



□ Hezbollah's strategy of influence in South Lebanon 2/3

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Histoire & stratégie

A social anchor in continuity with the political strategy

Hizballah

As Peter Thomas reminds us, the political power of an depends to a large extent on its ability to create a group that is a lasting link with its social base²⁸. Thus, Hezbollah is inscribing its social strategy within a more general political approach to mobilize the whole society in a fight against Israel. The insertion of Hezbollah into the Lebanese social fabric must therefore be understood as an extension of its political strategy.

The Shia movement ensures its anchoring in Lebanese society thanks to a network of social and charitable institutions which make it possible to mobilize part of the Lebanese population in his struggle against the Hebrew state. Such roots have been made possible through the Community structure of the political system, historically characterized by the domination of a bourgeoisie Maronite or Sunni on the economic and political life of the country. In the south of Lebanon or in the Bekaa plain, the majority of the population is majority, the poverty rate exceeds 30%.²⁹. Hezbollah has thus assumed the substitute role of the state by developing an apparatus of comprehensive social action, structured around organizations autonomous and operating in a network, in those Shiite areas where the public authorities do not perform their function³⁰. The party has notably developed institutions that take charge of the functions of assistance to victims of the fighting.

For example, the Martyr's Foundation (Mu'assasat alchahîd) provides salary, housing, and coverage of medical expenses for the families of the fallen soldiers for the Resistance, taking care of funerals... and the maintenance of the memory of the fighter. Likewise, the Association of Developmental Institutions for the Effort of construction, Jihâd al binâ'.takes charge of the reconstruction of the areas affected by the fighting. The institutions of the Hezbollah is also involved in other functions relating to the wider society: assistance to the needy (scholarships tutoring, food rations, clothing, training, etc. professional, etc.), technical services (provision of electricity, etc.) and waste collection), employment assistance or hospitals.

In addition to these social services, there is also indoctrination of young people. Hezbollah has founded fourteen schools. al-Mhadî in Lebanon and has extensive support networks around the world university. The scout association al-Mhadwhereby it inculcates, among other things, the values associated with the Resistance such as courage and respect for the martyrs, would have brought together in 2010 more than 70,000 young people³¹. This broad network allows the movement to present itself to Shiite populations such as the community advocate, where the party Amal had and to consolidate and expand its support base³². By this social strategy, Hezbollah does not seek to create a clientelisation relationship with the populations benefiting from of these services. Indeed, while playing an important role, these institutions can correct aberrations, but under no circumstances can they significantly improve people's living conditions local. Also, the material support pledged by Hezbollah includes unless it is used as a means of conveying values and messages³³.

In fact, Hezbollah's outreach knows broaden its scope of intervention to other communities:for example, the Lebanese Association for Prisoners and the Libérés (ALPL) follows the files of prisoners incarcerated at the South Lebanon and Israel and assists them and their families, what regardless of denominational or political affiliation. From its In addition, the Association of Developmental Institutions for the Effort to Combat Poverty and Social construction company took over the rehabilitation of houses in citizens of all faiths³⁴. According to Aurélie Daher, "l'objective the first of Hezbollah's social apparatus is not to engage social development of the Shiite regions, but to defuse any resentment (...) that could jeopardize the support of the Lebanese society to the Resistance»³⁵. The success of this strategy is exemplified by the social diversification of its supports: touching initially the underprivileged Shiite populations, its members now include a large part of the middle classes and bourgeois³⁶.

Hezbollah's political-social strategy is a pillar for ensure the hegemonic presence of the party. As formulated by Ali Fayyad, deputy of the Party of God, "l'he Hezbollah organizations were put in place to build a strong relationship between the people and the party; they are an essential element in its strategy mobilizing»³⁷. Its extensive network of social institutions, which are all points of access to the population, coupled with its the political system, allowing it to become a part of the political system. develop as a hegemonic apparatus, thus supporting its domination of the Shia population and its military resistance, political and social against Israel³⁸. And that explains the importance a communication strategy that reinforces these objectives.

