

TIPPING POINT - THE ADOPTION OF SUICIDE BOMBINGS

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RESUMEN

La última década ha sido testigo de un creciente número de artículos sobre la el aspecto organizativo del terrorismo. Gran parte de la teoría se centra en la lógica instrumental, estratégica y táctica de la violencia política. Se presta menos atención en la literatura académica a la condiciones subyacentes que dan lugar a la aparición de las campañas de acción y a los ataques suicidas. Mediante un análisis de mecanismo, este trabajo pone de relieve un mecanismo ambiental que lleva a la aparición de los ataques suicidas con bombas. Se trata de un mecanismo ambiental ya que se refiere a la dinámica de producción externa de la organización. Afecta el clima socio-político y el grupo militante dentro de ella. En este trabajo se plantea que un agravio impuesto de repente impuesto acentúa la percepción de asimetría en el conflicto e impulsa a la organización a innovar tácticamente. Los atentados suicidas disminuyen la percepción de asimetría táctica, estratégica y normativamente. Basándose en ejemplos ilustrativos, se ilustra el proceso dinámico a través del cual las organizaciones deciden usar primero este tipo de violencia.

ABSTRACT

The past decade has witnessed an increasing number of articles on the organizational dimension to terrorism. Much of the theorizing focuses on the instrumental, strategic, and tactical logic of political violence. The underlying conditions that give rise to the onset of campaigns garners relatively little attention. There is also little emphasis within the academic literature for the specific onset of suicide bombings. Using mechanism analysis, this paper highlights one environmental mechanism that leads to the onset of suicide bombings. It is an environmental mechanism because it relates to dynamics externally produced from the organization. It affects the socio-political climate and the militant group within it. This paper argues that a suddenly imposed grievance that accentuates the perceptions of asymmetry in the conflict spurs the organization to innovate tactically. Suicide bombings lessen the perceived asymmetry tactically, strategically and normatively. Drawing upon illustrative examples, this paper illustrates the dynamic process through which organizations decide to first use this particular type of violence.

Key words: atentado suicida, guerra asimétrica, terrorism [suicide bombing, asymmetric warfare, terrorism]

While the number of academic studies on suicide bombing has flourished over the past decade, there remain a number of operationally relevant areas that remain unexplored at both the individual (Gill, 2012) and organizational levels. At the organizational level of analysis, studies that emphasize structural explanations or the strategic logic of the perpetrators are

commonplace. Missing from such analyses is an understanding of the temporal decision to adopt suicide bombing as a repertoire of violence. Suicide bombing is rarely the first tactic used by a terrorist organization yet the dominant explanations within the literature posit drivers that are largely static in nature. The dynamic change in a terrorist group's tactics over time is much more likely influenced by the everyday realities of conflict than by distal grievances that underpinned the onset of the conflict itself. While factors such as foreign occupation, poverty, general repression and inequality may help explain a conflict's onset, this article outlines that the onset of specific manifestations of violence is much more likely a result of salient grievances accrued during the conflict itself. By understanding a terrorist group's adoption of particular tactics through this prism, a stronger basis for the management of conflict and terrorism can be formed. This article first outlines and analyses Pape's (2005) "strategic logic of suicide bombing". Using elements from the social movement literature, this article then provides an alternative explanation of why organizations resort to suicide bombing at specific times in a conflict.

The Strategic Logic of Suicide Bombing

Pape's (2003, 2005) seminal work was the first systematic study of suicide bombing emphasizing its "strategic logic". Inferring from his "universe" of suicide attacks, Pape asserts two rationales behind why militant organizations resort to suicide bombing. First, suicide bombings coerce foreign occupiers to "make significant territorial concessions" (2003: 343). For Pape, democracies are particularly vulnerable to suicide bombings. Second, militant organizations "have learned that it pays" (2003: 343). Pape bases this second inference on three interlocking arguments. First, suicide bombing is relatively more destructive than other forms of political violence. Second, suicide bombings signal to the target there is more suffering to come and finally it increases "expectations of escalating future costs by deliberately violating norms in the use of violence" (2003: 347).

Pape's law-like assertions of occupation and social learning stem from three underlying patterns he infers from his data. First, suicide bombings are neither isolated nor unsystematic events but instead occur in organized campaigns. Second, suicide bombing campaigns compel democracies to withdraw military forces because they are "uniquely vulnerable" to this form of political violence (Pape, 2005: 4). Finally, strategic goals direct suicide bombing campaigns. Pape's line of argument is unconvincing. His definition of a campaign is very loose.

