2018

The Effect of Participation in Party Politics on Terrorist Organizations: A Case Study of Hamas and Hezbollah

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THE EFFECT OF PARTICIPATION IN PARTY POLITICS ON TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF HAMAS AND HEZBOLLAH

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A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion

Of the Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies

Croft Institute for International Studies

Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College

The University of Mississippi

University, Mississippi

May 2018

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Abstract

This thesis sought to explore the effect of participation in party politics on terrorist organizations through a comparative case study of Hamas in the Palestinian Territories and Hezbollah in Lebanon. The project was inspired by the existing literature on party-terror linkages and inclusion-moderation theory. The methodology used to test this relationship required analysis of the histories of the two organizations to identify each organization's years of participation and non-participation in party politics. Then, using the data compiled by the Global Terrorism Database, I calculated the average number of terrorist incidents per year across the phases of participation in party politics for each organization. In summary, the data showed that participation in party politics has no effect on terrorist incidents per year. For Hezbollah, joining party politics led to an insignificant decrease in terrorist activity; while Hamas showed an insignificant increase in terrorist activity upon joining party politics. From this study, I conclude that there were extraneous internal and external factors for each organization that have produced a greater effect on their levels of terrorist activity.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

Since 1970, there have been over 170,000 acts of terror committed across the globe (Global Terrorism Database 2018). As terrorism has increased, so has the research on its causes, manifestations, and consequences in the world of domestic and international politics. The effect that terrorism has in the world is unique, as researchers and policymakers seek to understand how to address the problems faced when attempting to suppress or alleviate such violent tactics and its perpetrators.

What makes the issue particularly complex are the cases in which terrorism and the legitimate political sphere collide. People in the West often view political parties and terrorism as opposites without any notion that the two could operate as one. However, a brief look at history would indicate that this is a misconception and there are numerous terrorist organizations who join the sphere of party politics and simultaneously resort to terrorist violence to advance their political goals. This combination of political tactics has complicated international conflicts immensely over the last century as states deal with the extreme demands and activities of these violent political actors.

One region in which this issue is especially prominent is the Middle East; where young states ridden with social, economic, and political grievance provide a fertile ground for various political organizations to try and provide their own solutions to the

region's problems. Two groups that have successfully participated in party politics while resorting to acts of terror are Hamas in the Palestinian territories and Hezbollah in Lebanon. And while there is a significant body of research on the topic of terrorism and party politics, one question that has not been answered is whether participating in party politics has an effect on the levels of terrorist activity executed by these organizations.

Thus, for this thesis, I examine the effect that participation in party politics has on organizations' terrorist incidents executed per year by producing a comparative case study of Hamas and Hezbollah. In this case study, I discover whether participation in party politics has an effect on an organization's number of terrorist incidents per year. This requires me to compare each organization's years of non-participation in party politics to its time operating in the sphere of party politics.

My goal for this project is to make a formidable contribution to the body of research on the links between party politics and terrorism. Answering the question of whether terrorist incidents per year is affected by participation in party politics for a given terrorist organization may be valuable in informing decisions on whether to negotiate with terrorist organizations who simultaneously operate in party politics. If joining the realm of party politics decreases terrorist activity and moderates the organization, then maybe states and foreign actors should consider treating them as legitimate entities and include them in negotiations and peace talks with the expectation of alleviating the organization's need and ability for terrorist violence. However, if participation in party politics enables terrorist violence, then perhaps legitimate actors

and governing institutions should more adamantly restrict the organizations from negotiations and policy formation.

This project is presented in seven sections. First, I begin by conceptualizing and defining the terms "terrorism" and "political party", given that these terms hold weighty connotations and often inaccurate misconceptions that make it easy for us to assume organizations act solely as either one or the other. Second, I review the existing literature on party-terror linkages and inclusion-moderation theory: both of which provide a foundation from which I am able to construct theoretical arguments that attempt to explain the effect participation in party politics might have on terrorist activity.

This leads to the third section where I discuss my selected cases for this study and use their histories of varied political legitimacy to explain how each political group fits the labels of both a terrorist organization and a political party (or party politics participant). The theoretical constructions are presented in the fourth section followed by three competing hypotheses that support each theoretical argument. Then, I provide a fifth section that explains the research design and methodology used to test the competing hypotheses. In the sixth section, I present the data results and analysis that explain the relationship that occurs in each of my cases; followed by the final section that includes concluding remarks on the project and suggestions for future research on terrorism and party politics.

II. Conceptualization of Terms and Definitions

The first issue to be addressed is the issue of definitions and classifications. Given the vast and evolving body of research across fields, defining the terms "terrorism", "terrorist group", and even "political party" can be very challenging. Sometimes, our definitions are narrowed and inaccurate due to generalizing assumptions we formulate from limited perspectives on the terms. While other times, our definitions may be too broad, making our units of analysis ambiguous and possibly irrelevant.

An example of this challenge is displayed in a study done by Schmid and Jongman that discovered over 100 definitions of "terrorism" have been used by researchers and policy-makers with a surprisingly wide variety of characteristics ascribed to it (Schmid and Jongman 1984). Some, like Hoffman, interpret terrorism more broadly and define it as "violence-or the threat of violence-used and directed in pursuit, or in service of, political aim (Hoffman 1998)." Many would say this definition should be narrowed to include violence directed at "noncombatants". Yet the term "noncombatant" can have multiple interpretations as well, making the search for one objective and universal definition impossible.

However, this does not mean that key characteristics and misconceptions across terms cannot be identified; nor does it mean operational definitions cannot be solidified for research. Thus, before providing the specific definitions used for this thesis, I want to address two common areas of misconception regarding terrorism and political parties that

skew their definitions and make it difficult to understand how a political group could operate as a terrorist organization and political party simultaneously.

Ideology vs. Tactic

First, there is the common misconception that terrorism is an ideology inseparable to the organizations labeled as "terrorist". What I have come to believe, after reading Leonard Weinberg and his colleagues' work on terrorism, is that it is more accurate to conceptualize and define terrorism as a *tactic* rather than an ideology (Weinberg, Pedahzur, and Perliger 2009). While the use of terrorism can be crucial for the implementation of a group's extreme ideology, it is not necessarily the ideology itself. In fact, many political groups that researchers and policymakers deem terrorist organizations, including the two organizations researched for this thesis, do not self-identify as such and do not attach the word to their various ideologies. They may be left-wing, right-wing, religious fundamentalist, socialist, or fascist. But these core beliefs and subsequent goals do not make them terrorists. Instead, terrorists are defined by the tactics they employ to achieve their ideological or policy goals.

