confrontation of the enemy. The effective word, the good article, the useful book, support and solidarity – together with the presence of sincere purpose for the hoisting of

Allah's banner higher and higher – all these are elements of the Jihad for Allah's sake" (Hamas 7).

3.4 *Hamas' modus operandi (1987-2006)*

The 'means' employed by Hamas contain of four distinctive elements; first, they aim to mobilize the people, the targets of the occupation, to later steer them into the right direction to further Hamas' accomplishments (Hroub 22). Second, the area in which the strategy is carried out is Palestinian in character, as much as it is Islamic and Arab. Hamas highlights the importance of the territory upon which martyrs have given their life for this cause as an area of conflict (Hroub 23). Their aim is to show that they will not operate outside of Palestinian territory, regardless of the purpose of their activities, be they military or political. Through this Hamas hopes to safeguard the organization's challenge as being part of the freedom fighters movement rather than being terrorist (Saarnivaara 425). Thirdly, the method through which the struggle should be carried out is *jihad,* and Hamas states that it will not cease its efforts until the territory is liberated (Hroub 23). Lastly, Hamas states that political activity is a central point in their strategy for it increases their chances of mobilizing the Palestinian people (Hroub 23). This last point can be seen in Hamas' efforts to reestablish Palestinian social life through the establishment of religious, education and health institutions aimed at improving life quality.

Civilians as targets

When analyzing the practical performance of its military strategy, a trend can be seen from 1989 to 1992 where Hamas specifically targeted it 'legitimate military targets'. These targets were for example Israeli soldiers and policemen, highlighting that it did not target civilians. In the period from 1992 to 1994, there was a significant change in Hamas' strategy, limiting its efforts no longer only to legitimate military targets, but also targeted civilians through the use of suicide tactics (Saarnivaara 426, 427). Attacking Israeli civilians became a legitimate part of Hamas' military strategy for their deaths weaken the state of Israel. This is a form of psychological warfare, for it weakens Israel's ideology and legitimacy, and is aimed at confronting Israel's confidence. This shift came as a reaction to the peace process of the early 1990s, which Hamas opposed for they believed that the continued occupation of Palestinian Territories could not be considered as peace (Saarnivaara 425). As a reaction, they initiated a

suicide campaign in 1994, aimed at hindering the peace process between Israel and the PLO, as well as targeting civilians (Saarnivaara 426). This campaign lasted until 1996 and encompassed approximately ten attacks. Strategically, the use of suicide tactics is accompanied by the risk of alienating the supporters from the organization. However, Hamas maintained its support base successfully despite the use of martyrdom operations because of its position in Palestinian society as a social and political actor (Saarnivaara 424). Additionally, Hamas altered its organizational structure by implementing a unified military branch; the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigade (Saarnivaara 426). Before this alteration, Hamas' military branch was split into different areas and units, which made it difficult to effectively carry out military operations. Through the use of unconventional means and by focusing on the enemy's weaknesses, Hamas attempted to oppose the unequal military capabilities, a tactic similar to Sun Tzu's ideas on the exploitation of the enemy's weaknesses to benefit your own position (Saarnivaara 427; Tzu 106).

Social Activism

At the end of the 1990s, another shift can be seen in Hamas' ideology; The Israeli Defense Force's attacks were no longer purely political and military in nature, but also targeted Palestinian cultural heritage, values and beliefs; to Hamas; "Defeating the occupier (Israel) became a matter of cultural preservation, building a moral consensus and Islamic value system as well as political and military power" (Roy 15). This also led to a shift in Hamas' ideology; additional to the political and military attacks, Hamas became involved in Islamic social activism, establishing Islamic social institutions concerning the health, education, and banking sectors (Roy 16). This shift shows a move of Hamas from a more extreme political stance towards a more centrist one.

After 9/11

However, Hamas became more extreme after the Second Intifada and the attacks of 9/11 in the US. The organization rebuilt its political-military infrastructure, and followed a military strategy aimed at targeting civilians on Israeli territory (Roy 17). This resurgence was based mainly on two reasons; first, the denial of the Palestinian Authority to take on a dominant role in the Second Intifada, and second, the rise of a younger, militarized generation within Fatah

that filled a leading position during the Intifada (Roy 17). Additionally, Hamas targeted that PA with a political-military campaign aimed at the destruction of its institutions.