Pape's work has been criticized on a number of grounds. Not all suicide bombings occur in isolation. Al Dawa's suicide bombing of the Iraqi embassy in Beirut in December 1981 is the earliest example. The motivation behind the bombing is unclear but no sustained campaign of similar violence followed, but many other examples exist.¹ Not all suicide bombings have targeted democracies.² Moghadam (2006) places Pape's statement of a 54% success rate for campaigns of suicide bombing at a more modest 24%. Pape also posits too much emphasis on the proactive nature of militant organizations' strategic logic. Kaplan, Mintz and Mashal (2006) speculate that increasing numbers of Palestinian suicide bombings follow targeted assassinations by Israel. My data shows that 53.4% of Palestinian suicide bombings -from 2000 to date - occur within one week of an Israeli targeted assassination and 80.3% occur within two weeks. 61% of Fatah's suicide bombings are within one week of an Israeli targeted assassination. Just over a quarter (26.4%) of Hamas suicide bombings come within one week and 52.8% within two weeks of one of their militants being killed in a targeted assassination. Brym and Araj (2006) also illustrate the symbiotic nature of violence between non-state and state actors using the second Intifada as a case study. They explain suicide bombings as retaliation of Israeli counter-terror tactics that are then in turn explained by suicide bombings. Hafez's (2007) work on suicide bombings in Iraq shows an increase in suicide bombing around two occurrences - counterinsurgency operations and developments in the political arena such as elections. Kydd and Walter's (2002) game theoretic models hypothesize that extremist groups use suicide bombing to spoil peace processes.

Gupta and Mundra's (2005) empirical investigation of Hamas and Islamic Jihad's also highlights the importance of temporal dynamics within conflicts. Availing of twice-yearly incidents of suicide bombings by both groups as dependent variables, they test whether suicide bombing is a result of initiated (peace processes and/or elections, a reaction to Israeli provocation, or the outcome of inter-organizational cooperation and competition. Their findings highlight political events as a far better indicator than violent provocations such as targeted assassinations. Inter-organizational rivalry plays a pivotal role also. For Gupta and Mundra, suicide bombing is "not irrational but produced within a complex cauldron of political calculations" (2005: 591).

Finally, politically violent acts are not just an attempt to communicate to the political elites and public opinion of the state targeted. Militants aim to communicate to many other levels. For example, one Hamas claim of responsibility explicitly gave messages to "the Israeli government", "the

Israeli people”, “all concerned”, “the brothers in the Palestinian National Authority” and “to our struggling people” (BBC, 1996). Weinberg and Pedahzur (2009) likened militant organizations to political parties because they are both ultimately dependent on the moral and economic patronage of their supporters. Appeasing these supporters’ demands is an important goal to achieve. Pape fails to clarify that, as Tilly (2005: 21) points out, the use of terror is a strategy that involves interactions among political actors on different levels, “and that to explain the adoption of such a strategy we have no choice but to analyze it as part of a political process”. While Pape attempts to explain the phenomenon by looking at how a militant group rationally calculates its move vis-à-vis its opponent, Bloom (2005) instead argues that dynamic factors are responsible. Bloom argues that domestic political competition between rival groups competing for public support incentivizes militant groups to suicide bomb. In other words, she hypothesizes that when a civilian population supports targeted violence against an enemy, an array of groups with differing shades of ideology might compete for popularity from citizens, “engage in outbidding, and use violence to mobilize and radicalize the polity” (2005: 45). For example, public opinion polls in Palestine showed overwhelming support for suicide bombing just prior to and during the Second Intifada. Bloom (2005: 19) argues that “with such mounting public support, the bombings became a method of recruitment for militant Islamic organizations within the Palestinian community. They serve at one and the same time to attack the hated enemy (Israel) and give legitimacy to outlier militant groups who compete...for leadership of the community”. Often, groups competed for claims of responsibility. In one case of a double suicide bombing in February 2008 within Israel’s borders, Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Hamas claimed the bombers as their own. However, this competition for prestige was not just limited to militant groups. Here four families competed over claims surrounding whose son actually engaged in the suicide bombing itself (Wheeler, 2008).

In effect, Pape is correct in asserting that there is a strategic logic behind suicide bombings but posits too much emphasis on the drivers of this strategy being distal and static. Foreign occupation may urge a terrorist group to resort to violence as a strategy but the existing empirical evidence suggests that the tactical decision to adopt suicide bombing is more likely rooted in the on-the-ground realities and experiences of the conflict itself. The next section seeks to build upon the above empirical findings in a social movement theory framework and utilizes illustrative case studies to outline these dynamics.

