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Killing Without Dying: the Absence of Suicide Missions

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O'Callaghan was a member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) who later became an informer for the Irish police. Having spent most of his life fighting against terrorism, O'Callaghan (1999: 308) concludes that 'the IRA is an organization that produces people prepared to starve themselves to death, people prepared to spend large part of their lives in prison. In short, it produces people who are prepared to inflict death, pain and suffering on themselves as well as on others in pursuit of a cause.' Yet, in spite of this, the IRA never launched a suicide mission (SM). The same holds for many other insurgent and terrorist organizations all over the world, no matter how violent their tactics, how virulent their ideology, or how extreme their members' preferences and commitment.¹ *Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna* (ETA) in Spain, the Red Brigades in Italy, the Baader Meinhof in Germany, the Shining Path in Peru, and the Kosovo Liberation Army, to name but a few, never engaged in SMs. Even the Algerian *Groupe Islamique Armée* (GIA), an extremely violent and militant Islamist organization that engaged in tens of massacres of civilians, resorted to SMs only once. In fact, according to a recent estimate only 113 out of 7,053 terrorist incidents (1.6 per cent) were suicide bombings and the great majority were attributed to a handful of organizations.² Here, we turn the central question of this volume on its head and ask why so many organizations do *not* resort to SMs.

Any explanation of why some organizations do engage in such missions must also account for the fact that the great majority of insurgent and terrorist organizations refrain from using this method. In particular, if we assume that SMs are instrumentally planned to achieve a set of specific goals, we must also be able to say whether the absence of SMs results from altogether different goals or, rather, from differences in the costs associated with the parameters of the production of violence. In Becker's terminology (1996), the variation on SMs can be attributed either to variations in preferences or to variations in the relative costs of the inputs that are necessary to

produce the final commodity—in this case, violence. In general, we tend to favour the latter type of explanation.

The chapter is in two parts. In the first part we ask why organizations may be unwilling to resort to SMs. We examine five possible reasons: cognitive accessibility, normative preferences, counterproductive effects, constituency costs, and technological costs. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that organizations which are willing to resort to SMs are unable to do so because of the lack of individual volunteers. Thus, in the second part we explore the factors that affect individual members' willingness to participate in SMs. Because evidence on the reasons or causes for the absence of SMs is particularly hard to come by, this chapter is more analytical than empirical. It formulates hypotheses and illustrates them by examples rather than testing them.

Organizational Incentives

Both the long tradition of SMs and their spectacular success in at least some of the instances where they were used (for example, Lebanon in 1983 and the World Trade Center (WTC) in 2001) make their overall infrequent incidence puzzling.

Cognitive Accessibility

One answer to the puzzle is simple: some organizations may have never contemplated relying on SMs because they did not know about them. In other words, SMs are *inconceivable* for these organizations for reasons that are unrelated to any normative or rational rejection. SMs would just not appear on their radar screens.

There are at least two possible objections to this explanation, a strong one and a weak one. According to the strong objection, any strategy that is potentially beneficial for its users should belong to their choice set, particularly if that strategy is not conditional on some previous technological innovation. As Elster (chapter 7, this volume) points out, it was obviously not easy to think of suicide bombings before the invention of dynamite. But once this became technologically feasible, what could have restrained organizations from considering this possibility? Indeed, high-risk operations that entailed almost certain death have been common in the history of warfare—and the leap from high-risk missions to SMs is rather small. In fact, as we show below, the idea of suicide bombing came naturally to Russian anarchists at the end of the nineteenth century.

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The weak objection applies only to the last twenty years. During this period, SMs have been a highly visible strategy and hence it is difficult to make the case for a gap in knowledge. In fact, there is an evident contagion effect. In Lebanon, Hezbollah's initial use of SMs was first imitated by many other non-Islamic groups: Kramer (1994: 35) has calculated that, of all SMs in Lebanon between 1983 and 1986, only a quarter were carried out by Hezbollah. Later, Hezbollah was imitated by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Israel, where even groups linked to secular organizations, such as al-Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), eventually adopted this weapon; more recently, Chechen insurgents have used spectacular SMs against Russian targets—though this strategy was first used during the battle of Grozny in 1994 to destroy Russian tanks (Knezys and Sedickas 1999: 50, 65).³ Most recently, SMs have been extensively used by groups fighting the presence of the US-led coalition in Iraq. AQ1