3.5 *Conclusion*

This chapter's aim was to map out in what ways the three categories of strategy are carried out by Hamas. Regarding its 'ends', the organization's main objectives are ending the Israeli occupation and freeing Palestinian lands and the establishment of a Caliphate in Palestine. However, as Hamas evolved over the years, the creation of an Islamic State diminished in prominence. The principal goal of Hamas remains the liberation of the Palestinian Territories from Israeli rule, Hamas states that the Palestinian people are free to choose the subsequent political system that is to be installed. But, Hamas does promote an Islamic state system. Additionally, the organization puts greater focus on short-term objectives aimed at the re-installment of Palestinian social welfare. Hamas dedicated its efforts to the setup of religious institutions and education and health care services.

In the second category, the 'way's, Hamas employs *jihad* in order to carry out and legitimize its struggle. The form of *jihad* that Hamas calls upon is smaller defensive *jihad,* drawing upon the invasion and occupation of Palestinian Territory by Israel. Additionally, Hamas emphasizes the importance of non-violent forms of *jihad,* greater *jihad,* by focusing on intellectual methods to carry out their struggle.

Hamas' modus operandi evolved significantly over the years. Where at first the organization targeted solely legitimized military targets, this shifted halfway through the 1990s. Civilians became targets, and through the use of suicide tactics Hamas intended to delegitimize Israel's cause. These tactics are part of psychological warfare, aimed at the demoralization of Israel's cause and ideology. Additionally, Hamas' modus operandi focused on social activism in order to preserve Palestinian cultural heritage.

The next chapter focuses on Al Qaeda, the third case study to this research. Similar to this chapter and the previous one, it revolves around the foundation of Al Qaeda as a *jihadi* organization, and the ends, ways and means to its strategy. As Al Qaeda is the last case study to this research, the fifth chapter will encompass the cross-comparing analysis of the three cases.

Master Thesis

An Islamic Way of War?

Chapter 4
Case Study 3: Al Qaeda (2000-2020)

The attacks of September 11th, 2001 transformed Al Qaeda from an unknown terrorist group into a global *jihadi* organization. Since 2001, Al Qaeda has taken responsibility for several terrorist attacks located in Europe, such as the Madrid bombings in 2004 and the London bombings in 2005 (Bergen 15).

After 9/11, many scholars asserted that Al Qaeda did not operate through an underlying rational strategy, but rather that they were fanatics, blinded by their hatred for the West (Lia 4). However, the writings from Sayyid Qutb and al-Suri and the increased interest in *jihadi* strategic studies, suggests that *jihadi* organizations, such as Al Qaeda, potentially do think strategically when planning their operations (Porter 2; Adamsky 13; Henzel 76, 77).

Al Qaeda bases its strategic goals upon the idea of an "imagined *jihadi* community", in which its members share a specific culture and global narrative (Adamsky 4). What complicates the establishment of strategy is that *jihadi* organizations lack a formal centralized organizational structure. However, when looking at al Qaeda, the organization does seem to acknowledge the importance of strategy (Adamsky 6). According to Adamsky, Al Qaeda's strategic behavior is of a more instrumental nature, he argues that Grand Strategy guides the violent means to attain tangible political objectives (Adamsky 6).

This chapter analyzes the ends, ways, and means that make up the strategy of the third case study in this research; Al Qaeda. First, an overview is given on the foundation and evolution of the organization in order to identify the context in which Al Qaeda operates. Then, the political objectives of the organization are set out, followed by Al Qaeda's perception and adoption of *jihad*, to finally analyze the employed modus operandi.

4.1 *Foundation*

Al Qaeda is primarily known as the organization responsible for the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon on September 11th, 2001, and the main adversary in the Global War on Terror that followed the attacks. However, this was not the first confrontation between al Qaeda and the US, earlier attacks date from the 1990s. Al Qaeda was founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden as part of a struggle against non-Islamic rulers in the Arab world, specifically the Soviet Union who invaded Afghanistan in 1979 (Haynes 181; Burke 2). An Islamist force of *mujahideen*

fought against the Soviet Union and the communist Afghan government in a war that ended in 1989. Al Qaeda was built on the support of these *mujahideen*, with the aim of defending Muslims all over the world from oppression (Burke 3).

The organization started in Peshawar, Pakistan, but with the internationalization of the struggle it appealed to groups worldwide. In 1993, an attack was carried out at the World Trade Center in New York, which was linked back to the relatively unknown Al Qaeda (Juergensmeyer 193; Burke 3). The fact that the organization was not yet known to the public as well as government services at this moment in time is sensible, since the organization only encompassed a small group of people (Burke 4). Only at the end of the 1990s, does the name 'Al Qaeda' appear in government documents from the US (Burke 5). In 1996 to 2001, Al Qaeda enhanced its organizational structure and ideology, and developed the disparate network of loose groups (Burke 8). The operational core of Al Qaeda is based in Afghanistan; the larger network consists of regional nodes and terrorist cells that are globally distributed (Gunaratna 54). In 1998, Al Qaeda openly turned against the US and the West, for they aimed to dominate and humiliate the Islamic World (Juergensmeyer 202).