It is important to make this distinction because falsely assuming terrorism is an ideology makes it easier to assume that 1) terrorist organizations are bound to the terrorist identity; and 2) terrorist organizations are limited to the use of terrorist violence to achieve their goals. The former leads one to think that the only way a terrorist group can depart from this identity is either by way of adopting a new ideology or accepting defeat. Yes, dramatic ideological shifts and the defeat of terrorist organizations happen. And given our distaste for organizations that engage in such violence, it is natural to think

"Once a terrorist group always a terrorist group".   However, it would be extremely inaccurate to assume that terrorist organizations never lay down arms, moderate demands, and become legitimate political entities without a cosmic shift in identity, goals, and core ideology. These cases do happen, and they depart from the "terrorist" label through the abandonment of specific tactics more so than core ideology.

Regarding the latter, assuming terrorism is an ideology also makes it easier to assume that a terrorist group's goals and operations are limited to terror and violence. Of course, this is untrue as numerous organizations, including the two selected cases in this project, have an array of nonviolent goals with subsequent tactics employed in the areas of education, social programs, and party politics. Therefore terrorism, in its more accurate definition, is one of numerous available tactics used by these organizations to achieve their goals. And for this study, a "terrorist organization" is simply an organization that uses this specific tactic. Conceptualizing terrorism in this way alleviates a misconception that would otherwise hinder us from understanding how terrorism can be linked to the sphere of party politics.

Violence and Rationality

Second, I believe there are two misconceptions about violence and rationality in relation to the conceptualization of terrorist organizations and political parties that contribute to the false assumption that political organizations cannot be both simultaneously. The first misconception is that political parties are, by association if not by definition, nonviolent. The second misconception is that terrorist groups' extreme or brutal tactics make them irrational actors.

Beginning with the former, I believe there exists a misconception that political parties are perceived as being nonviolent. This is likely due to a natural inclination to conceptualize political parties based on what is normative and familiar in Western politics, rather than what is commonly displayed within states around the world. In Western democratic states, political parties are commonly nonviolent entities that operate in nonviolent political systems to elect members of government with high accountability, peaceful transition of power, and strict repression of violent or extreme actors. Because of this, it is easy to make a generalizing assumption that political parties are, by definition, nonviolent organizations that achieve goals strictly through legal policy procedure within the legitimate political system. If we make this assumption, then a violent terrorist organization that uses violent tactics outside the legitimate political sphere could readily be assumed as opposite and incompatible with the definition of a political party. However, a brief look at history would tell us that political parties are not at all obligated or limited to the use of peaceful tactics to bring about policy change. Thus, we should not define them as nonviolent nor should we assume they are limited to the use of nonviolent tactics to achieve political goals.

The second misconception that adds to the cognitive incompatibility of terrorist organizations and political parties is that terrorist organizations are irrational political actors. A quick glance at Western media may lead us to believe that terrorists are simply crazed extremists seeking blood and subsequently, we should label them as irrational individuals (Applebaum 2004). However, the vast body of research done on the roots of terrorism would indicate that these individuals, and the organizations they form, are far more complex than this. Though extreme, the groups that survive are led by an educated,

inspiring, and calculated leadership. Thus, I feel "inhumane" may be a more accurate term to describe terrorist brutality.

Further, in the study of world politics and international conflict, a rational actor is one that acts in accordance with his perceived interests and preferences. This means that rationality is amoral and instead, should be understood in terms of goals and tactics. Therefore, we must assume that terrorist organizations are, in fact, rational because they seek to achieve their self-interest by the use of necessary political tactics; in their case terrorist violence. This leads us back to the main point that what makes them "terrorist" is not their ideology, rationality, or even a lack of soundness of mind and morals. Instead, terrorist groups are distinguished by their use of the *tactic* of terrorism.

Definitions of Terrorism and Political Parties

With this in mind, the definition of a political party should not imply restriction from use of violent tactics, and the definition of a terrorist group should not imply a restriction from use of nonviolent tactics. Therefore, like Weinberg and his colleagues, I prefer Alan Ware's definition of a political party being "an institution that (1) seeks to influence a state, often by attempting to occupy positions in government, and (2) usually consists of more than a single interest in the society and so, to some degree, attempts to 'aggregate interests'" (Weinberg et al. 2009). As for terrorism, I will again refer to Weinberg and use the American law (Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656d(d)) definition of terrorism being "Premeditated, political violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience…" (Weinberg et al. 2009). Thus, a terrorist group is

any political group that decides to use tactics of terrorist violence to achieve political goals.

The reason for alleviating misconceptions and providing these specific definitions for the key terms in this project is to provide the conceptual foundation that is essential for theorizing how participation in party politics might affect terrorist activity. Now that this foundation has been established, we see that a political group can, in fact, be labeled a terrorist organization and a political party simultaneously as long the tactics of terrorism and participation in party politics are used. This also implies that organizations can adopt and depart from these labels if they abandon such tactics. This, then, leads us to examine how the two operate together by reviewing the existing work on party-terror linkages.

III. Review of Existing Literature

Party-Terror Linkages

Despite the relevance of the issues regarding party politics and terror, there is a relatively small existing body of literature on party-terror linkages: most of which has come from Leonard Weinberg and his colleagues of the last 27 years. Beginning with his work with William Eubank, Weinberg began by creating the first typology used to study party-terror linkages. Soon after, he sought to explain the formation of terrorist groups and found that most originate from political parties (Weinberg and Eubank 1990). What followed were years of articles and books attempting to explain how and why political groups shift from using terrorism and party politics as forms of political expression.

Two major sets of cases have emerged from the research done on the linkages between terrorism and party politics. One set includes cases in which political parties turn to terror, and the second set includes cases in which terrorist groups turn to party politics. This thesis contributes to the body of research on the latter.

In the second edition of the book *Political Parties and Terrorist Groups*, Weinberg, Pedahzur, and Perliger introduce seven "types of relationship" that fall into these two primary sets. These types of relationship range from the most common "party creates terrorist group" to the least common "political movement creates terrorist group

and party" (Weinberg et al. 2009). From there, the researchers present quantitative data along with case studies to explain why and how each relationship occurs.

The type of relationship researched by Weinberg, Pedahzur, and Perliger that is most relevant to this thesis is the one in which terrorist organizations become a political party. For this type, the researchers found that the primary reasons terrorist organizations resort to party politics included changes in the political order, repression of the state, difficulties with clandestine operations, the need for popular support and resources, and amnesty offered by the government (Weinberg et al. 2009). They also mention potential costs for doing so like vulnerability to accusations of treason, betrayal, corruption, and discouragement of use of violence.

Weinberg also provided valuable insights as to how terrorist organizations resort to party politics in different ways. He first explains that there are cases in which terrorist groups abandoned their violent campaigns completely and joined the realm of nonviolent party politics. In doing so, they successfully transitioned from being a violent political actor to a peaceful political party. However, this was dependent on the conditions through which they were able to make this tactical shift: for example, when the existing government grants amnesty if they lay down arms and join the legitimate political sphere (Weinberg et al. 2009).