The use of communication tools : a amplifier of military and social strategies policies

A communication strategy aimed at legitimizing and consolidating

Hezbollah's emphasis on its communication strategy illustrates the importance, particularly in the context of an war of attrition, popular mobilization in the struggle against the Israel. This communication strategy thus aims to legitimize the military means employed, extend its influence to different groups of voters and strengthen the political base of the movement. Since its beginnings, the Party of God has brought attention to its image, seeking at the same time to to manage it and to institutionalize it³⁹. To this end, he has developed a range of communication tools. As early as 1982, the creation written communication organizations such as al-Mujtahid, Ahl al-Thugur, al-Intiqad or al-'Ahd quickly allowed him to disseminate its theological message and promote the Resistance. The radio al-Nour (light), created in 1988, expands the possession of public space and amplifies the dramatic effect of messages⁴⁰. The

launch of the television channel al-Manar (the lighthouse), in 1991, further reflects the role of the communication in Hezbollah's overall strategy, by introducing a visual narrative to the struggle against Israel. This new narrative model, based on the cult of the martyrs and fighters, the mobilization of Shiite symbols and the broadcasting of videos of the fights, thus directly seeking to influence the masses in favor of Hezbollah's cause.

In May 2000, by broadcasting the disorganized withdrawal live... of the IDF troops and the liberation of the prisoners from the centre of Khayam by the civilian population, al-Manar provides the world the first images of the liberation of an occupied territory. without resorting to peace agreements or other forms of negotiation⁴¹. Finally, the Internet has also become one of the the most important communication tools of the movement. Since the launch of its first site in 1996, Hezbollah has expanded its web presence to more than 50 sites, some of which have been presenting the educational, religious or social services of the group, others its main leaders and religious figures, or by striving to deal with current events or even to disseminate its doctrine. nun. The use of the internet has allowed the movement to strengthen its international presence while providing it with a means of direct communication with its supporters⁴². Thanks to on the web, the Party of God can also target, specifically, young populations, as evidenced by the video game "Forces Speciales" available online in Arabic, Farsi, French and English, through which players participate in operations of Hezbollah against Israel and can practice shooting at targets with the effigy of Israeli political figures⁴³. At the same time, Hezbollah is demonstrating its mastery of means. traditional communication methods.

In South Lebanon and on the road connecting Beirut to the airport, the movement has installed a series of billboards presenting its message and commemorating the group's successes, both in Arabic and in English. English and French. Hezbollah has also opened a site tourism in South Lebanon, Mleetain which he exposes his military operations and illustrates its commitment to defence of the land and the values of sacrifice. Gatherings spectacular politics, gathering a crowd, contribute to the also to this visual representation of its power and to and to reinforce Hezbollah's members with the strength of the movement. On these occasions, the extreme personification of the movement ...around its leader, the charismatic Hassan Nasrallah..., all the more mythical as his physical appearances remain and further strengthens the role of the public sector in the the link between the group and the population⁴⁴. Finally, the movement specifically targets children by producing cards games, posters, key rings, comic books or other toys⁴⁵.

Expanding your audience Hizbollah's attention to the various means of communication, as well as the increasing role given to the structures dedicated to information in the party's internal organization chart, reflect its concern to change its public image, and the resulting pragmatic shift in its strategy politics. It also underlines the bias of no longer being limit to Lebanon and to seek support overall Arab world⁴⁶. Since the victory in 2000, the movement has given its strategy communication a pan-Arab orientation. The Shia identity of the party has been nuanced in favour of an Arab-Muslim identity and a more consensual and nationalist approach to the conflict. Arab-Israeli⁴⁷. By opening up to other figures (women non veiled, representatives of other political currents, etc.), Al-Manar accompanied the political transition of the party. Thanks to with a budget of nearly \$15 million, the channel has diversified its programs by offering entertainment programs or programs for children. It broadcasts by example al-Muhemma (the operation), a game show during where participants answer questions about Hezbollah, its leaders, its religious values or its Israeli enemies and Americans, in order to advance on a virtual path leading to Jerusalem.

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