From then on, Al Qaeda carried out attacks against several American embassies, with the most famous attack on September 11th, 2001, directed at the heart of the Western world (Juergensmeyer 202). The aim of the 9/11 attacks was not simply to create immense destruction; it also provided an opportunity to gain global prominence as a *jihadi* organization (Haynes 181). The Global War on Terror initiated by US President Bush after the 9/11 attacks, weakened Al Qaeda significantly, however, the larger network survived due to its diffused organizational structure and far-reaching ideology (Gunaratna 55). Ironically, Al Qaeda was able to endure these attacks because of the dispersed organizational structure established with help from the US. In the 1980s, the US established and funded the organizational and operational infrastructure upon which Al Qaeda build throughout the years (Gunaratna 55).

4.2 *Al Qaeda's political objectives*

With regard to the ends of Al Qaeda's strategy, several different political objectives can be identified. Zawahiri, who is regarded as deputy leader of Al Qaeda, asserted that the organization had three main goals; first, the formation of an ideologically coherent organization; second, challenge the existing opponents in the Muslim world; third, the establishment of a Caliphate in the center of the Arab world that reflects Al Qaeda's worldview

(Burki 239; Gunaratna 55; Harrison 145; Haynes 182; Henzel 76; Ryan 66, 72). Besides these three objectives, Haynes identified two additional goals of the organization; the assassination of Americans and their allies, and a return to true Islam (Hanyes 182; Ryan 73).

4.3 *Al Qaeda's jihad*

In the 1980s and 1990s, Osama bin Laden declared a defensive *jihad* against the Soviet Union invading Afghanistan in 1979, and later against the US troops present in the Persian Gulf. At these moments, bin Laden called for a defensive smaller *jihad*, defending the Islamic community from non-believers who attacked the community (Burki 236). However, Al Qaeda's *jihad* since 2000 is twofold; both defensive and offensive. Al Qaeda depicted the US invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan early 2000s as attacks on the Islamic community against which a defensive smaller *jihad* was declared (Burki 236; Ryan 70). However, at the same time, Al Qaeda fought offensive smaller *jihad*, by inciting individual action carried out by Muslims living on the territory of the non-Muslims in Europe and North America (Burki 236; Gunaratna 225; Rabasa et al. 51; Ryan 82). In this form of *jihad*, *jihad* served the purpose of a banner under which people are mobilized to fight Intifada in their own countries and equip and train themselves (Adamsky 9; Lia 316). According to Islamic principles, this type of *jihad* is not a mandatory duty for Muslims, but rather an individual call. The writings of Abu Mus'ab al-Suri are seen as the main source of Al Qaeda's strategy (Cruickshank and Ali 8). Similar to al-Suri, bin Laden claimed that offensive smaller *jihad* was in fact the individual duty of every Muslim; he even went as far to say that "no other priority, except faith, could be considered before [*jihad*]." (Gerges 3) In other words, *jihad* was deemed as part of the religious duty in Islam, and if one did not answer to the call of *jihad*, he was not a true Muslim. Thus, both offensive and defensive smaller *jihad* served for Al Qaeda as a way to create support for their mission (Burki 239).

4.4 *Al Qaeda's military strategy (2000-2020)*

A central objective for Al Qaeda was to transform itself into a globally significant organization that would come to represent the entire Islamic community. Al Qaeda was able to supersede from a local and nationalist focus onto a global one because of two factors; the use of preexisting local struggle to magnify their global significance, such as the Palestinian conflict; and by drawing on the US as the far enemy in its conflict narrative (Payne 127, 130; Ryan 53).

By provoking the US into a conflict between the Muslim world and non-believers, Al Qaeda aimed to drain the monetary and military capabilities of the US. At the same time, drawing the US into the conflict helped Al Qaeda to define its struggle as defensive smaller *jihad*, which enlarged the organization's support base (Payne 130). The means that Al Qaeda employed to obtain its political objectives are threefold; guerilla warfare, propaganda, and suicide tactics. Additionally, several scholars have identified a seven-step strategic plan, showing Al Qaeda's vision for the future.

Propaganda

The call for offensive smaller *jihad* in which questionable tactics were employed, bore the difficulty of mobilizing people to take part in the fight (Burki 237). Al Qaeda relied on two mechanisms to legitimize their call for offensive smaller *jihad*; firstly, by using propaganda the organization aimed to legitimize the use of prohibited tactics such as suicide attacks; and secondly, through altering of the boundaries of the Islamic territory, Al Qaeda's goal was to illustrate the fight as a form of defensive *jihad* instead of offensive (Burki 237). This redefinition of the form of *jihad* as a defensive one necessitated all Muslims to participate in the call for *jihad*, creating a larger recruitment base (Burki 237).