Power Asymmetries and the Resort to Suicide Bombing

Existing research on terrorism often overlooks research on similar processes. One rich source of neglected findings stems from social movement theory and its various associated mechanisms dealing with, amongst other things, political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures and framing.

Militant organizations originally derive from perceived grievances. Typically, grievances tend to be distal environmental factors such as occupation by foreign powers, religious or cultural differences, or nationalist concerns. These distal factors, or 'root causes', explain the original grievance that underpins the conflict itself. In other words, without perceptions of some type of grievance, the conflict is unlikely to happen in the first place. Distal factors such as these though fail to account for two key aspects. First, because these grievances are long-standing, by themselves they cannot take account of when a violent campaign will begin. Second, once violence has begun, distal explanations cannot explain tactical shifts in a militant group's repertoire. To answer these questions, we must look further into the box of explanation and seek proximate causes. Militant groups who ultimately engage in suicide bombings largely share a pattern of antecedent experiences before their initial suicide bombing. Whereas the underpinnings of the violence itself are predicated on a distal grievance, the onset of suicide bombing can largely be categorized as a response to a suddenly imposed grievance that accentuates perceptions of asymmetry in the conflict. This suddenly imposed grievance acts as a political opportunity structure in which organizational elites can justify the use of suicide bombings to their constituency of potential followers. In essence, it is easier to market martyrdom and thereby elicit support and new recruits within this opportunity structure. The suddenly imposed grievance is an environmental mechanism because it relates to dynamics externally produced from the organization. It affects the socio-political climate and the militant group within it.

The power asymmetry between the non-state militant group and the targeted state plays a key role in why the non-state militant group starts using suicide bombing. The relationship between both sets of actors is one of power asymmetry. If power were evenly distributed, the non-state group may be more likely to engage in more conventional forms of warfare or political mobilization. In the case of militant organizations first resorting to suicide bombing, there is often a clearly visible example of a recent suddenly imposed grievance that exacerbates the perceived asymmetry in power relations between the militant group and the enemy state. This suddenly imposed grievance is often an unexpected change, from the militant group

perspective, in the immediate environment in which the long-standing grievance plays out.

Social movement theorists developed the concept of political opportunity structures to overcome the inherent weaknesses in using long-standing structural grievances as an explanation for the outbreak of mobilization or violence. Long-standing grievances without the requisite political opportunity to mobilize are unlikely to lead to contentious actors and actions emerging. The suddenly imposed grievance that dramatically increases perceptions of asymmetry is a mechanism that explains one such political opportunity. Because of the perceived increased asymmetry, organizational elites have an easier time of selling the culture of martyrdom and thereby increasing the pool of recruits, and active and passive supporters.

Walsh (1981) first coined the term “suddenly imposed grievance”. It describes dramatic and largely unanticipated occurrences that increase resistance to the surrounding political consensus. Social movement theorists focused upon the role of suddenly imposed grievances in protests such as those opposing nuclear power following an accident in 1979 at Three Mile Island (Walsh, 1981) and Chernobyl (Koopmans and Duyvendak, 1995), and movements advocating desegregation of U.S. schools following an unexpected court order that mandated busing (Useem, 1980).

By heightening the sense of power asymmetry, the suddenly imposed grievance spurs the militant organization to act to assert its identity and fight despite the power imbalance. The suddenly imposed grievance changes the political environment and hence opens up a political opportunity for the organization to act in order to garner more support. The suddenly imposed grievance often has the potential to undermine the militant group through either military confrontation that will destroy the organization's infrastructure and fighting capabilities, or through political moves that may make the group inconsequential because of the new arrangements. A suddenly imposed grievance could also open space in the political landscape for new groups to emerge onto the political scene through violent acts. For example, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq changed the political scene from one of an authoritarian system in which groups could not operate to an anarchic system that allowed for new groups to emerge and militants to flood into the state.

The new political opportunity structure opened by the suddenly imposed grievance of heightened power asymmetry limits the variety of tactics a militant organization can pursue. Low-scale warfare such as firing AK47s will not do much to bridge the asymmetry for example. The tactic of suicide bombing helps balance the asymmetry in conflicts for strategic,

tactical and psychological reasons. Strategically, as will be discussed in more detail below, the progenitors of suicide bombing in Lebanon were quite successful in repelling U.S., French and Israeli soldiers. They inflicted large damage to army personnel with a ruthlessly efficient, cost-effective strategy of large-scale bombings. Tactically, suicide bombing is effective to balance asymmetry for many reasons. There is little planning needed because no getaway route is required. Even if security forces capture the individual, he can detonate the charge – this reduces the chance of later interrogation and conceding valuable information about the organization. The individual can change targets at the last moment. It inflicts a relatively large number of casualties per dollar spent. For example, the average suicide bomb vest costs approximately \$150 to construct (Atran, 2005). Psychologically, suicide bombing portrays to the target audience the militants' intense belief in the cause. It illustrates the depths to which they have needed to sink and it promises much more suffering in the future.