But Weinberg also explains that laying down arms does not always happen, and what he refers to as "front organizations" also exist and operate effectively through party politics and terrorism simultaneously. These organizations are political groups who have formed separate "wings" dedicated to party politics and terrorist violence so that they can operate simultaneously in the legitimate political sphere while still achieving goals

through violent means (Weinberg et al. 2009). However, while he explains that there are cases where terrorist activity persists despite resorting to party politics, Weinberg does not assess whether the shift effects the levels of terrorist activity for the organizations.

Martin and Perliger also contribute to the literature on party-terror linkages by focusing on political adaptation and tactical shifts. They did so by researching the conditions under which political groups resort to violent and nonviolent tactics. Their study identified the driving factors that make a tactical shift attractive to a particular political group. These factors included political conditions (like regime characteristics or party-system characteristics) and group characteristics such as ideology or duration of existence (Martin and Perliger 2012). This study is valuable in that it demonstrated how tactical shifts are not always tactical replacements, and that an organization can in theory employ violent and nonviolent tactics simultaneously. Additionally, Martin showed that tactical shifts are caused by internal and external factors. Danzell also contributed to this body of work by focusing on the subgroup of political parties who resort to terror. He found that the external factors of the ideology of the regime in place along with structural relationships and strategy were the primary factors that drove political parties to terror (Danzell 2011).

The existing literature regarding party-terror linkages primarily exists to explain how and why political parties resort to terror and terrorist organizations resort to party politics. There has been very little research done on the effect these tactical shifts have on the organizations, especially within the subset of terrorist organizations who resort to party politics. If the effect has been mentioned, it is often out of speculation and without any real analysis. There are two reasons why I believe this is the case. First, the subset of

terrorist organizations resorting to party politics is much smaller than political parties resorting to terror. According to Weinberg, over two-thirds of cases included a political party turning to terror. And when there is a small set of cases to work with, it is much more difficult to test theories as to how terrorist organizations are affected by the tactical shift.

Second, Martin and Perliger suggest this is due to the fact that terrorist organizations often have absolutist demands and are unwilling to moderate, making the tactical shift to participate in party politics less appealing and less likely (Martin and Perliger 2011). She also found that the least likely organizations to make this shift were religious fundamentalist organizations. Given these findings, it seems that it has become natural to assume that joining the legitimate political sphere would make a terrorist organization less violent, and so greater focus is placed on understanding the conditions by which organizations make this transition.

This does not mean the existing literature on party-terror linkages is not valuable to this specific research question. On the contrary, standing on the shoulders of researchers like Weinberg and Martin and understanding the conditions under which terrorist organizations resort to party politics are crucial for theorizing the effect the tactical shift may have on terrorist organizations that operate as, according to Weinberg, "front" organizations.

Inclusion-Moderation Theory

      The second body of research reviewed for this thesis includes the work produced on inclusion-moderation theory. The hypothesis of this theory argues that inclusion of radical political groups into the electoral political system leads to their moderation due to a need for popular support and political legality: so that moderation is a result of acting on political openings that provide incentives to change a group's radical behavior. Initially, support for this theory was found in examples of socialist parties of Western Europe in the twentieth century (Tezcür 2010). Over the years, however, numerous scholars have produced significant research on how this theory can apply to, or be revised by, Islamist organizations in the Middle East.

      One of the most notable scholars to explore the inclusion-moderation hypothesis in the context of the Middle East is Jillian Schwedler. In her article published in 2011, Schwedler examines the theory by providing three models to explain the mechanisms and sequences of inclusion and moderation of Islamist groups (Schwedler 2011). One of the models that is particularly relevant to this thesis is the behavioral moderation of political groups. First, Schwedler explains that moderation is a process from which a group moves along a continuum from radical to moderate that is often "tied to liberal notions of individual rights and democratic notions of tolerance, pluralism, and cooperation" (Schwedler 2011). The behavioral moderation model is centered on the notion that political inclusion–that results from political openings prompted by the existing government– creates incentives for opposition groups (in this case Islamist groups) to join the electoral processes often upon the condition of modifying behavioral tactics (Schwedler 2011). Huntington refers to this as the "democratic bargain" that involves

"agreeing to abandon violence and any commitment to revolution, to accept existing basic social, economic, and political institutions…and to work through elections and parliamentary procedures in order to achieve power and put through their policies." (Huntington 1993). Deciding to take advantage of these political openings produces behavioral effects that then lead to moderation of ideology. Therefore, in sequence, "incentives alter strategic choices, which lead to moderation of behavior, which in turn leads to ideological moderation" (Schwedler 2011). However, the sequencing of behavioral moderation leading to ideological is often disputed amongst scholars.

Does the inclusion-moderation hypothesis hold for all cases of Islamist groups in the Middle East? Definitely not. In fact, some studies like one performed by Omar Ashou on Egypt and Algeria showed three cases where political inclusion led to three varied results. One Islamist group succeeded in de-radicalization, one group failed at de-radicalization, and one became even more radicalized. What he found was that four variables proved to be the key determinants of political inclusion leading to de-radicalization: state repression, selective inducements, social interactions, and leadership (Ashou 2009).

Schwedler also discovered varied results in her book *Faith in Moderation* that examined *Islah* in Yemen and the Isalmic Action Front in Jordan (Schwedler 2007). She found that moderation succeeded in Jordan but not in Yemen. She attributes these results to three dimensions that push for moderation of Jordanian and Yemeni Islamists. These include state-managed political opportunity, internal group structure, and the "ideological dimensions of public political space" (Schwedler 2007). What I believe is particularly

important in her work is the fact that inclusion does not always lead to moderation of Islamists (though it can), and that internal and external factors are at play.

Tezcür then added to the literature of moderation theory and Islamist groups who operate in evolving democratic countries in the Middle East by examining the cases of Iran and Turkey (Tezcür 2010). He found that ideological changes in Islamist groups are often accompanied by behavioral change (making the two parallel rather than sequenced), and moderation may result in domestication of the group. However, moderation of Islamists groups is not necessarily conducive to democratization. This means that political inclusion may lead to moderation of Islamist groups in both democracies or authoritarian regimes, and that the moderation is an accommodation with the system to ensure success and survival (Tezcür 2010). Similar to Schwedler, this work would also point to the relevance of internal and external factors that lead to ideological moderation and behavior change of Islamist groups.

The literature on political moderation and inclusion is of obvious relevance to this thesis given that the two cases selected for this project are Islamist political groups in the Middle East. Using the existing literature on inclusion-moderation and its application to Islamist groups in the Middle East, I can then form theoretical arguments as to what effect participating in party politics (a form of political inclusion) might have on a militant Islamist organization's terrorist incidents per year. However, before these theoretical arguments are discussed, I would first like to introduce the cases selected for this study.