Similar to Mao and Giap, Zawahiri emphasized the importance of political action and propaganda in addition to military action, aimed at winning hearts and minds to legitimize the struggle (Henzel 77; Payne 126; Ryan 71, 72). The idea of "propaganda by deed" from the late 19th and early 20th century is a tactic employed by Al Qaeda, by using attacks as sources for propaganda to legitimize their objectives and methods (Rabasa et al. 15; Ryan 71). However, Al Qaeda brought this to new heights by distributing its propaganda worldwide, especially through the Internet, creating a global platform for the organization (Bergen 16; Rabasa et al.15). Al Qaeda's propaganda efforts have also served as a tactic in psychological warfare against it enemies, most notably the US (Rabasa et al. 21). The organization released numerous threats that were taken up by the international media, instilling fear in the opponent's audiences, while at the same time inspiring new supporters (Rabasa et al. 21, 22).

Suicide tactics

Al Qaeda attacks indiscriminately targeted primarily civilians (Burki 244; Porter 65). Al Qaeda's justifications: proportional response, martyrdom acts, collateral damage, and

inevitable human shields (Burki 246). The use of suicide tactics brings the risk of losing support among the recruitment base (Pape 345). Suicide attacks are a part of the strategy of coercion, aiming to compel the target to change its course of action by inflicting harm on the target's society (Pape 346).

A third tactic that Al Qaeda has employed is targeting economic assets of the opponent, most notable the US (Bergen 23; Payne 130; Rabasa et al. 39). The 9/11 attacks showed the organization that its attacks could carry economic consequences for its opponents by disrupting economies; leading amongst others to diminished returns for New York businesses, and decreasing levels of tourism (Rabasa et al. 39). Additionally, political targets, such as American embassies and military bases, became better protected after the 9/11 attacks. Economic targets on the other hand were easier to hit, demonstrated by the rise of suicide attacks targeting oil facilities in Saudi Arabia (Bergen 23, 24).

Al Qaeda's Master Plan

Fishman describes Al Qaeda's strategy as 'the master plan', which reflects relatively accurate Al Qaeda's vision for the future (34). Similarly, Fouad Hussein has published a book regarding the statements of al-Zarqawi about the general strategy of al Qaeda that would last twenty years, starting in 2000, containing seven steps (Turner 213; Musharbash; Zelin; Fishman 34-36).

- The Awakening (2000-2003), aimed at provoking the US into war after the attacks of 9/11, which al Qaeda could use as a war against Islam aimed at 'awakening' Muslims (Turner 213; Musharbash). The more precise timeline is from 9/11 until the fall of Baghdad after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Musharbash).

- Opening Eyes (2003-2006), the moment in which al Qaeda had to brand itself a global movement by focusing on Iraq as the center of global operations and the establishment of an armed force and bases in other Arabic nations (Turner 213; Musharbash).

- Arising and Standing Up (2007-2010): operations should be extended beyond Iraq to focus on Syria, combined with potential attacks on Turkey and Israel. The choice to focus on Syria as the central territory of the Islamic State is a strategic one; with the Assad regime in place, it was not likely that the US would support it if it were attacked. This made the Syrian government extremely vulnerable for *jihadi* resistance, with a greater chance to overthrow it and establish an Islamic State (Fishman 35). Additionally,

Al Qaeda continued its attacks on Israel, hoping to become recognized as an organization (Turner 213; Musharbash).

- The Stage of Recuperation (2010-2013): this phase will focus on the termination of opposing Arab regimes, which will lead to growing strength within the organization. Additionally, operations should be redirected at the US by attacking its economy through cyber-attacks (Turner 213; Musharbash).

- The Stage of Declaring the State (2013-2016): at this point in time, the influence of the West in the Middle East should be reduced significantly to prevent resistance to the declaration of an Islamic State or Caliphate, aimed at creating a new world order (Musharbash).

- The Stage of Absolute Confrontation (2016-2018): from 2016 onwards, there will be 'total confrontation' between believers and non-believers after the establishment of the caliphate as Osama bin Laden has predicted (Musharbash).

- The Stage of Final Victory (2018-2020): the final stage of al-Qaeda's twenty-year strategy is marked as 'definitive victory' and focuses on the success of the caliphate after a war that will leave the rest of the world beaten down. This phase should last approximately until 2020 (Musharbash).

