Hezbollah is a well-known “terrorist” group based in Lebanon, whose ideology is a radical interpretation of Shi’i Islamism, following the model of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. But we can also consider it nationalist since its origin was to expel foreign forces (Israel, U.S., France) from Lebanon.

So, the first difficulty is to consider Hezbollah a terrorist organization or not. For the European Union, only the armed wing is on the terrorist organizations list. In opposition, the United States and other countries have included the whole organization in it. As Florence Gaub notes in his report about *Hezbollah’s role in post-conflict Lebanon* for the European Parliament, "Hezbollah is a strange creature to grasp; attempts to categorise it either as a terrorist organisation or a ‘Lebanonised’ political party not only reduce its complex nature but are also misleading. Its several identities are interconnected yet distinct, and continuously evolve as Hezbollah adapts to changing political circumstances. […] Since 1990, Hezbollah has therefore undergone a series of metamorphoses which today lend it at least four identities: it is a political party, a resistance group, a group considered a terrorist organisation as well as an Islamic movement. Understanding Hezbollah requires the recognition of these different dimensions and their interconnecteness.”(Gaub, 2013, p. 4).

This idea is connected with Myth #5 which states that terrorism has not political grievances. In the case of Hezbollah that is false, because it mixes a nationalist and territorial grievance with a political aim of changing political system expressed in religious factors.

According to the Global Terrorism Database, for the entry 'Hizballah', there are 376 incidents related to this group. We can see that the group is mostly active in Lebanon but it has also operated in Israel, and in some different and distant countries like Bahrain, Bulgaria, Argentina, Iran, Turkey, Niger, Greece, Tunisia, Cyprus, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Denmark, Kuwait, Spain or France.

Respecting to the type of weapons used by the group, it stands up Dynamite, explosives, bombing (294 times) and firearms (68). We also see that in 61 times the weapon used rests unknown.

The targets preferred by Hezbollah are the Military (128 times), terrorists (87), private citizens & property (52), the Government (49) and business (23). Each target has been targeted in different periods. For example, military suffered most part of attacks between 1990 and 2001, the period that coincides with the end of Lebanese Civil War and the occupation by Israeli Army of South Lebanon, so we can figure out that most military targets were Israeli. We also can see that governmental and violent political party targets prevailed during the 80’s.

In reference to their lethality, Hezbollah commits many attacks with no casualties (114) and just 11 attacks with more than 50 people dead. One aspect that stands out is that many of the most lethal attacks occurred out of Lebanon. We have two attempts in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 1992 and 1994 with 29 fatalities and 220 injuries the first and 85 fatalities and 236 injuries the second. We also have the hijacking of a plane in Niger in 1989 with
the result of 171 fatalities and another one in Reiyadh in 1986 with 62 fatalities. Apart of this, the biggest attack of Hezbollah was in Beirut in 1983 with 241 fatalities.

The importance of the militancy in Hezbollah is stated in the 1985 Open Letter: "No one can imagine the importance of our military potential as our military apparatus is not separate from our overall social fabric. Each of us is a fighting soldier. And when it becomes necessary to carry out the Holy War, each of us takes up his assignment in the fight in accordance with the injunctions of the Law, and that in the framework of the mission carried out under the tutelage of the Commanding Jurist."

The reasons for joining Hezbollah were established along three axes of effort: "the ideological-religious, with the aim of mobilizing society and incorporating into it motifs such as religious activism, resolve, and willingness for personal sacrifice for the sake of the whole; the social, with the aim of abolishing ethnic discrimination and social injustice and improving the living conditions of the Shiite population; and the military, with the aim of bringing about the expulsion of all foreigners from Lebanon." (Butler, 2011, p. 30).

According to the mechanisms of individual radicalization that McCauley establishes, Political grievance would be the central reason in joining to Hezbollah, due to the intention of the group of expelling foreign forces from Lebanon and changing the political system (Islamic state). But here is also important to note the mechanisms of mass radicalization, conflict with an outgroup, since a great part of the population shares this perceptions and also due to the importance of the social organization in religious communities, specially in the case of the Shia community, which was the most disadvantaged. This situation mixed with the radical religious ideology could result in martyrdom exalted by the organization (McCauley, 2008, p. 1-2).

In any case, principal reason for joining Hezbollah is to defend the cause of the Shia community. As Butler signals, "Hezbollah is one such organization whose recruitment processes evolved through adaptive processes in its operations and tactics in order to remain a viable opponent of Israel, and a proponent for the welfare and safety for the Lebanese Shiites in Southern Lebanon." (Butler, 2011, p. 28). We cannot forget that all Hezbollah's members are not terrorists or radicalized, since many of them are dedicated to social labour, or are on the political wing and do not participate on the armed struggle.

Hezbollah's goals are stated in the 1985 program and are the followings:

- to expel the Americans, the French and their allies definitely from Lebanon, putting an end to any colonialist entity on our land;
- to submit the Phalangese to a just power and bring them all to justice for the crimes they have perpetrated against Muslims and Christians;
- to permit all the sons of our people to determine their future and to choose in all the liberty the form of government they desire. We call upon all of them to pick the option of Islamic government which, alone, is capable of guaranteeing justice and liberty for all. Only an Islamic regime can stop any further tentative attempts of imperialistic infiltration into our country.