This is not to discount the underlying root causes of the conflicts themselves. Distal grievances include foreign occupation and historical repression associated with the occupation, lack of political freedom, economic development, extremist ideologies, historical antecedents of political violence, perceptions of government illegitimacy and relative deprivation. Distal political, social, and/or religious grievances act in much the same facilitative way as the availability of inter-organizational rivalry and religious fundamentalism. Distal grievances such as occupation by a foreign power help facilitate organizations resorting to suicide bombings. However, they do not provide a full accurate picture of the more proximate dynamics between non-state militant group and the state. They fail to account for the specific timing of the onset of suicide bombings. Distal grievances are often far too long-standing to provide insight into tactical innovations of militant groups. When we account for the onset of suicide bombings within a campaign of violence, we consistently uncover a suddenly imposed grievance that accentuates perceptions of power asymmetry. In a way, the outline that follows confirms Pape's analysis that strategic rationality explains why groups use suicide bombings. The analysis here however goes further and explicates the context and timing within which the strategic rationality of suicide bombings becomes salient for organizational elites. The following pages outline illustrative examples of suddenly imposed grievances at work.

Ayatollah Khomeini swept to power in Iran in 1979 following the overthrow of the Shah. The new Iranian regime faced internal dissent. Anti-Khomeini factions engaged in violence. One group in particular, Mu-

jadhideen-E-Khalq, assassinated dozens of Khomeini's top aides in car bombings. For example, a double bombing in June 1981, killed Iran's Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammed Beheshti and 71 other prominent politicians. Another bombing in August 1981 killed Iran's President Mohammad Ali Rajal and its Premier Mohammad Javad Bahonar. The Mujahideen-E-Khalq combined Marxism and nationalism with Islamic principles. Prior to Khomeini coming to power, the Mujahideen-E-Khalq were one of the more prolific violent opponents to the Shah. The Mujahideen-E-Khalq were also responsible for the first ever suicide bombing. Eerily it took place exactly twenty years before suicide bombings came to the world's attention. On September 11th 1981, in Tabriz in Northwestern Iran, Mujahideen-E-Khalq assassinated Khomeini's representative to the region, Ayatollah Madani. Surprisingly, given the number of analyses on the problem of suicide bombings, this book is the first to pinpoint the Mujahideen-E-Khalq as suicide bombing progenitors. The bomber approached Ayatollah Madani, hugged him and detonated the grenades strapped around his body. Similar suicide bombings occurred for a number of months afterwards including the world's first female suicide bomber on December 11th, 1981. The day before the initial suicide bombing however, the Iranian regime had executed a prominent leader of the resistance movement, Amir Taheri Shokrai, by firing squad in Tabriz (Rizvi, 1981). The suicide bombing acted as a show of strength to illustrate the resistance movement was not dead and could still affect the higher echelons of Khomeini's regime despite Khomeini's attempt to decapitate the movement.

Israel commenced a large-scale occupation of southern Lebanon on June 6th 1982. They intended to force both the PLO and Syrian troops out of Lebanon. The U.S. and France sent troops in August to stabilize the country. By September, the PLO had moved operations to Tunisia while IDF troops appeared to begin plans for a long stay in Lebanon. "From this point on, Israel began to implement a long-term plan to stabilize Maronite Christian control over the government in Beirut, and appeared to settle in for a prolonged occupation of Lebanon" (Pape, 2005: 131). By pledging to eliminate PLO existence in Lebanon, Israel gained early support from the Lebanese Shi'a constituency. However, "any Shi'a euphoria soon developed into resentment and militancy following the realization that Israel would continue to occupy southern Lebanon" even after the eradication of the PLO (Ranstorp, 1997: 30). U.S. marines landed in Lebanon on September 29th 1982 to further bolster peace initiatives. The first Lebanese suicide bombing occurred in November 1982 as a direct response to the long-term occupation by foreign forces that had seemingly begun.