Al Qaeda has proved in the past decades to be relatively successful in completing its first four stages. However, what should be noted is that stage four succeeded not necessarily as a result of Al Qaeda actions. The uprisings known as the Arab Spring is what caused regime changes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and led to the ongoing conflict in Syria (Zelin). Al Qaeda has used the war zones in Syria to gain more supporters by providing social services.

The fifth phase has not yet taken place. Even though it has diminished over the years, the West still maintains military presence in the Middle East as well as ties to Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia (Zelin). Furthermore, the region remains instable since the Arab Spring, which complicates a declaration of a caliphate. There is a relatively small chance that Al Qaeda will accomplish the last three phases of its strategy, especially in the twenty-year term they set for themselves.

4.5 *Conclusion*

The aim of this chapter was to analyze Al Qaeda's strategy in detail, by focusing on the three categories of strategy; the ends, ways and means. With regard to the ends, three distinctive political objectives were identified; first, the establishment of an ideologically coherent organization; second, oppose existing secular regimes in the Muslim World; and third, the establishment of a global Caliphate that represents the ideology of Al Qaeda. Additional to these main objectives, scholars identified two other goals; the elimination of the West, more specifically the US, and a global return to true Islam.

In order to carry out their strategy, Al Qaeda employed defensive smaller *jihad* as a 'way'. In the early 2000s, the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan provided Al Qaeda a narrative to justify defensive *jihad,* focusing on the need to protect the Islamic community from an outside attack. Additionally, Al Qaeda employed offensive smaller *jihad,* by stimulating supporters living in the West to carry out attacks on behalf of the organization. Unlike defensive *jihad,* this individual action in offensive *jihad* did not build on the mandatory duty of Muslims to respond to its call. Therefore, Al Qaeda had to incorporate means to increase participation on this front, which became part of their modus operandi.

As we have seen, Al Qaeda's modus operandi is threefold; it combines the use of propaganda, suicide tactics and targeting economic resources. Propaganda was an important source that helped Al Qaeda enlarge its support base, specifically to carry out attacks outside the Islamic community, its offensive *jihad.* Additionally, it provided Al Qaeda a platform to gain global significance. The use of suicide tactics was aimed to instill fear in the population and to compel opponents to change their objectives and course of action. The third element of Al Qaeda's modus operandi, targeting economic resources, allowed the organization to generate damaging economic consequences for its opponents, from which they would suffer greatly. Furthermore, Al Qaeda is known to have a seven-step plan that guides them strategically to their final objective, the creation of a global Caliphate. The plan was meant to last from 2000 to 2020, however, the organization does not seem to be able to carry out all the steps of its plan. But, the plan does provide relevant insights into the strategic thinking of Al Qaeda, providing elements that are central to the organization.

All three case studies have now been studied in detail on the three categories of strategy; ends, ways and means. This leaves us with useful insights into what strategy entails for these three *jihadi* organizations. The following chapter presents the overarching examination by cross-comparing the single case analyses from chapters two, three and four. This will provide

the research an understanding whether the strategies of these *jihadi* organizations possess analogous elements and to what extent *jihadi* strategic studies is an actual phenomenon.

Chapter 5

An Islamic Way of War?

After the separate analyses of the ends, ways, and means of each case study, it is possible to combine and compare each category to see whether there are analogous elements are present. This overarching final analysis will be used to build the final argument. The following table presents a concise overview of the three case studies and the three categories that were analyzed. The following paragraphs form a detailed comparison of the three case studies per category.

	Case Study 1: Hezbollah	Case Study 2: Hamas	Case Study 3: Al Qaeda
Ends	Expel Israeli forces from Lebanon, followed by annihilation of Israel	Liberate Palestine from Israeli Occupation	Establishment of ideologically coherent organization
	Expulsion of Western influences from Lebanon, especially American and French	Initially; establish Islamic State, later promotion of Islamic character, but population chooses freely	Challenge existing opposing regimes in the Muslim world
	Overthrow Phalangist government in Lebanon, make them stand trial for the crimes committed		Establishment of a Caliphate representing the entire Islamic community, encompassing Al Qaeda's worldview
	Right to self-determination; people choose state system freely, but promotion of Islamic state system		Also; assassination of Americans and their allies, return to true Islam

Ways	Defensive Smaller *jihad* Collective duty	Defensive Smaller *jihad*, Collective duty Greater *jihad*	Defensive Smaller *jihad* Collective Duty Offensive Individual duty
Means	Guerilla Warfare/Attrition Psychological Warfare Propaganda Suicide attacks	Psychological Warfare Social activism Suicide attacks	Psychological Warfare Propaganda Generate economic impact Suicide attacks

5.1 *Ends*

Hezbollah's main objectives are fourfold; first, removal of Israeli forces from Lebanon and the liberation of Jerusalem from Israeli occupation, followed by Israel's total annihilation; second, expulsion of Western influence from Lebanon, specifically the US and France; third, upheaval of the Phalangist government in Lebanon, making them stand trial for their crimes committed against Muslims and Christians; and fourth, allow the Lebanese population the right to self-determination, allowing them to choose their own state system freely. However, Hezbollah does promote an Islamic state system, but does not identify what this system should look like specifically. While it is probable that it would resemble the Iranian Islamic State based on this aspiration of this system, Hezbollah does not specify on this point.