They are reconsidered in the 2009 Manifesto, which replaces the notions of East and West with the others of 'oppressor' and 'oppressed', fomenting what they call 'Unity of the Oppressed' as one of the pillars of political thought, shaping our understanding, relationships and attitudes towards international issues". (Alagha, 2011, p. 30). However, it does not change its position towards Israel and the United States.

So we can distinguish two strategies in Hezbollah in two different periods:
During the Civil War it was outbidding. It tries to make itself a place between the different militias that were fighting and they got it with the attack to the barracks of american and french soldiers of the multilateral peace forces. Since then, Hezbollah has been a key player in Lebanese politics. They have shown great resolve in fighting against foreign forces and constitute themselves as protectors of the Lebanese. That's why after the end of the conflict they remain the only one militia that it's still armed, with the mission of expelling the Israeli from the south of the country.

After the war, it is a clear strategy of Attrition. They integrated in the Lebanese political life, participating in elections and constituted themselves as a political party with a clear representation of the Shi'a community, but not only. And, what it's most important, they turned into a 'Lebanisation' process and separate from the doctrine of fight against the global oppressor inherited from the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Since 1992, Hezbollah members have been present in Parliament and in the government and have had a word to say in the Lebanese political process.

Hezbollah's scholar Azani "concludes that Hezbollah's “success, survival, and expansion” are due to “two basic elements:"

A. The regulative element is the ability to build an effective activity capability leaning on internal and external resources composed of efficient and hierarchical organization, military capability, funding, and the enforcement of organizational authority.

B. The legitimacy element, leaning on the organizational discourse, includes within itself dogmatic justifications for strategic changes carried out by the movement, the appropriation of Lebanese national responsibility, partial adjustment (if only seemingly), and willingness to operate in the framework of the existent Lebanese political system as an exception of evaluations of the situation, sensitivities to changes, and the influences of the sectarian public opinion." (Butler, 2011, p. 18).

We can now signal four tactics that makes possible this survival: foreign alliances, the media strategy, recruitment strategy and fundraising.

In relation to the foreign alliances, it's clear the support that the organization receives from Iran and also from Syria, both Shiite regimes. It's important, not only for the financial and military aid, but also for the 'legitimation' that it gives the organization, making of it such an important actor in the geopolitics of the region. Hezbollah is maybe one of the terrorist organizations that uses the media more useful for its purposes. It manages a great net of media, including television, radio and websites. The axis of this strategy is the Al-Manar TV, which is broadcasting across the globe, thanks to Western satellites. It is specially used for diffusing its messages to the Palestinian population but also to other Muslim populations in the world. Al-Nour radio also deserves to this purpose, specially in the occupied territories. The use of Internet is also important, with a website in arab but also in english.

Recruitment: the objective are the young shiite men. Towards them are focussed the messages of religious radicalization and fighting against the Western evil. The estimated size of Hezbollah’s core fighters is 30,500 (Butler, 2011, p. 33).

Fundraising: it's one of the key aspects of the expansion of the organization. Apart of the known sources of funds that is Iran, it is also important to point that many of the incomings come from Lebanese expatriates, specially in Africa, North America and South America, charity organizations and the criminal economical activity in the
As Matthew Levitt points out in his inform to the US Senate about Hezbollah's financial activities, "It is a painful reality that no counterterrorism technique or effort, however extensive, international, or comprehensive, will put an end to terror attacks or uproot terrorism. There will always be people and groups with entrenched causes, an overwhelming sense of frustration, a self-justifying worldview, and a healthy dose of evil, who will resort to violence as a means of expression. The goal of counterterrorism, therefore, should be to constrict the environment in which terrorists operate so that it is increasingly difficult for terrorists to carry out their plots of destruction and death at every level" (Levitt, 2005, p. 2).

So, what counter-terrorism should do to fight Hezbollah? I think this case is more complicated than what happens with other terrorist organizations that no one has doubt about their terrorist status. With Hezbollah, as I have pointed in the beginning of this assessment, there is a lot of ambiguity, specially due to the fact that for most Lebanese they are not as bad as foreigners see them. In my point of view, three aspects are the most important in fighting Hezbollah:

- **Legitimation**
- **Disengagement**
- **Fundraising**

Legitimation factor is so important. Due to its fighting against Israeli occupation forces but also due to its social labour in many areas where Lebanese government cannot provide to its own people, Hezbollah has conquered a lot of support among Lebanese population, not only among shiites but also in Sunni and Christian communities, specially among the most disadvantaged. Since many people considered them as part of society and not a violent force that should be defeated, trying to put and end to this organization would be very difficult, specially if we have in mind that the military wing is just one part of the organization, but not the whole organization.

Disengagement. I think disengagement would be the best solution but it's complicated because Hezbollah do not want to renounce to the use of violence. Refusing violence it could convert itself in a participant of political and civil Lebanese society with all the legitimacy of law and it also could be taken out of the lists of terrorists organizations. But, at the same time, it's difficult for Hezbollah to renouncing to violence because it has been the source of its power and expansion.

And last, but not least, fundraising. To end up with Hezbollah it is absolutely necessary to cutting off its monetary resources. Without this, it would be impossible to end up with it. Financial power feeds media strategy and recruitment and also contributes to the great social labour that the organization carries on in Lebanon and, that in the end, is the main reason for its popular support among Lebanese, not only within the Shia community. In the economical aspect, Hezbollah is a reach global organization and the fight against it has to be carried on by security forces from many countries, something that complicates more the struggle.
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