The fascination produced by the 9/11 attacks is illustrated by an operation designed by the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), a Marxist guerrilla organization that has never been involved in SMs, to sabotage a ceremony in which newly appointed President Alvaro Uribe was to take office. The police foiled the FARC's plan to hire a pilot who would crash a plane into the presidential palace. The FARC had no volunteers for the mission and was offering to compensate the family of the pilot willing to crash the plane with \$2 million. According to the BBC, the FARC was looking for pilots among former members of the Medellin cartel (note that this is clearly a case of an organization willing to undertake an SM but unwilling to do so unaided). The organization had to content itself with exploding several bombs around the presidential palace, killing seventeen people and injuring sixty-five others on the day Uribe took office.⁴

What could be called 'delegated' or 'forced' SMs indicate that rebel organizations that do not launch SMs are nevertheless well aware of their potential benefits. This kind of operation has some of the technical advantages of an SM and none of its drawbacks in terms of personnel costs. On 24 October 1990 the IRA took the family of Patsy Gillespie hostage; he worked in the canteen of an army base (which made him a 'legitimate target'). In order to release his family, Gillespie had to drive a car full of explosives that the IRA exploded by remote control when he arrived at a checkpoint. He was used as a human bomb.⁵ That same day, the IRA tried the same tactic with James McEvoy, who was warned that, if he did not comply, two of his sons would be shot. He did comply and was wounded during the operation, but survived. A similar operation took place in Colombia on 28 May 2002, apparently organized by the FARC. A driver was given a box of vegetables concealing a bomb inside. The organization exploded the bomb when the van

was very close to a populated square near Bogotá.⁶ This has not been the only such case in Colombia.⁷

These episodes show that some organizations understand the benefits of potential SMs but, for reasons unrelated to cognitive accessibility, refrain from launching them. Those same episodes reveal also that some organizations lack volunteers or at least the will to use them (we discuss this case in greater detail in the last part of this chapter). However, we also found evidence that at least two organizations considered and then decided to reject SMs despite the availability of volunteers.

In its fight for independence for the Basque Country, ETA has unsuccessfully tried to kill the king of Spain at least five times (Zavala 1998). The latest attempt and the one that came closest to succeeding took place in 1995, when a member of the organization was ready to shoot the king during his vacation in Mallorca but at the last minute the police foiled the operation. Killing the king would have obviously attracted massive international attention to the Basque conflict, and would have humiliated the Spanish security services and demoralized the Spanish public. In 1995, ETA also tried to kill José María Aznar, leader of the Popular Party, who became prime minister the following year. Despite the importance of these targets, ETA rejected the option of an SM against the king even though there was a volunteer inside the organization willing to execute the attack. The police intercepted some letters written in the late 1990s by one of the leaders of the organization, José Javier Arizcuren (*Kantauri*); these letters addressed questions and demands by ETA's most important commando, *Donosti*. In one of them, *Kantauri* refers to the letter of the volunteer for the Kamikaze action against the king in these terms:

With regard to the militant's letter in which he offers himself for more extreme actions (kamikaze-like), we must say that in principle we do not agree with the idea of a militant blowing himself up in a car. Yet, if the militant is willing to run a high risk, there could be a chance to carry out an action following a funeral. Let me explain: after a powerful attack, we find out where the funeral will take place. We can, then, kidnap the people who live in a house close to the cemetery or church and from there gun down one of the politicians attending the funeral (the King, the Prince, the Minister of Interior, Aznar, etc.). If the police do not have a file about the militant and he abandons his shotgun there, he may be able to escape in the ensuing confusion. (Quoted in Díaz Herrera and Durán 2002: 729).

Unfortunately, *Kantauri* does not elaborate on the reasons why the organization rejects SMs. He just expresses disagreement with this method and offers instead a very hazardous operation, implicitly drawing a line between sending a militant to certain death and sending him on a high-risk mission.

The GIA in Algeria similarly rejected SMs after resorting to an SM only once. In January 1995, GIA suicide bombers killed at least 42 people in an

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attack near the central police headquarters in Algiers as part of a strategy designed to bring the civil war into the cities. However, all the other attacks that were part of the same strategy involved 'traditional' bombings and fell short of SMs. What makes this case interesting is that a key figure of the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS), Ali Belhadj, suggested around the same time that SMs were indeed on the agenda: 'From January 1995, suicide attacks will be carried out against French diplomatic missions and interests in the Arab world.' However, this opinion was apparently not shared by other leaders of the FIS, such as Anwar Haddam, who explicitly condemned SMs (Freeman 1994). The Algerian case also suggests that, while volunteers were available and an SM was tried out, internal debates about which we have no information led to their swift abandonment.⁸

Normative Preferences

These examples suggest that, at least in some cases, SMs are explicitly contemplated but rejected by insurgent organizations. Why? A first answer suggests that they have moral or ideological objections to this method.