Hamas' initial political objectives for their struggle were the liberation of Palestinian lands from Israeli occupation and the subsequent establishment of a Caliphate on the freed territories. However, over the years this last objective has decreased in prominence, the organization has been silent about its aim of setting up an Islamic State. Rather, Hamas focuses on the liberation of Palestine from Israeli occupation, and several short-term goals such as enhancing Palestinian social life through the institutionalization of medical, educational and

religious services. Hamas declares that it is up to the Palestinian people to decide what state system should be implemented after the liberation of Palestine. Likewise, Hamas promotes a system with an Islamic character, but the organization is no longer solely devoted to the establishment of a Caliphate.

For Al Qaeda, three main objectives are identified; the establishment of an ideologically coherent organization, challenging existing opposing regimes in the Muslim world, and the establishment of a global Caliphate that represents the worldview of Al Qaeda. Next to these three objectives, there are two additional goals; the elimination of Americans and their allies, and a return to true Islam.

There exist several similarities among the political objectives, or ends, of the three case studies. Firstly, all three organizations attack Israel in some way. Where Hezbollah aims for the total annihilation of Israel, Hamas aims to end the Israeli occupation. Similar to Hezbollah, Al Qaeda aims to extinguish opposing regimes in the Muslim world, of which Israel is one. Secondly, all three organizations aim for the establishment of some form of Islamic state system. However, there are differences between the organizations and their ideas on to what extent the Islamic character should be applied in the forthcoming state system. Where Hezbollah and Hamas promote a state system with an Islamic character, the organizations both claim that the population should choose freely the state system they see fit. Al Qaeda on the other hand, solely sees the Caliphate as the just state system, aiming to encompass the entire Islamic community. Thirdly, Hezbollah and Al Qaeda hold similar objectives that aim to eliminate Western influences from the Middle East, both targeting specifically the US and France. A major difference between Hezbollah and Hamas on the one side, and Al Qaeda on the other lies in their central focus; where the first two maintain a local focus, Al Qaeda extends to a global outlook.

5.2 *Ways*

With regard to the 'way' in which Hezbollah carried out its struggle, the organization opted for defensive smaller *jihad* as a collective duty. Hezbollah declared defensive *jihad* based on the belief that the Islamic community needed to be protected from attacks by the US, France, Israel and the ruling Phalangist party in the Lebanese government. Hezbollah claimed that these four actors oppressed the Shia population in Lebanon. This reflects the Shia interpretation that *jihad* was legitimate in absence of the Twelfth Imam when it addressed oppression. Hezbollah's main

efforts were pointed towards Israel, whom they believed to embody the 'spearhead' for the US to increase American influence in the region.

Equally to Hezbollah, Hamas built its strategy on a campaign of defensive smaller *jihad*, presented as a collective duty. The defensive nature of Hamas' *jihad* stemmed from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, which was considered to be an attack on the Islamic community from outside. Hamas used *jihad* as a way to elevate its struggle from a nationalist to a religious one, emphasizing its Islamist identity in comparison to the PLO's sectarian character. Besides the smaller *jihad* that Hamas declared, the organization also called for greater *jihad,* highlighting that violent action alone was not enough to win over the militarily superior Israel, but that written accounts and spoken reports would benefit the struggle of the Palestinians.

In line with Hezbollah and Hamas, Al Qaeda has opted for defensive smaller *jihad* as the 'way' in its strategy. Already in the 1980s and 1990s this was the main form of *jihad* that Al Qaeda called for, and this remained at the turn of the century. Early 2000s, Al Qaeda legitimized defensive *jihad* by drawing on the US invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, claiming that these invasions were an attack on the Islamic community. This *jihad* was waged as part of the collective duty, calling all Muslims to respond to the call. Besides defensive *jihad,* Al Qaeda also called for offensive smaller *jihad*; the organization incited individual action from Muslims living in Europe and North America. Since participation in offensive *jihad* is not part of Islamic collective duty, this type of *jihad* was based on a non-mandatory individual duty. Thus, Al Qaeda had to find ways to create a support base to carry out these attacks, which became part of their means of strategy. To Al Qaeda, *jihad* was a way to create a larger support base to legitimize and carry out its global struggle against non-believers.