IV. Introduction of Cases

The two organizations selected as my units of analysis for this thesis are
Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Palestinian territories. The following section will
provide brief accounts of their histories in relation to terrorism and party politics that will
essentially explain how they fit Weinberg's definition of "dual organizations".
Additionally, I will use their histories to clearly identify the phases of varied participation
in party politics for each organization: which is essential for the research design and data
analysis.

Hezbollah: A Brief History

Hezbollah (in Arabic حزب الله meaning Party of God) was founded in 1982 after
the Israeli invasion and occupation of south Lebanon. Acting as a proxy for Iran, the
organization has executed paramilitary attacks primarily against Israel for the last 35
years while becoming one of the leading political actors in Lebanon. Hezbollah's original
leader was Abbas al-Musawi, and he was succeeded after his death in 1992 by Hassan
Nasrallah. Over the course of its history, the organization has played a significant role in
the Lebanese Civil War, South Lebanon Conflict, Bosnian War, the Lebanese War in
2006, and the Syrian Civil War. The organization has a para-military wing called the
Jihad Council while its political wing is Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc party in the
Lebanese parliament (Norton 2014). Its ideology is very much influenced by Khomeini
and the Iranian Revolution, and it is classified as an Islamist, Jihadist, and Shiite political

organization (Counter-Extremism Project 2018). However, as will be explained later, Hezbollah is known for its ability to adapt to the political and social atmosphere and gain support from groups outside of its core ideology. Part of this is due to its commitment to social programs in Lebanon, and part of this is due to holding Israel as its primary enemy.

Hezbollah and Terrorism

While active in the Lebanese Parliament, Hezbollah is considered a terrorist organization by the United States, Israel, Canada, and the Arab League along with its military wing by the United Kingdom, Australia, and the European Union (Counter-Extremism Project 2018). The organization receives its funding, training, and weapons from Iran, but it also has gained support from groups in other countries like Syria and Iraq given its opposition to Israel and efforts to liberate Palestine. The accusations of terrorism faced by Hezbollah are due to numerous bombings, suicide attacks, and asymmetric warfare that has targeted and killed noncombatants in both Lebanon, Israel, Bahrain, and other countries around the world. Some of the most notable attacks have been the two suicide bombings in 1983 in Beirut that killed a combined 304 people (CNN 2013), the suicide bombing of the US Embassy in Buenos Aires that killed 29 (Levitt 2013), a bombing in Beirut in 2005 that killed 23 people including the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri (Bassam 2011).

Often these killings have been justified by Nasrallah in saying, "in occupied Palestine, there is no difference between a soldier and civilian, for they are all invaders, occupiers and usurpers of the land (Daoud 2015)." This statement embodies a common belief held by other Islamist resistance organizations including Hamas, and it is how

these organizations deem their violence as justified acts of war. This belief also holds for allies of Israel as demonstrated in the numerous attacks against the United States' presence in the region. Of course, this is very much disputed and opposed by Western countries and, given the definition of terrorism provided in this paper, Hezbollah will be considered a political organization that uses terrorist tactics to advance its goals and aspirations: thus, maintaining the label of a terrorist organization.

Hezbollah and Party Politics

It is without doubt that Hezbollah's long-time survival and involvement in Lebanese politics can be heavily attributed to its impressive ability to adapt to the evolving legitimate political sphere within the country. Being founded in 1982, the organization was born in the middle of the Lebanese Civil War. Therefore, until the end of the war in 1990, Hezbollah spent roughly ten years operating outside the realm of party politics.

It was in 1992 that the first post-civil war parliamentary elections were being held in Lebanon, and Hezbollah made the tactical shift to join party politics (Weinberg 2009). In its first election, Hezbollah captured 8 out of 128 parliamentary seats (Masters and Laub 2014). Since then, Hezbollah has gradually increase its presence in the legitimate political sphere with notable years being 2005 where it captured 23 parliamentary seats (Dakroub 2005), 2009 where the Doha agreement granted the Hezbollah led opposition veto power in the Lebanese government (BBC 2008), 2011 when Hezbollah-backed Najib Nikati was appointed prime minister in the new "Hezbollah government"(McLaughlin 2011), and 2016 when Michael Aoun was elected president from the Free Patriotic Movement, an ally of Hezbollah in 2006 (Lynfield 2016).

Hezbollah's ability to increase its support in the political sphere can also be attributed to its ability to mesh into the Lebanese social fabric. Despite its active military wing that promotes Hezbollah as a guardian of the people, the organization also provides social services to the people primarily in Southern Lebanon. It funds hospitals and social welfare programs while also running its own TV broadcasting channel (Norton 2014). This is one of the many ways through which Hezbollah diversifies its tactics and increases its popular support across a diverse Lebanese population.

In summary, what makes Hezbollah a prime case for this thesis is how it fits specifically into Weinberg's label as a dual organization. Given its organizational structure that includes a political wing and para-military wing, Hezbollah has been able to achieve a wide variety of goals through diverse means. And unlike terrorist organizations who are forced to lay down arms and abandon terrorist campaigns once they join the legitimate political sphere, Hezbollah has been able to maintain its terrorist operations while having a strong presence in Lebanese Parliament and Lebanese society simultaneously. Therefore, we know that participation in party politics did not alleviate terrorist tactics from Hezbollah's strategy, but simply added the legitimate political sphere to its multi-faceted organization.

Hamas: A Brief History

Soon after the establishment of Hezbollah came the founding of Hamas: an Arabic acronym that reads حركة المقاومة الاسلامية and translates to the Islamic Resistance Movement. Created as a Palestinian offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza, Hamas has led violent campaigns against Israel and other opposition groups since the Second

Intifada in 1987. Over the course of its history, Hamas has waged multiple wars against

Israel, rivaled opposition parties and the Palestinian Authority, severed ties with the

Muslim Brotherhood, and asserted and maintained control over Gaza.

The group also holds striking similarities to Hezbollah. First, Hamas'

organizational structure similarly includes a political wing and military wing. The

political wing's authority is split between a foreign based bureau and its Gaza-based

government (Counter-Extremism Project 2018). The military wing is termed the Izz ad-

Din al-Qassam Brigades and is responsible for the majority of Hamas' violent activity.

Second, Hamas is active in providing social services and welfare programs for

Palestinians, which consequently increases its support in the political sphere (Tamimi

2011). Third, Hamas adheres to an Islamist ideology that advocates for a Palestinian state

subjected to Sharia law and the annihilation of Israel (Hamas 1988). Lastly, it has

received funding from a number of outside sources including the Muslim Brotherhood,

Iran, Qatar, and Turkey (Counter-Extremism Project 2018).