First, moral constraints: insurgents tend to see themselves as engaged in some sort of just war in which some practices are outside acceptable bounds (Gilbert 1995: ch. 2). In both the Christian version of the just war and the Islamic one (jihad), killing others may be licit if certain external conditions are met (for instance, repression and denial of basic rights) and if the killing is not indiscriminate or does not affect innocent civilians. Thus, the expression 'legitimate target' is not uncommon in the discourse of many insurgent organizations: not every killing is acceptable, implying that some are. The fact that they feel the need to justify their actions, no matter how objectionable such justifications may seem for those who do not share their views, shows the importance organizations often attach to acting under just war constraints.⁹ The story that inspired Camus to write *Les Justes* (1977) is relevant here: in 1905 Ivan Kaliayev refused to throw a bomb at Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich because of the unexpected presence of his children in the carriage. Yet he was to kill the Grand Duke a couple of days later (Pomper 1995: 91). It seems that purely self-imposed moral constraints restrained Kaliayev.

When civilians unconnected to the state apparatus are killed, insurgent groups resort to a wide range of exculpatory justifications: the killing was a mistake, it was an accident, the police did not take the warning seriously, in every war there are collateral victims, and so on. These defences are regularly cited even if the number of innocent victims is extremely high (curiously enough, civilians represent the same percentage of total victims, around 40 per cent, both in the IRA case (McKittrick et al. 1999: 1504) and in the ETA

one (Sánchez-Cuenca 2001: 256). When the IRA exploded twenty-one bombs in Belfast on Friday 21 July 1972 ('Bloody Friday'), killing 9 people and injuring 130 others, the organization refused to accept responsibility for the consequences because it had issued warnings in every case. In his autobiography, Adams (1996: 210) admits that 'Bloody Friday' was a sort of technical mistake, but adds that 'the IRA had set out to cause economic damage and had sought to avoid civilian casualties by providing at least thirty minutes' warning in relation to each of the twenty-one bombs.'

This discourse, even if it sounds cynical or ad hoc from the outside, is still compatible with some just war doctrine. Members of the organization exonerate themselves for the killing of innocent civilians because it was a mistake or an accident. However, SMs cannot be so easily reconciled with just war, if only because excuses such as those just mentioned would not be available. SMs convey a clear intention. Hence, civilian victims or illegitimate fatalities are the intended outcome of the action. Imagine an SM in which a suicide bomber decides to blow himself up, fully realizing that his gesture is going to cause a massacre; even though his nervousness may induce a premature detonation, as is sometimes the case, it usually entails no mistakes or accidents, and warnings make no sense.¹⁰ Therefore, the usual disclaimers are not available and the action cannot be justified in just war terms.

Of course, the argument that organizations renounce SMs because they are incompatible with the ideological or normative preferences of just war is subject to several caveats. SMs can be selective, as when used for selective assassinations of specific people; and it can be argued that under some circumstances SMs may deliver more precise ('surgical') attacks than unmanned car bombs.

There may also be moral or religious rejections of suicide itself regardless of its victims. For instance, Freeman (1994) argues that Sunni Muslims are traditionally less susceptible to violent extremism than Shia Muslims because, unlike the latter, they do not relish martyrdom. In fact, Islam forbids suicide and an SM has to be presented as an act of martyrdom which becomes licit only under certain circumstances. Yet such a rejection is at odds with the willingness of insurgent groups to kill people in order to achieve desired results. A doctrine that allows killing others but forbids suicide is not logically contradictory, but, to say the least, it seems strange.