All three case studies use *jihad* as their 'way' to address their struggle. However, given the various elements to *jihad* identified in chapter 1 of this research, there exist several similarities as well as differences between the three *jihadi* organizations. The one similarity that comes across all three organizations is their use of defensive smaller *jihad* based on collective duty. All *jihadi* organizations claimed to be dealing with an outside force that attacked the Islamic community. However, the difference lies in the use of additional types of *jihad* by Hamas and Al Qaeda that provides them with an additional dimension in selecting of tactics in their strategy.

5.3 *Means*

The means of Hezbollah's strategy are based on two types of warfare; guerilla and psychological warfare. The guerilla element in Hezbollah's strategy is characterized by minor attacks targeting trivial segments of the Israeli forces. The attacks formed an end in itself, aiming to weaken Israel by attacking military bases and personnel. This strategy is known as attrition, targeting human and economic resources of the opponent. Additionally, suicide attacks were used as a tactic to demoralize Israel's image and spread fear. A second component in Hezbollah's strategy was the use of psychological warfare. Through propaganda, the organization directed its efforts to manipulate the opponents in believing that they would lose the war. Through videos and articles, Hezbollah aimed to delegitimize Israel's cause, and at the same time legitimize its own activities. The organization's propaganda was built around two narratives; the first emphasizing the negative consequences that the opponent would endure in case he should attack, and the second of 'winning hearts and minds', promising a better future for those who supported Hezbollah.

Since their establishment as a *jihadi* organization, Hamas has followed a strategy based on four components; first, to mobilize people that could later be used to further Hamas' accomplishments; second, the Palestinian struggle is contained to the Palestinian territories, the organization will not operate outside this territory; third, the struggle is to be waged through *jihad*; and fourth, political activity is a central element aimed at the reestablishment of Palestinian social life. Since 1989, the strategy evolved in several ways. At first, Hamas targeted mainly legitimate military targets in the Israeli Defense Forces. From the early 1990s, the organization shifted its attacks to include Israeli civilians, for it would weaken Israel's ideology and legitimacy. To a similar end, Hamas' employed a campaign of suicide attacks against the Israeli forces. These are elements of psychological warfare, aimed at the demoralization of Israel. Additionally, Hamas was involved in Islamic social activism aimed at strengthening the Palestinian social institutions.

The military means employed by Al Qaeda as part of its strategy are threefold; the use of propaganda, suicide tactics, and attacking economic targets. Propaganda was a large part of Al Qaeda's strategy, it allowed for the distribution of the global aim that the organization wanted to pursue. By focusing on the US as the far enemy in its narrative, and the use of local struggles, Al Qaeda superseded the national focus and grew into a globally significant organization. Additionally, Al Qaeda used propaganda in order to enlarge its support base; by redefining the boundaries of the Islamic community, the organization could translate offensive

jihad into defensive *jihad* by making it seem that the community was being attacked. Additionally, bin Laden, leader of Al Qaeda, manipulated Muslims to participate in the struggle by broadcasting statements that neglecting the call would make them not a true Muslim. A third way in which Al Qaeda used propaganda was to legitimize its own cause, through so-called 'propaganda by deed', by broadcasting its own attacks. The second element of Al Qaeda's strategy was the use of suicide attacks against civilian targets, aimed to compel the opponent to change its course of action by inflicting harm upon them. The third part of Al Qaeda's strategy was focus on attacking economic targets that would disrupt the opponent's economy, which generated great economic consequences and were easier to hit. Another element of Al Qaeda's strategy was the identification of a concrete seven-stage plan, the master plan, encompassing the organization's strategy in the period 2000 to 2020.

Thus, when comparing the three case studies and their means of strategy, there are several overlapping elements. Most notable is the use of suicide attacks as a tactic by all three organizations. While this tactic carried the risk of alienating their own supporters, it benefitted the organizations enough to endure the costs. Secondly, all three organizations use some form of psychological warfare, either through the use of propaganda or physical attacks, in order to demoralize the opponents. However, the focus that Al Qaeda has put on generating economic consequences is not present in the strategies of Hezbollah and Hamas, as is the global focus of the organization. Furthermore, scholars were able to identify a concrete seven-stage strategy, whereas for the other organizations such a plan is lacking. Hamas' focus was instead solely on the local context, limited to the Palestinian territories, and participated in social activism aimed at developing Palestinian social life. Overall, there are elements that are comparable among the three cases' 'means' to strategy, mainly the use of suicide attacks and psychological warfare, but at the same time there are significant differences in focus of the struggle.