Following a bombing of a bus station in Colombo, the Sri Lankan government launched a large military operation in Tamil areas, which affected civilians badly. Looking for peace, the Indian government began negotiations that led to the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord in late July 1987. No Tamil representative attended the talks but the Accord itself required the Tamil Tigers to disarm. Three weeks before the final signing of the Accords, a member of the Tamil Tigers, Captain Miller, engaged in a suicide bombing (Pedahzur, 2005). There is some dispute about whether this attack was granted by the upper echelons of the Tamil Tigers at the time. What can't be disputed is that in subsequent years, the Tamil Tigers lauded Captain Miller as their suicide bombing progenitor. He was the prototypical member that others within the cadre aspired to.

Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel was also involved in a small number of suicide bombings. Unconfirmed reports suggested a December 1989 truck bombing of the National Police Office of Bogota involved a suicide bomber. The truck was packed with half a ton of dynamite, killing 35 and injuring a further 500. Suspicion of a suicide bomber arose because the truck was still moving as it exploded. At this time, a major police and judicial investigation into cocaine labs allegedly owned by the Medellin Cartel was underway (Coleman, 1989). There is no doubt that the next series of Medellin Cartel attacks were suicide bombings however. They occurred in May and June 1990. The suicide bombings (and other suicide attacks that involved the death of the perpetrator such as the assassination of Presidential candidate Carlos Pizarro) coincided with a presidential election that would decide the future of President Virgilio Barco's concentrated effort against the Colombian drug industry. The first suicide bombing occurred the day before the election at a hotel in Medellin (Harvey, 1990). A report by United Press International in 1993 casts doubt on whether the bombers were willing accomplices. The report discovered that the Cartel had intermittently used proxy bombs. The evidence emerged from interviews with a homeless would-be proxy bomber who was caught by Colombian security forces. It alleged that the Cartel would pay homeless men to drive cars packed with explosives to a target and then detonate the device remotely before the proxy bomber could escape.

The Egyptian group New Jihad's only suicide bombing came in the week of a trial of 54 of their members. The Egyptian regime hanged 15 Islamic militants in the two months preceding the suicide bombing (Agence France Presse, 1993). This suicide bombing emerged after an 18-month long campaign of violence seeking to instill an Islamic regime in Egypt.

Throughout 1995, a large deployment of Turkish troops crossed into Iraq with the stated intention of rooting out the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) who used the Kurdish enclaves in Northern Iraq as a base. The Turkish Army claimed it killed more than 1,100 PKK guerrilla fighters and had permanently damaged the infrastructure of the organization itself. Some analysts posit that the first suicide bombing by the PKK, occurring in early 1996, was a response to this (Pedahzur, 2005: 90). The week leading up to the bombing was a highly symbolic one. At a convention for the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party, activists replaced the Turkish flag with the flag of the PKK. Turkish police arrested forty officials from the party in connection with this event. Another reaction by Turkey was to hang national flags outside all public and private buildings for one week. The PKK's first suicide bombing was at one such public flag ceremony. It also occurred two days after the creation of a new Islamist led government following nine months of political stalemate in Turkey (Associated Press Worldstream, 1996).

The first suicide bombing in Saudi Arabia occurred one month after Saudi Arabia beheaded four captured Islamic militants for their role in bombing U.S. army offices in Riyadh in November 1996 (Agence France Presse, 1996c).

The signing of the Oslo accords created two major problems for both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. First, "the Accords would bring an end to their lofty vision of the establishment of an Islamic state on all Palestinian-Israeli territory. Second...the Accords granted Fatah a dominant status in the institutions of the Palestinian Authority and excluded Islamic organizations...from the process of making and executing policy in the Authority" (Pedahzur, 2005: 58). Both Hamas and Islamic Jihad's first suicide bombings came in response to the Oslo accords. Hamas' first bombing also occurred within a fortnight of Israeli forces killing one of Hamas' West Bank leaders and arresting two other senior members. Arguably, Fatah's waning political support during the second Intifada drove them to adopt the tactic of suicide bombing and rhetoric of martyrdom.

The U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan began on October 7th 2001. The first suicide bombing by insurgent forces occurred November 25th the same year. In the week leading up to this bombing, Northern Alliance forces captured key cities Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat. Kandahar was also close to capture after tribal fighters had taken the nearby airport (Salahuddin and Russell, 2001). Two days before the original suicide bombing, President Bush expressed his intentions to stay in Afghanistan for the long haul and that his troops may need to enter other states: "Now is the time to

make a stand against al-Qaeda. But there are likely to be other fronts, other places where we need to work to rout out terrorist organizations. We are going to fight terror wherever it exists. America is not waiting for terrorists to try to strike us again. Wherever they hide, wherever they plot, we will strike the terrorists” (quoted in Eastham and Wilson, 2001).