Hamas and Terrorism

Hamas has been designated a terrorist organization by a number of states

including Israel, the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, New

Zealand, Australia, and Japan (Counter Extremism 2018). It received its terrorist

designation due to its long history of executing various attacks against civilians and

noncombatants that included, but were not limited to, suicide attacks, bombings, rockets,

and armed assaults. Hamas has been credited for over 40 percent of the suicide attacks

against Israel during the Second Intifada (Benmelech and Berrebi 2007). From 2001 to

2008, the organization launched over 5,000 rockets and mortars at Israeli targets (Fox News 2008). In 2014, the third war in Gaza began and naturally gave rise to more attacks against Israel. Many targets included military personnel, but non-military targets were not exempt from Hamas' tactics: some of which included tunnel building beneath the Gaza-Egypt border, kidnappings, rockets, and suicide attacks.

Of course, there is the ongoing debate about which of these hundreds of attacks actually constitute as terrorist attacks. In the research design, I will explain how the criteria for terrorism was applied to Hamas and the data collected on the organization. What is important to note now is that Hamas has existed for 30 years without ceasing to build up its armed resistance and use terrorist tactics against noncombatants to achieve its goals. It is believed that Hamas has now amassed an armed force of over 25,000 and its use of extreme violence used for an extreme ideology persists today (al-Mughrabi and Fahmy 2017).

Hamas and Party Politics

Unlike Hezbollah, Hamas had the opportunity to participate in party politics in the Palestinian government in 1995 during the Oslo period in which the Palestinian Authority was attempting peace negotiations with Israel. Hamas refused to participate in these elections due to the fact that doing so would recognize Israel's right to exist which would compromise a core component of its ideology. Thus, it has a longer history of non-participation than it does of participation in party politics. However, this does not take away from the amount of political power Hamas has amassed since it joined the realm of party politics.

Hamas' 11 years of participation in party politics is made complex by the ever-changing political atmosphere in the Palestinian territories. In 2006, Hamas shockingly won majority of the seats in the Palestinian Authority legislative elections, beating its rival Fatah by 3% of the vote (Central Elections Commission Palestine). Immediately Hamas was ordered to renounce violence and recognize the state of Israel, which of course it did not.

The next year, Hamas was expelled from the Palestinian Authority due to violent tensions with Fatah, and thus moved to take control of Gaza (Tran 2007). This led to the First Israel-Gaza War in 2008 from which Hamas remained in control of the area. And it was not until 2014 that Hamas and the PLO would announce a new unity agreement that led to new Palestinian Authority elections (Rudoren and Gordon 2014). This unity agreement held over the course of the Second Israel-Gaza war despite Hamas' failing relations with Egypt. In 2016, Hamas member Haniyeh replaced Rami Hamdallah as the new PA Prime Minister. Since then, Hamas has made a reconciliation agreement with Fatah and maintained a strong political presence in the Palestinian Authority (Al Jazeera 2017).

What is important to note concerning Hamas' history is that it also has successfully operated as a dual organization like its Lebanese counterpart. The organization began with strict abstinence from party politics until running for elections in 2006. Since then, it has fought and adapted to an evolving Palestinian political sphere while simultaneously continuing armed resistance against Israel with a bold and maintained use of terrorist violence. Because of this, Hamas is the second case I will use

to determine how participating in party politics has affected the use of terror to achieve

its political goals.

V. Theoretical Argument

From the body of research on party-terror linkages combined with numerous examples in history, we know that it is not uncommon to see tactical shifts where terrorist organizations turn to party politics and political parties resort to terror. According to Weinberg and his colleagues, the former happens less than the latter, and there are only 23 cases where a terrorist organization creates a political wing and continues executing terrorist attacks (Weinberg et al 2009). With fewer cases comes greater difficulty in theorizing about the consequences of terrorist organizations making this shift.

However, given the core assumption that terrorism is a tactic combined with the insights of existing literatures on party-terror linkages, tactical shifts, and inclusion-moderation theory, I believe there are three plausible theoretical arguments that would explain the effect participation in party politics may have on a terrorist organization's levels of terrorist violence. All three arguments are oriented around the assumption that this tactical shift leads to internal and external consequences that affect the organization's *ability* and *desire* to continue to employ terrorist violence as a means of achieving its goals.

Beginning with the first theoretical argument, I believe there is a natural inclination of scholars to assume a tactical shift in which an organization adds a nonviolent tactic to its strategy would reduce a political group's use of violent tactics when achieving political goals. The core of this argument is informed by the logic of inclusion-moderation theory and tactical shifts. If an organization has the opportunity to

be included in the sphere of party politics and it decides to, it will then be subjected to a need for popular support and political legality: which could likely lead to a moderation of the organization's ideology or behavior. According to the behavioral model explained by Schwedler, deciding to participate in party politics may require a decrease in the organization's violent behavior. This would also make sense given the logic of tactical shifts where the group sees strategic interest in taking advantage of the political opening and adopting a nonviolent tactic–but it has to reduce its use of terrorist violence in order to reap the benefits of its decision. This behavioral change could then lead to ideological moderation that would make the organization more cooperative with the existing governing structures and lead to a further decrease in the ability and desire for employing terrorist attacks.

Additionally, an organization may find that the tactical shift has consequences that diminish its capability to employ terrorist attacks on its enemies. This could be the case if the organization faces an increased accountability to remain a legitimate political entity due to the strength of the state and its repressiveness toward terrorist violence. Therefore, the tactical shift entering the legitimate sphere would diminish the organization's ability to execute terrorist attacks; regardless of its desire to do so. In either case, whether it be through diminished desire or capability, it is intuitive to think that participation in party politics would result in a decrease in terrorist violence.

There are two other plausible theories that may be slightly less intuitive than the first. The first expects that participation in party politics would facilitate and therefore lead to increased levels of terrorist activity; while the second theorizes that participation

in party politics would have no effect on levels of terrorism, implying that other extraneous factors have a greater effect.

Beginning with the former, we could argue that participating in party politics increases an organization's levels of terrorist activity. Theoretically, this could be the case if adding a nonviolent tactic happened to increase the capability and/or the desire for violent tactics. In regards to capability, terrorist violence is always dependent on resources, sponsorship, support, and sanctuary whether in the form of followers willing to carry out attacks, funding, or weapons. Therefore, joining the legitimate political sphere could lead to an increase in these four elements that, consequently, leads to an increase in a political group's capabilities for terrorist violence.

Participating in party politics could also increase, or at least maintain, the desire or willingness to use execute terror attacks. As Schwedler and Tezcür discussed, political inclusion does not always lead to moderation of Islamist groups. In some cases, the group is not forced to moderate its ideology, and so its goals do not necessarily have to be revised. Instead, the tactics used to achieve them have been diversified (by adding a nonviolent tactic to the strategy).