Conclusion

This thesis' aim was to provide a deeper understanding of strategic thinking in *jihadi* organizations. Lawrence Freedman's definition of strategy as linking the ends, ways and means, provided the research a theoretical framework that could be applied to a case study. Because of their shared *jihadi* ideology, the organizations Hezbollah, Hamas, and Al Qaeda were chosen as case studies for the research. These cases were valuable to the research, since they were individually significantly studied on their strategic behavior and on the tactics they employed. However, what made this research relevant is that way in which it combined these individual cases to assess whether there exist analogous elements between their strategies. This was the first research objective of the thesis, in order to substantiate Adamsky's assertion that *jihadi* strategy is a separate phenomenon within the field of strategic studies.

The fifth chapter of this research showed several similarities among the strategies of the cases; the opponents, use of *jihad,* establishment of an Islamic State, use of psychological warfare.

The similarity in choice of opponents can be found both in the ends of strategy, as well as the ways. The analysis of the ends of strategy showed that the main objectives were directed at either Israel or the West. Israel is deemed as a spearhead for Western influence in the Muslim World, that the organizations aim to extinguish. The analysis of the 'ways' of strategy showed that smaller defensive *jihad* was present in all organizations, drawing on an outside source that attacked the Islamic community. Additionally, all organizations drew on mandatory duty of participating in defensive *jihad*. To Hezbollah this force represented Israel and the West, to Hamas Israel was the main invader, and to Al Qaeda the US and more broadly the West presented the main opponent attacking the Islamic community. Thus, all three organizations have a similar focus with regard to their opponents, mainly focusing either on Israel as spearhead for the West, or the West itself. This suggests that Western influence in the Muslim World or the Middle East is one of the main factors that these *jihadi* organizations fight against.

Another element that was present in all strategies was the establishment of an Islamic State as an objective. However, Hezbollah and Hamas put less priority on this objective as they evolve through time. Where Al Qaeda maintains heavy reliance on the creation of a global Caliphate, the other two cases come to view self-determination of the people as an essential part of the political system. Hezbollah and Hamas do promote an Islamic State system but claim

that the people should choose freely the political system they see fit. The main difference regarding the ends of the three cases is their focus; local or global. Hezbollah and Hamas maintain a local focus, Al Qaeda extends its activities with a global outlook.

A third element that comes forward in the modus operandi of all three cases is the use of some form of psychological warfare, aimed at the demoralization of the opponent. The use of suicide attacks as a tactic is part of this type of warfare, as well as the use of propaganda. These tactics help to manipulate the opponent into believing that victory is impossible and delegitimize the opponent's cause. At the same time, these tactics help to legitimize and promote the organization's own objectives and modus operandi among its supporters.

However, besides these similarities among the strategies of the three case studies, there are some differences as well. One such difference is the additional uses of *jihad*; greater *jihad* by Hamas and smaller offensive *jihad* by Al Qaeda. Additionally, an element that is only present in Al Qaeda's strategy is that the organization's 20-year Master Plan is a publicized phenomenon.

To what extent does *jihadi* strategy exist and is it a relevant object of study? Given the fact that there are a significant number of similarities among the strategies of the three *jihadi* organizations seems to suggest that similar strategic thinking is present. This indicates that *jihadi* strategy could serve a useful purpose as a field of study within the larger strategic studies scholarship. However, it is difficult to make generalizations due to the scope of the research, in order to make universal claims it is necessary to examine a larger set of cases and study them more in-depth. This is an effort that could be done in future research, to see whether such claims can be made about strategic thinking in *jihadi* organizations.

Can it then be said that an Islamic Way of War exists? According to Porter, such an assumption ignores the exchange of elements between different cultures and their conception of strategy (Porter 72). As we can see from the analysis, these *jihadi* organizations lend certain aspects of Western strategic scholars and applied them to their own practices. We saw that the strategies of these *jihadi* organizations can be structured in a similar way as Freedman does, based on ends, ways and means. We saw similar ideas about the military genius that Clausewitz describes in al-Suri's writings. We have seen that these organizations applied elements similar to Sun Tzu's theory, who argued for the exploitation of the enemy as well as attrition as a useful tactic in war. Furthermore, elements from Mao's guerrilla warfare return in all three organizations, such as Al Qaeda's use of propaganda to enlarge its own support base and

delegitimize the opponent. From this, we can argue that *jihadi* organizations *do* think strategically when it comes to obtaining their objectives, and that they borrow elements from other *jihadi* organizations and Western strategic studies. This seems to suggest that no real 'Western' or 'Islamic' Way of War exists, but rather that strategic thinking is influenced by cultural heritage and the cultures that it comes into contact with. As Payne fittingly stated: "Adaptation and emulation are features of warfare, as of all cultural relationships" (Payne 125).

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