Second, ideological constraints: Marxist terrorists have traditionally rejected individualistic actions detached from the class struggle and its associated revolutionary activity. As Trotsky (1974: 8) put it in 1911: 'Social Democracy rejects all methods and means that have as their goal to artificially force the development of society and to substitute chemical preparations for the insufficient revolutionary strength of the proletariat.' He then went on to compare a strike with the murder of a factory owner: in the strike,

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workers develop and strengthen their self-consciousness and reinforce working-class organizations, whereas the assassination of the factory owner quickly leads to his replacement and has no social implications. Writing in 1906 about guerrilla war, Lenin (1968: 85) insisted that Marxism did not reject any form of struggle as long as it did not lose its connection with the masses; and, when Mao (1961) justified guerrilla warfare as a necessary phase in the revolutionary war, he argued that it could succeed only if it was firmly based on society.

Clearly, SMs exacerbate the individualistic dimension of certain forms of terrorism disconnected from the masses. Unless martyrdom is seen as a natural and proper action by the population, isolated cases of suicide will only deepen the gap between the insurgents and the masses. In this sense, SMs are alien to the ideological inclinations of Marxism. Hence, it is not surprising that Marxist organizations have never endorsed SMs.¹¹ Given that many insurgent organizations, particularly those of the national liberation variety, have more or less remote Marxist origins, the absence of SMs could be partially explained by reference to ideologies. This conjecture is reinforced by the massive use of SMs in Sri Lanka by the Black Tigers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a national liberation organization that has no Marxist roots (Chapter 2, this volume).

Nevertheless, there are reasons to remain sceptical about the role of moral or ideological preferences. For instance, Hamas committed itself at the start of the 1990s not to kill civilians: when the organization reneged on this commitment in 1994, it found plenty of reasons for justifying the shift (Hroub 2000: 245–9). Likewise, Islamic doctrines either prohibit or constrain women from carrying out SMs—for instance, by forbidding disguises that involve removing their veils or moving around without a chaperone; yet as soon as Palestinian women began participating in SMs, influential Muslim clerics issued religious proclamations exempting women in Palestine from these rules and assuring them that they could reach paradise though suicide bombings (Bennet 2003*b*: A14). In Russia, Marxist groups, such as the Social Democrats, that nominally rejected terrorist tactics because of their individualism ended up participating in individual acts of political violence (Geifman 1993: ch. 3).

Clearly, normative preferences are at best soft constraints on insurgent groups (ideologies and moral beliefs offer ample room for *ex post* rationalization) and at worst little more than rhetorical devices used to prevent the loss of supporters. Furthermore, preference-based arguments have similar observational implications to other arguments (in terms of counterproductive effects, constituency costs, and technological costs) which can be more easily tested since they entail public, measurable, and concrete indicators, whereas the operation of normative preferences has to be inferred from

actions and words. Lastly, moral and ideological arguments are equally ad hoc in explaining either the use or the absence of SMs. It has now become commonplace in the media and elsewhere to account for SMs by reference to ideologies such as Islamism. However, there are two problems with this view. From an empirical point of view, Islamism is obviously neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for SMs. From a methodological point of view, even if it were possible to define a particular strain of Islamism as conducive to SMs, it would be difficult to produce a truly falsifiable claim as ideologies are always open to multiple interpretations. Indeed, most arguments that point to particular ideologies (or theologies, for that matter) are circular if not tautological (Kalyvas 1998).

Counterproductive Effects

A third type of explanation points to the counterproductive effects of the subset of SMs that indiscriminately target civilians. Although civil wars differ from terrorist campaigns, interesting parallels may be drawn between them. In civil wars, the reliance on indiscriminate violence is generally counterproductive (Kalyvas 2003). SMs may be absent from the great majority of insurgencies for the same reasons that indiscriminate violence by insurgents is relatively absent from civil wars.

Unlike selective or indiscriminate SMs that are directed at military targets, SMs that target civilians tend to be almost always indiscriminate in the sense that they do not aim at specific individuals. We identify two versions of this argument. The first stresses the negative effects of indiscriminate violence on potential recruits and supporters and the second points to the detrimental international repercussions of such actions.

When aimed against civilian targets, SMs are a weapon particularly (though not exclusively) suited for random, massive, and indiscriminate violence: according to data from the Rand Corporation, 'suicide attacks on average kill four times as many people as other terrorist acts' (Hoffman 2003: 42). Yet, far from turning SMs into a popular enterprise, as Hoffman hastens to deduce, such violence may well be counterproductive for its users (Kalyvas 2003).¹² The underlying logic is as follows: although random violence may be useful to a dictator because of its ability to paralyse and atomize the population, it is less so under the conditions of fragmented sovereignty that characterize civil wars, in which the presence of a rival makes defection and resistance possible. In so far as one side's use of violence is intended to deter civilians from collaborating with its opponent and to compel them to collaborate exclusively with itself, it usually fails when it forecloses the possibility of avoiding violence. That is, unless civilians are given options (such as that, if they act in certain ways, they will be safe), their behaviour will not be shaped