Suicide bombings in Afghanistan occurred sporadically until the beginning of 2005 when a seemingly concerted campaign began. Suddenly imposed grievances precede many of these sporadic suicide bombings. The second attempted suicide bombing in Afghanistan came eight months after the first suicide bombing and five days after the United States pledged a further \$300 million to aid Afghanistan’s reconstruction efforts. The next successful suicide bombing in Afghanistan occurred over one and a half years later in January 2004. Militants targeted a NATO convoy. This occurred just over two months after NATO “called for the systematic introduction of troops into the north, west, south, and east, consecutively” (Pape and Feldman, 2010:122). The week previous to this suicide bombing, NATO engaged in its first offensive action on suspected insurgents. At that point, NATO had troops in Afghanistan for nearly five months. As soon as NATO started military action, they became a legitimate target in the eyes of the suicide bombers and their dispatchers (Shah, 2004). The next suicide bombing occurred the following October on the same day as the inaugural elections for the Presidency of Afghanistan. Jumatul Mujahideen Bangladesh’s conventional bombing campaign in 2005 quickly turned into a suicide bombing campaign against lawyers and courts in the immediate build-up to the trials of hundreds of suspected Islamic militants (Hossain, 2005).

After a cessation of a suicide bombing campaign, it often takes another suddenly imposed grievance for suicide bombings to re-emerge. Examples include a Hezbollah suicide bombing in October 1983 following a four-month cessation. The attack on U.S. and French military installations coincided with Lebanon’s national reconciliation conference (Ottaway, 1983). In August 1989, Hezbollah deployed its first suicide bomber in ten months. Organizational elites described the bombing as a “down payment” for the abduction of Sheik Obeid (Nassar, 1989). Hezbollah’s suicide bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992 came a month after the assassination of prominent Hezbollah political leaders and over two years after their last suicide bombing (Gamini, 1992). The Tamil Tigers ended a six-month moratorium on suicide bombings by assassinating Sri Lanka’s President Premadasa on May 1st 1993. A week earlier, Premadasa quelled ideas of a Tamil homeland by declaring in parliament that Sri Lanka “must prevent the division of our homeland” (Murdoch, 1993). Hezbollah’s first

suicide bombing in almost two years in July 1994 came swiftly after Israel sent reinforcements to the Lebanese border and launched raids on Hezbollah training camps. Immediately after the raid, Hezbollah's General Secretary Nasrallah commented; "Yesterday we had tens of suicide attackers. Today we have not hundreds, we have thousands". According to some reports, the attack on the training camp was "the deadliest single attack ever launched" against Hezbollah by Israel (Hoffman, 1994). Hamas launched its first suicide bombing in over five months quite quickly after the massacre at the Cave of the Patriarchs Hebron mosque in 1994. Two days after Israel and Jordan agreed a peace deal in October 1994, Hamas conducted its first suicide bombing in over six months. Islamic Jihad's first suicide bombing in over a year came nine days after the assassination of its leader Hani Abed in November 1994. Similarly, Islamic Jihad conducted no suicide bombings in the four months prior to their November 1995 attack that they claimed was retaliation for the assassination of another leader Khalil al-Shikaki. A year long cessation of suicide bombings in the Palestinian conflict ended in March 1997. Hamas bombed a café in Tel Aviv three days after Israel had broken ground for a new Jewish neighborhood in east Jerusalem. Some Palestinian elites mapped out this specific location as a potential capital of any future Palestinian state. Islamic Jihad claimed their first suicide bombing in over a year and a half in November 1998 was a response to the Wye Accords. The PKK's first suicide bombing in eight months in September 2001 was in support of the recently initiated hunger strikes in Turkish prisons. An al-Qaeda attack on a Jakarta hotel in August 2003 occurred two days before the trial of the Bali bombing suspects. The PFLP went over a year without suicide bombing until the killing of two of its militants by Israel prompted them to retaliate. The suicide bombing of the Israeli embassy in Uzbekistan in May 2005 occurred at the same time as a high profile trial of alleged Islamist militants in Uzbekistan. The first Kashmiri separatist suicide bombing in just under a year occurred on the same day that new Kashmir chief minister was sworn in to office in November 2005. The attacks at a Moscow metro station in March 2010 came the day after Vladimir Putin claimed the insurgency was under control.