Therefore, if terrorist attacks increase once an organization shifts to party politics, this is likely an indicator that adding a nonviolent tactic to its arsenal did not require diminished use of its violent tactic. Instead, the nonviolent tactic proved useful in achieving the tools necessary to execute the violent tactic, and so the desire or willingness to use terrorist violence either increased or was maintained. Lastly, if a terrorist organization's participation in party politics affects no change on the status quo, the political group may have the incentive and desire to increase its terrorist activity in

hopes of becoming more successful in achieving its goals: which would also indicate an increase in desire for terrorist activity.

Finally, there is a strong argument for there being no correlation between participation in party politics and terrorist activity, indicating that the tactical shift to join the legitimate political sphere has minimal to no effect on terrorist activity. This would further imply that the capability and desire for terrorist activity within an organization is more heavily affected by extraneous factors working aside from the decision to participate in party politics. These factors could be internal or external to the organization and would likely coincide with leading causes or hindrances of terrorism including repressiveness of the state; the strength of the national military; a change in social, political, or economic climate; or a shift in the organization's support network, etc. In tying this argument back to inclusion-moderation theory, a relationship of no effect could be expected due to the presence of more significant factors outlined by researchers like Ashou who found that de-radicalization is most heavily affected by state repression, selective inducements, social interactions with opposition, and leadership.

Thus, this case study will compare two political groups operating in the Middle East that initially employed terror tactics to achieve political goals while abstaining from participation in party politics. However, at certain points in their existence, each organization experienced a tactical shift where it joined party politics and ran members for elections while either joining or forming a political party. I have generated three competing hypotheses that seek to explain the effect that this strategic shift had on each organization's terrorist activity where terrorist activity will be measured by terrorist attacks per year:

H1: Participation in party politics decreases an organization's terrorist attacks per year.

H2: Participation in party politics increases an organization's terrorist attacks per year.

H3: Participation in party politics has minimal or no effect on an organization's terrorist attacks per year.

In the next section, I will explain how these hypotheses will be tested using data compiled from the Global Terrorism Database.

VI. Research Design

This project is a comparative case study generating three competing hypotheses that seek to explain the relationship between participation in party politics and terrorist activity. The analysis used to test these hypotheses is both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitatively, I use descriptive statistics compiled through the Global Terrorism Database[1] to determine what effect varied participation in the legitimate political sphere had on the average number of terrorist incidents per year involving each organization. Qualitatively, I use the histories of each organization along with my theoretical concepts to explain the reasons for whatever relationship occurs.

The units of analysis for this project are two leading Islamist political groups located in the Middle East who have experienced this tactical shift of joining the party politics after initially using terrorist tactics and abstaining from party politics. The two cases include Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

These cases have been selected due to their striking similarities that allow me to better control for extraneous variables that would be at play had I chosen a more diverse or expansive set of cases. These similarities include their Islamist ideologies, geographic

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[1] All of the data results were produced from data provided in the Global Terrorism Database through the "advanced search" function on the home page of the website. From there, I was able to filter and manipulate data searches by altering years and perpetrators to then calculate how many incidents occurred per year given each phase. Additionally, all of the results regarding targets was produced from these advanced searches. The data can be accessed via the link below: http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

location in the Middle East, large following, long-time survival, and a common enemy of Israel and its allies, and a common goal in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Of course, in any case study, we must acknowledge that despite the numerous qualities that make these organizations comparable, each political group has a unique history with unique internal and external characteristics. And for a thesis that is primarily qualitative, not all extraneous variables can be isolated and controlled.

However, we first need to establish the phases of varied participation in party politics (PPP) for each organization. For Hamas, there was abstinence from legislative elections beginning in its founding in 1987 until 2006 when the organization dramatically decided to run members in the Palestinian Legislative Elections. Thus, I will categorize Hamas' existence into two phases. Phase 1 includes the period of non-participation in party politics (nPPP) from the years 1987-2005. Phase 2 includes the period of PPP from 2006-present. Similar for Hezbollah, I will also divide the organization's history into 2 distinct phases. Phase 1 will be the period of nPPP from their founding in 1982-1991. Phase 2 will be the period of PPP from their first elections in 1992 to the present. These phases are indicated in the table below. [2]

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[2] It is important to note that the Global Terrorism Database only provides data up to the year 2016. In the qualitative analysis, I may refer to incidents that happened after 2016, but these cannot be included in the quantitative data.

Table 1: Phases of participation in party politics (PPP) and non-participation in party politics (nPPP)

Organization	Phase 1: nPPP	Phase 2: PPP
Hamas	1987-2005	2006-2016*
Hezbollah	1982-1991	1992-2016*

Now that the phases of varied participation in party politics have been established, I will explain the quantitative methodology used to determine its effect on terrorist activity. Using the Global Terrorism Database, I will run descriptive statistics on each organization's levels of terrorist activity to determine if the average number of terrorist incidents per year increased or decreased from Phase 1 to Phase 2. I will also seek to determine trends concerning the nature of the attacks across the phases to determine whether other characteristics changed for each organization. This could include the diversification of targets or attacks, changes in weaponry, etc.

Additionally, given the complex and disputed nature of what constitutes a terrorist incident along with the fact that both organizations were active in multiple wars, I will use three basic criteria that will filter out more disputable cases regarding the terrorist incidents. The criteria are listed as follows:

1. The act must be aimed at attaining political, economic, religious, or social goal.

2. There must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience than the immediate victims.

3. The action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities, i.e. the act must be outside the parameters permitted by international humanitarian law (particularly the admonition against deliberately targeting civilians or noncombatants).

These criteria are in congruence with the definition of terrorism adopted for this thesis, and they alleviate the ambiguity of what could otherwise be termed as symmetric warfare used by the organizations. Lastly, I have included incidents that proved unsuccessful attacks because these can serve a significant role in achieving the goals that a successful attack would.

VII. Results

According to the descriptive statistics, it turns out that the supported hypothesis is the null hypothesis, or hypothesis of no effect. While Hezbollah proved to show a decrease in terrorist activity after shifting to participation in party politics, Hamas showed an increase in terrorist activity. The data tables are listed below:

Table 2: Hamas' terrorist incidents per year from nPPP to PPP

Phase	Duration (years)	Total Terrorist Incidents	Average Terrorist Incidents / year
Phase 1 nPPP	19	193	10.16
Phase 2 PPP	11	156	14.27

As we can see, Hamas experienced a longer phase of nPPP than it did of PPP. The phase of nPPP lasted 18 years from its founding in 1987 to the year prior to Hamas running members for the Palestinian Authority legislative election in 2006. This period resulted in an average of 10.16 terrorist incidents a year. Then, from the period of 2006-2016, the organization joined and remained active in governance and party politics. It was in this period that Hamas averaged 14.27 terrorist incidents per year. Therefore, by transitioning from nPPP to PPP, Hamas experienced roughly a 40% increase in terrorist activity. However, after running a two-sample t-test on the two phases, we find that this difference in means is not statistically significant. These results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Welch's two sample t-test for Hamas' terrorist incidents per year

Hamas	nPPP: 1987-2005	PPP:2006-2016
n	19	11
$\overline{M}$	10.16	14.27
S^2	136.92	270.82

$$[t(15.95) = -0.7294, p > 0.05]$$

As we can see, the Welch's two sample t-test indicates that the difference of the means between the two phases of political participation was not found to be significant given that $p > 0.05$. Because they are not statistically significant, the null hypothesis is supported and according to the data, participation in party politics does not have an effect on Hamas' terrorist incidents per year.