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by the violence aimed at them. The sheer unpredictability of indiscriminate violence makes populations fear lethal sanctions by the political actor who relies on such violence regardless of their behaviour: compliance with that actor is utterly impossible. Gross (1979: 212) elaborates on this point writing about German occupation of Poland during the Second World War:

One would expect that noncompliance with German demands carried such drastic penalties that scarcely anyone would dare to defy them. But full compliance was impossible; terror continued and even intensified with time. The population quickly recognized the new logic of the situation: whether one tried to meet German demands or not, one was equally exposed to violence. . . . It makes no sense, in the context of random punishment, to style one's life according to the possibility of being victimized, any more than it makes sense to orient all of one's everyday acts to the possibility of an accident.

Arendt (1970: 56) must have had indiscriminate violence in mind when she remarked that 'violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it'. Indeed, even particularly vicious insurgents, like the Algerian Islamists of the GIA, curtailed their use of indiscriminate bombings in the cities, most likely because they were unwilling to countenance their counterproductive effects.¹³

Insurgent leaders have often argued on strategic grounds for selective violence and against indiscriminate violence. For example, Che Guevara (1998: 91) recommended that 'assaults and terrorism in indiscriminate form should not be employed'. Indeed, insurgents have often actually welcomed, or even provoked, indiscriminate army reprisals by ambushing an isolated enemy soldier close to a village so as to win recruits (for example, Aussaresses 2001: 62; Senaratne 1997: 95). Conversely, there is evidence suggesting that incumbent armies also gradually shy away from indiscriminate violence for the same reason (Kalyvas 2003).

This logic applies clearly to cases in which incumbents and insurgents compete for the same population: faced with selective and indiscriminate threats, civilians are better off collaborating with the actor that is selective. But what about ethnic or secessionist insurgencies? Presumably, no counterproductive effects can result from targeting a population that can never provide potential supporters, let alone recruits. But this is not quite so. For one, even ethnic insurgents may want to drive a wedge between a government and its popular basis by directing its struggle against the government rather than the population at large. Furthermore, intra-ethnic violence is almost always a feature of ethnic insurgencies as ethnic rebels use violence to induce collaboration (Kalyvas 2002). However, the indiscriminate character of SMs is likely to alienate the population base of ethnic insurgents and turn at least some people against them, particularly in societies with strong norms of

revenge.¹⁴ For example, Palestinian SMs have repeatedly killed Israeli Arabs, Chechen SMs have killed innocent Chechen civilians, and the WTC attack killed several Muslims;¹⁵ most recently, the apparent al-Qaeda SM in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, and Casablanca, Morocco, in May 2003 killed mostly Muslims.¹⁶

Perhaps an indirect piece of evidence of the counterproductive aspect of SMs may be the timing of its use by the Chechen separatist insurgents. Although they have targeted for the most part military and political objectives, they have also killed many Chechen civilians, including women. This, according to observers, may be an indicator of their desperation, a sign that they are losing the war. Myers (2003: A5) points out that 'unable to control territory or fight Russian forces head-on, [Chechen rebels] have increasingly resorted to suicide attacks'. Wines (2003:A3) concurs: 'as Russian forces have largely neutralized the guerrillas' ability to wage organized battles, the bombings have become more deadly and spectacular.' If these assessments are correct, they suggest that, for the Chechen guerrillas, the demonstration effect of spectacular suicide bombings outweighs their counterproductive effects, but this is certainly not a sustainable strategy.

A second counterproductive effect of SMs may be related to its international repercussions. International repercussions are not always necessarily negative. Attracting international attention to a long-forgotten conflict may be so beneficial as to offset potential costs. However, in so far as suicide bombing is perceived as a particularly repugnant strategy and as long as the 'international community' under the influence of public opinion in hegemonic countries may be swayed by moral considerations (an expectation that violates prevailing realist assumptions in international relations), the expectation of such reactions may outweigh the benefits of advertising a cause and hence prevent SMs from being planned and implemented. Even if states are willing to close their eyes, the growth of transnational interest groups and non-governmental organizations may produce similar effects. An implication of this argument is that the domestic benefits of an SM must exceed its negative international effects. Perhaps this is rarely the case.