On some occasions, militant organizations launch a suicide bombing in the hope that a response will lead to an over the top reaction from the target state. The reaction itself works as a suddenly imposed grievance and becomes used as a rallying point for future bombings, radicalization of the campaign and as a recruiting tool. For example, immediately following the first Chechen suicide bombing in June 2000, Putin imposed direct presidential rule over the area.

Conclusion

This article provided a number of illustrative examples to show that for a true understanding of the strategic logic of suicide terrorism, it is necessary to analyze the context in which the decision was made to resort to suicide terrorism. Suddenly imposed grievances spur the organization to act in order to counteract perceptions of a heightened asymmetry in power relations between the non-state actor and the adversary. However there a number of issues to be considered here. First of all, leaving the analysis as it stands depicts the militant organization as unrestrained in the types of violence it engages in. Militant organizations spend a great amount of time and effort releasing communiqués and statements regarding violent attacks. There is a clear logic behind them. If you consider the fact that organizational elites risk exposure to security services by releasing these statements, the importance of them must be large. Mostly, organizations use these statements to make the claim that their organization was responsible for the violence and to outline the justifications for the attack. Other statements may include a refusal to take responsibility. On these occasions, the organization may have noticed the apparent backlash amongst its constituency of supporters and used the statement to distance itself from the attack. Other statements entail false claims. If the success is seen to be successful and if that particular type of violence resonates amongst the constituency, organizations will compete for claims of responsibility (Bloom, 2005).

The aim of many of these statements is not just to communicate to the targeted enemy the organization's goals and intentions. Instead, organizations seek to portray to their own constituency the morality and necessity of the bombing. Therefore, a more nuanced understanding of the wider processes within which militant organizations are located posits that the organizations rely upon the political, moral, and economic patronage of a constituency of active and passive supporters. Militant organizational elites seek to be the vanguard of a movement. Some presuppose themselves to be the leaders of their projected new state entity. Others seek to be the moral and religious leaders of an Islamic Caliphate for example. Organizational elites must ensure support throughout their campaign. Because of this, organizational leaders must use a calibrated amount of violence to ensure constituency support is not withdrawn. In a sense, militant organizations resemble political parties (Weinberg and Pedahzur, 2009). They must be in touch with the wider community they claim to represent. In the Palestinian, Tamil, and Chechen cases, this constituency is large and surrounds the organization itself. For al-Qaeda, insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, and one-off cases such as 9/11, the Bali bombings, and 7/7, the constituency

mainly entails a 'virtual constituency' consisting of global supporters on the internet and a small minority from within their own country holding similar sentiments. The fact that al-Qaeda and their affiliates possess a 'virtual constituency' makes them less constrained in their actions. For example, they would not rely upon provision of safe houses and community silence toward security forces as much as a group like the IRA would.

Additionally, organizations often threaten suicide bombings months before its original attack. This suggests that organizational elites at times use suddenly imposed grievance as a post facto legitimization for using suicide bombing. The organization, in other words, was prepared for suicide bombings but used the suddenly imposed grievance as a legitimization for the shift in tactics. For example, eight and a half months before the first Chechen suicide bombing, a prominent Chechen militant, Shamil Basayev threatened suicide bombings. Six months before the first suicide bombing in Yemen, al-Qaeda sympathisers let their intentions be known (Agence France Presse, 2002).

Another point to consider is that the mechanism of suddenly imposed grievances interacts with other levels of analysis in a dynamic fashion and other actors help create, sustain or potentially decrease the prevalence of suicide bombings. In other words, an organization may be very aware of the strategic utility of suicide bombings through diffusion and may experience suddenly imposed grievances but because of the fear of constituency backlash, suicide bombings are not adopted. For example, the Mahdi Army in Iraq has never utilized suicide bombings despite having a number of key elements identified elsewhere in the literature (Gill, 2007). It possessed a charismatic leader held in cult-like status. It was widely supported in impoverished areas like Sadr City where the militia mobilized early in the surrounding chaos of post-Saddam Iraq to provide security and aid to the city's population. Muqtada al-Sadr's family history provided a legitimately perceived culture of martyrdom to provide legitimacy for suicide bombings. It resembled a state-shell in some areas such was the length of its service provision. Shortly after the fall of Saddam, his movement had control of '90% of the mosques in Sadr City and had taken over schools, hospitals and welfare centres...A week after he [Saddam] fled the Sadrist claimed to have 50,000 volunteers organized in predominantly Shi'a East Baghdad, collecting refuse, directing traffic and distributing hospital meals' (Cockburn 2009, p.147). His blend of 'Islamic revivalism, populism and Iraqi nationalism' resonated within the Shi'a community (Cockburn 2009, p.136). Al-Sadr set up a political party for the 2005 elections, finishing fifth. The fact that the Sadr movement had stayed in Iraq and faced such

brutal coercion under Saddam, gave it an authority in some communities that the formerly exiled and now returning political leaders could not match in post-Saddam Iraq (Cockburn 2009, p.12).