However, this does not mean that the increase in terrorist incidents per year and other data collected are not important to the research. For example, one point to note that is of significance is that Hamas' targets for its terrorist attacks became more diverse after it transitioned to party politics. In the PPP phase, Hamas' terrorist incidents involved five target types that were not present in the nPPP phase. These targets included other political party, religious figures, journalists, utilities, and government (diplomatic). And while the last four targets took up a marginal percentage of the total target types, attacks targeting another political party made up for almost 7% of Hamas' total targets. Thus, it is important to note that the tactical shift may have allowed Hamas to diversify its targets,

and joining the legitimate political sphere did not keep the organization's terrorist tactics out of the legitimate political sphere. In fact, other government related targets increased from 0.5% to 6.3% after Hamas transitioned to party politics.

There are a few other important things to note regarding the targets of Hamas' attacks between the two phases. One, private citizens held the highest percentage of targets for the organization and made up for almost half of the organization's targets across the two phases. Two, Hamas' attacks appeared to have become more covert as the targets recorded as "unknown" increased from 2.7% to 11.2%. Lastly, police targets increased while targeting transportation, businesses, and educational institutions decreased significantly in the PPP phase. However, regardless of factors that changed once Hamas joined party politics, we must conclude that joining the legitimate political sphere did not produce a significant effect on terrorist incidents per year for Hamas.

Table 4: Hezbollah's Terrorist Incidents per year from nPPP to PPP

Phase	Duration (years)	Total Terrorist Incidents	Average Terrorist Incidents/year
Phase 1 nPPP	10	113	11.3
Phase 2 PPP	25	158	6.3

Hezbollah, on the other hand, showed very different results than its Palestinian counterpart. First, the organization experienced a shorter period of nPPP compared to its phase of PPP. Phase 1 of nPPP lasted 10 years from the organization's founding in 1982 to the year prior to its first Parliamentary elections in 1992, and Phase 2 consisted of 25 years of participation in the legitimate political sphere from 1992-2016. In Phase 1,

Hezbollah was involved in 113 total terrorist incidents, averaging 11.3 incidents per year.

In Phase 2, the organization was involved in 158 total incidents, averaging only 6.3

incidents per year. Therefore, unlike Hamas, Hezbollah decreased its terrorist activity by

roughly 44% after it transitioned into the legitimate political sphere. However, after

running a two-sample difference between means test of the two phases, we find that this

difference in means is closer, but not quite statistically significant. These results are

displayed below:

Table 5: Welch's two sample t-test for Hezbollah's terrorist incidents per year

Hezbollah	nPPP: 1982-1991	PPP:1992-2016
n	10	25
$\bar{M}$	11.3	6.32
S^2	51.57	59.84

$$[t(17.79) = 1.8141, p > 0.05]$$

Similar to Hamas, the Welch's two sample t-test indicates that the difference of

the means between the two phases of political participation was not found to be

significant given that $p > 0.05$. Because they are not statistically significant, the null

hypothesis is supported for Hezbollah as well, and according to the data, participation in

party politics does not have an effect on terrorist incidents per year for Hezbollah.

Hezbollah also differed from Hamas when it came to targets. In transitioning to

party politics, Hezbollah decreased its diversification of targeted significantly. In the PPP

phase, only four target types took up 83% of Hezbollah's targets, whereas in the nPPP

phase it took 8 different types of targets to make up 83% of the organization's targets. Thus, when it decided to join the legitimate political sphere, Hezbollah narrowed its targets to primarily include non-state militias, private citizens, and the military. Government targets decreased from 30% to only about 4%. What this likely indicates is that as Hezbollah's political legitimacy and accountability increased, its desire and ability to mobilize terrorist operations decreased. Therefore, in the case of Hezbollah, joining party politics proved to be a tactical shift that has led to a slight reduction of its terrorist activity. However, this reduction is not statistically significant according to the difference of means test, and the null hypothesis is supported.

VIII. Concluding Argument

So what can we conclude? The data shows mixed results and therefore the null hypothesis is supported. Hamas' participation in party politics led to an increase in its terrorist activity, while Hezbollah joined the legitimate political sphere and decreased its terrorist activity. Does this indicate that participation in party politics is irrelevant to terrorist activity? In terms of participation in party politics being a driving factor that holds explanatory power for increased or decreased terrorist activity, yes. Instead, I would argue that extraneous factors specific to each case produce a greater effect on a terrorist organization's ability and desire to employ terrorist attacks, and the terrorist organization's decision to participate in party politics is simply an additional result of these driving extraneous factors.

Extraneous Factors

What were the extraneous factors that explained the variance in Hezbollah and Hamas' levels of terrorist activity after joining the legitimate political sphere? For Hamas, I would argue that the primary factors leading to an increase in terrorism after 2006 included a lack of moderation in its ideology and the inability of the Palestinian government to disarm the organization and keep violence out of the realm of party politics.

Beginning with the first, when we examine the context under which Hamas joined party politics and ran members for the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Election, we see that

Hamas' decision to do so did not require a revision of its ideology nor an immediate renouncing of violence against Israel. This is because of the failures of the PA and the Oslo Accords that were signed in the 1990s with the intent of bringing peace to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Tamimi 2007). This process failed and diminished the popular support for the ruling political party Fatah and the perceived legitimacy of the Palestinian government. These failures gave Hamas an advantage in gaining support for its Jihadist belief that peace was not possible and the only solution to the occupation was armed struggle. Therefore, joining party politics and running members for elections did not require a revision of its ideology and only increased support for its armed resistance against Israel. Naturally, this led to an enabling of terrorist attacks employed against Israel.

Second, and what I believe is an even greater factor in the continuation and increase in Hamas' terrorist activity, was the incapacity of the Palestinian government in repressing terrorist violence practiced against Israel and between political parties in the Palestinian territories. While the Palestinian government ordered that Hamas' lay down arms after it won the legislative elections in 2006, Hamas refused to do so (Sarwar 2006). Of course, the party was expelled from the Palestinian Authority, but this only ignited violence between Hamas and Fatah that led to Hamas taking control of Gaza. Therefore, the Palestinian security forces were unable to punish and fully suppress the organization from gaining power, territory, and popular support; which led to two wars in Gaza and the PA's multiple attempts to negotiate with Hamas and create a unity government.