Constituency Costs

Most terrorists and insurgent organizations depend on the more or less active support of a pool of supporters. As Hamas admitted in a 1992 internal document, 'our real power is our popularity' (reproduced in Mishal and Sela 2000: 128). Because these supporters assist the organization and are usually necessary for its very existence, they may prevent some actions that otherwise the organization would be willing to carry out. Obviously, not all supporters are the same. It is possible to distinguish a hard core of those who

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explicitly help the organization from a more diffuse community of supporters who simply approve of the actions undertaken by the organization (Petersen 2001). Given that many organizations act for the sake of the people they claim to represent, it is possible to hypothesize that they need the support not only of the hard core but also of the wider community that they purport to defend.

Constituency costs have two components. First, they flow from the preferences and moral sentiments of the supporters. Second, however, those preferences have a greater or lesser constraining effect depending on the nature of the relations between organizations and their supporters. In either case, a trade-off exists between the intensity of killing or the selectivity of violence on the one hand and popular support on the other. Supporters may share the ends sought by the insurgent group but not support all the means it uses to achieve those ends. This disagreement over means can be normative or strategic. With regard to normative considerations, supporters could reject SMs simply because they object to suicide or do not see themselves, and thus do not want to be seen, as fanatics or extremists. Put otherwise, their preferences are not as intense as those of the terrorists and consequently the range of acceptable forms of struggle shrinks. In strategic terms, supporters may expect reprisals if the organization resorts to SMs (which are often disproportionately likely to affect them rather than the organization's hard-core members). Again, they may have different beliefs from those of the organization about the negative consequences of launching SMs: for instance, supporters could be more concerned than the terrorists about the image of the movement abroad, or they could believe that SMs are counter-productive.

A complete test of this hypothesis about constituency costs would require detailed data on the preferences of supporters and cadres. However, there is much indirect evidence about these constraints. Supporters of the IRA and ETA are more moderate than the terrorist organizations themselves, and reject indiscriminate attacks that provoke civilian victims. Were ETA or the IRA to carry out systematic indiscriminate bombings, support among important sectors of the nationalist communities would wane and the pool of volunteers would probably shrink. It is plausible to surmise, for instance, that, in the case of the IRA, SMs would have stopped some of the financial support it received from the Irish community in the United States. In fact, these organizations are well aware of the feelings of revulsion that some particularly bloody, brutal attacks would provoke among supporters—which is why ETA or the IRA have denied responsibility for some of their worst attacks.

The IRA did so several times: when a bomb exploded with no warning in a restaurant on 4 March 1972, killing 2 women and injuring over 100 people;¹⁷

when three car bombs exploded on 31 July 1972 with no prior warning, killing 9 people (Clarke and Johnston 2001: 78);¹⁸ when bombs exploded in two pubs in Birmingham on 21 November 1974, killing 19 people and injuring 182 (Taylor 1997:173); when an IRA gunman shot Joanne Mathers on 7 April 1981 (Clarke and Johnston 2001: 126); when a bomb exploded outside Harrods, the London department store, on 18 December 1983, killing 6 people (since the denial was not particularly credible, the IRA issued an statement trying to justify its deed: 'While the Army Council did not authorise this specific operation at Harrods, we do not believe that the Volunteers involved set out to deliberately kill civilians' (quoted in Clarke and Johnston 2001:143–4)); and when the IRA detonated a bomb that killed 11 Protestants on 8 November 1987 in Enniskillen, arguing (falsely, as it was later proved) that the British had triggered the bomb with a radio device (Moloney 2002: 341).

The sensitivity of the IRA to reactions in the Catholic community is well documented. Delegated SMs were quickly ruled out given the indignation of the community of support. As Taylor (1997: 317) writes, 'the vast majority of Catholics in Derry were sickened by the attack and no doubt let the IRA know what they thought.'¹⁹ Likewise, Moloney (2002: 348–9) argues that the IRA stopped this practice because it was counterproductive in terms of public support.²⁰ In a speech delivered in 1977, Gerry Adams stated very clearly the dependence of the IRA on the community of support: 'In a war zone it is a necessity, if nothing else, to force the republican movement into a complete and utter reliance on the people's support' (quoted in Sharrock and Devenport 1997: 159). More tellingly, Sean MacStiofain (1975: 214), Chief of Staff of the IRA between 1970 and 1972, wrote in his autobiography that 'No resistance movement in history has ever succeeded in fighting a struggle for national freedom without some accidental casualties, but the Republican interest in retaining popular support clearly lay in causing as few as possible.' If the IRA has not resorted to more extreme tactics, this most likely reflects its dependence on popular support. Eamon Collins, a former member of the IRA who was killed by the organization in 1999, said clearly that the IRA had been acting under constraints: 'the IRA fought with one hand behind its back: in general it did not carry out the indiscriminate campaign of all-out war which it would have been capable of fighting.' He added that the IRA 'sought to avoid any operations which had obviously sectarian overtones: a policeman could be justified as a legitimate target, his non-combatant Protestant family could not' (Collins 1997: 8 295).²¹