Importantly for this article, the Mahdi Army faced a suddenly imposed grievance that accentuated the perceptions of power asymmetry in the conflict on many occasions. During 2004, al-Sadr's newspaper was shut down and many attempts at his arrest ensued. During 2005, the U.S. tried many times to disband al-Sadr's militia army. In January 2007, President Bush unexpectedly announced his intention to send an extra 20,000 soldiers as reinforcements to regain control of Baghdad. His State of the Union address warned of the 'escalating danger from Shi'ite extremists'. Bush framed the threat from these extremists as being similar to that of Osama bin Laden (Cockburn, 2009, p.235). In March 2008, a major crackdown on the Mahdi Army by the Iraqi security services was underway. Despite these suddenly imposed grievances, the Mahdi Army never engaged in suicide bombings.

An early suicide bombing in the Iraqi insurgency occurred in August 2003. The target was a leading member of the Iranian-backed political party the 'Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq'. Initial reports attributed the bombing to the Mahdi Army. Details later emerged that al-Zarqawi's Sunni movement of mainly foreign fighters was responsible as his father-in-law was the bomber. This bombing illustrated al-Zarqawi's drive to not only inflict violence upon US coalition forces but also the Shi'a of Iraq. Sustained suicide bombings proceeded against innocent Shi'a civilians in crowded markets and those looking to join the new Iraqi regime in some form. None was worse than the series of bombings at Shi'a religious shrines in Karbala and Baghdad in March 2004. The Ashura bombings killed 270 worshippers and injured 570 in one day. Suicide bombings became the hallmark of indiscriminate violence by Sunnis against Shi'as in Iraq. Muqtada al-Sadr, looking to maintain his early success and support could not afford association with the same brush. Despite possessing all of the necessary ingredients, strategic rationality did not allow the process of suicide bombings to proceed. Providing ordinary Iraqis the security from suicide bombings, that U.S. forces and the nascent Iraqi state failed to do, gave the Mahdi Army further legitimacy in the eyes of many. Using tactics that were predominantly used against the Shi'a of Iraq may have ultimately corroded support away from the Shi'a supported Mahdi Army.

Any fully nuanced account of suicide bombings should therefore not just focus on its strategic utility but be aware of and account for the multiple interacting mechanisms among a number of different units of analysis.

Because suicide bombings kill more people, it is necessary to understand the routine activities and experiences that typically precede an organization's adoption of the tactic. Understanding the typical pathway into using the tactic can lead to more empirically informed intervention strategies that seek to disrupt and deter organization's from adopting the most lethal contemporary terrorist tactic available. In other words, further research on these dynamics will help in the development of more effective risk-management of developing conflicts, decision-making concerned with resource allocation and anticipating the second-order effects of day-to-day counter-insurgency tactics.

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¹ Include the Armenia Revolutionary Army's assassination attempt on the Turkish ambassador in Lisbon in July 1983, the Islamic Amal organization of Iraq's bombing of an Iraqi military headquarters in July 1984, a Hezbollah bombing in Buenos Aires in March 1993, New Jihad's assassination attempt on the Egyptian interior minister in Cairo in August 1993, a GIA truck bombing on a crowd in the Algiers in January 1995, a bombing of the Russian consulate building in Morocco the following month, the Babbar Khalsa International's (BKI) assassination of a chief minister in India in August 1995, Islami Chhatra Shibir's suicide bombing in Bangladesh of a rival political party meeting in June 2001, Army of the Levant's suicide bombing of a theatre in Qatar in March 2005, Muslim separatists attacked a police station in China in August 2008, an unclaimed attack occurred in a market in Damascus, Syria in September 2008, a Tamil Tiger engaged in an isolated suicide bombing in May 2009, an isolated suicide bombing also occurred in police station in Burma in April 2010, and a suicide bombing by an unknown group in Tajikistan in September 2010 also failed to escalate in to what could be deemed a campaign.

² Saudi Arabia, Iran, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, China, Qatar, Syria, General Musharraf's Pakistan, Morocco, Burma and Tajikistan.

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