So did Hamas participating in party politics not support the hypothesis that PPP would increase terrorist activity due to increased popular support and resources? Still, I

would say no because the popular support and increased perception of legitimacy for Hamas has so greatly hinged on the failures and perceived illegitimacy of the Palestinian government in handling the conflict with Israel. And if the government had a greater capacity for repression of violence, then Hamas would likely have been forced to moderate its behavior and act more so as a nonviolent political entity.

For Hezbollah, I would argue that the reduction in terrorist attacks per year cannot be attributed to participation in party politics so much as it can be attributed to the political actions of the post-civil war Lebanese government and the withdrawal of Israel from South Lebanon in 2000. In addressing the former, I believe that the formation of a new Lebanese government after the civil war, its decision to allow non-state militias to merge back into Lebanese society and politics, and its decision to allow Hezbollah to continue its para-military campaigns against Israel presented a political opportunity that first led to a moderation of Hezbollah's domestic behavior.

During the civil war and years of not participating in party politics, Hezbollah had a wider variety of enemies to fight, including the Lebanese government. However, after the war ended and non-state militias were disarmed and allowed to participate in the new unity government, the strength and number of Hezbollah's domestic enemies diminished and its primary shared enemy remained. Therefore, with the existence of a common enemy (Israel) and a government that allows para-militaristic campaigns against that enemy while disarming other opposition groups, Hezbollah had a diminished need for terrorist violence against groups aside from Israel.

This diminished need led to an increased desire to grow its political legitimacy, cooperate with other parties, and adopt a more pluralistic demeanor in Lebanese politics.

Evidence for this factor shows in the data if we examine the shift in targets after Hezbollah joined party politics. During the civil war, government targets took up roughly 30% of Hezbollah's attacks. However, after the unity government was formed and the militias were allowed to join party politics, government targets took up a mere 4% of Hezbollah's attacks.

Additionally, what I believe was an even greater factor leading to Hezbollah's diminishing terrorist attacks was the withdrawal of Israel from South Lebanon in 2000 (Goldenberg 2000). This would make sense theoretically when we remember that terrorism is a tactic used to achieve political goals. In the case of Hezbollah, terrorism was a tactic primarily used to combat Israeli occupation. And if the primary enemy of the organization withdraws from an area that was occupied since the birth of the terrorist organization, then the withdrawal would be a massive goal achieved and likely result in a diminished desire or need for terror.

The data appears to support the victory being a factor diminishing Hezbollah's terrorist activity. In the 17 years of Hezbollah existing whilst the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, the organization executed 215 terrorist attacks. In the 16 years that followed, the organization only employed 56 total terrorist attacks. This means that on average, Hezbollah employed 12.6 terrorist attacks per year before Israeli withdrawal, and only 3.5 terrorist attacks per year post-Israeli withdrawal[3]. This reduction in terrorist incidents per year is even greater than when the organization joined party politics.

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[3] Again, this can be found in the Global Terrorism Database by altering the range of years in the "advanced search" tab for Hezbollah.

Significance of Inclusion Opportunity as a Preceding Factor

Another issue that must be addressed in the results and may have more explanatory power for terrorist activity are the factors preceding the organization deciding to join the sphere of party politics. A prime example of a preceding factor that has proven to be a major difference between Hamas and Hezbollah was the opportunity for inclusion they were given before deciding to join party politics. Hamas demonstrated abstinence from elections when it refused to participate in the 1996 parliamentary elections in the Palestinian Authority (Baconi 2015). However, Hezbollah was formed in the middle of the Lebanese Civil War and was given no opportunity to participate in elections until 1992, and it seized the first opportunity to participate.

Hamas abstaining and Hezbollah joining when the first opportunity presented itself could be an indicator that Hezbollah was, from the start, likely to be more pragmatic and willing to moderate its behavior if presented with an opportunity to increase its legitimacy. Of course, Hezbollah did have the advantage of the existing government not demanding it lay down arms (whereas Hamas was demanded to do so when it won the Legislative Election in 2006). But even having this advantage indicates that the conditions that brought about the decision to participate in party politics proved to be significant in the change in terrorist activity.

The lack of acknowledgement of the importance of preceding opportunity for political inclusion is what I believe to be the biggest weakness of this project. Joining party politics is a choice made by two parties: first the government, then the terrorist

organization. If the government does not initiate the inclusion or does not allow the

organization to join the sphere of party politics, then no opportunity for inclusion will be

presented and the organization will be forced to continue operating with its existing

tactics. In short, the choice to participate matters, and this element is not accounted for in

the research design.

Therefore, for future research, I would make three primary recommendations and

variations to the design. First, I would incorporate an analysis of preceding factors to the

decision to join party politics. Without doing so, it is far more difficult to decipher

whether participation in party politics affects terrorist activity, or the factors that led to

the decision to join party politics are producing a greater effect. Second, I would

reorganize the phases of PPP and nPPP based on when the organization had a choice to

participate and either accepted or refused. Doing so would allow the researcher analyze

the organization's years of terrorist activity across the two phases in which it had the

opportunity to participate in both phases. Lastly, I would recommend including more

cases in future research. In Weinberg's study, he found 23 cases in which a terrorist

organization formed a political wing and joined party politics. Including more cases may

help provide evidence of a working model of the internal and external factors that cause

terrorist organizations to reduce their terrorist activity if participating in party politics

appears to have no effect.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis sought to examine the relationship between participation in party politics and the effect it may have on a terrorist organization's use of terrorism. The cases selected for the thesis were Hamas and Hezbollah. And the findings indicated that participation in party politics has minimal to no effect on terrorist activity. Instead, extraneous factors specific to each case proved to be more effective. For Hamas, joining party politics led to an increase in terrorist activity while for Hezbollah, terrorist activity decreased.

This research is significant in how it shows that a terrorist organization joining the sphere of party politics does not always become less extreme or less violent. And while many hoped that Hamas would moderate its ideology and reduce its use of terror once it joined party politics, it has only increased its use of terrorist violence. Does this mean that Hamas should not be treated as a legitimate political entity? Not necessarily. Hezbollah has decreased its terrorist activity since it joined party politics. And what is now important to decipher is whether there are common factors that lead to nonviolence after joining party politics–which will of course require deeper study of other terrorist organizations that have experienced the transition to party politics and a return to previous researcher's studies of the conditions under which the transition happens. But instead of stopping at conditions for transition, we must begin to further examine how the conditions and transitions affect the use of terrorist violence by the organizations.

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