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Likewise, ETA denied responsibility for the explosion of a bomb in a restaurant on 13 September 1974 that killed thirteen people and injured over seventy. The organization mistakenly thought that most of the customers were policemen, since the restaurant was close to the police head-

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quarters in Madrid (Gurruchaga 2001: 91–3). The internal quarrelling about this bombing was one of the factors that led to the more important split in the history of ETA. Even a radical organization like Hezbollah denied responsibility for the indiscriminate bombings in Paris in 1986 (Kramer 1994:38–9).

ETA's bloodiest attack was the detonation of a bomb in a department store in Barcelona on 19 June 1987 that killed twenty-one people and injured forty. This action was rejected not only by the more diffuse support community but also by the hard core and even by members of the organization. As a former member of ETA put it in an interview: 'We really fucked it up. I think there is a wide feeling among a lot of people that can be described as "These guys [the terrorists] don't care at all". Fuck, we messed up!' (quoted in Alcedo 1996: 173).

Of course, this trade-off between violence and support vanishes when supporters are already (or have become) as radical as the organization itself. This appears to be case for organizations that launch SMs, like Hamas or Hezbollah, and raises the question of what determines the preferences of supporters in the first place. Their preferences may be largely determined by the behaviour of their opponents: harsh and indiscriminate reprisals by incumbents may produce support for SMs. We return to this issue in the second section.

An implication of this hypothesis is that organizations that launch SMs would refrain from doing so if SMs were to reduce substantially the degree of support they enjoyed. An expert on Hamas points out that 'Although Hamas has been unresponsive to all international requests to stop its military operations, the erosion of popular backing for such action is sufficient to twist its arm to do just that' (Hroub 2000: 250).

A second hypothesis revolves around the relations between organizations and their supporters rather than supporters' preferences. The less constrained an organization is by its supporters in terms of victim selection and forms of killing, the more likely it is to adopt SMs.

The relation between support and strategy may be U-shaped, with organizations enjoying very limited or very strong support better able to adopt very radical strategies. At one extreme we would then observe organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah, or LTTE with a strong degree of support among their underlying community; in the other extreme we would observe organizations such as al-Qaeda, PIJ, and the anarchist terrorists and Russian revolutionaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: highly decentralized movements in which small and isolated cells commit 'magnicides' and indiscriminate killings with no popular backing (or direct support) whatsoever.

The U-shaped relationship is confirmed by the occasional presence of SMs in the old form of anarchist and nihilistic terrorism. After several failed attempts to kill Tsar Alexander II in 1880, on 1 March 1881 the People's

Will (*Narodnaya Volya*) finally did it. The tsar was travelling in a carriage. The first two bombs missed their target, wounding some Cossacks who were escorting him. The tsar stopped to see what had happened, and then Ignatei Grinevitski threw his bomb, killing Alexander II and himself (Hingley 1967: 13–14). SMs were frequent in Russia among Socialist Revolutionaries and anarchists in the first years of the twentieth century. On 23 April 1906 Boris Vnorovskii threw a bomb at the Governor General of Moscow, Dubasov, killing him and himself (Geifman 1993: 57). It could be argued that these were not SMs, since the terrorists were killed by their own devices unintentionally. Yet on 12 August 1906 three revolutionaries blew themselves up in St Petersburg, failing to kill their target, Prime Minister Petr Stolypin, along with thirty-three other people (Geifman 1993:74). On 7 February 1908 Vavolod Lebedintsev was arrested, also in St Petersburg, while wrapped with dynamite and prepared to act as a human bomb (Geifman 1993: 64). The anarchist Nisan Farber blew himself up in a police headquarters in October 1904 (Geifman 1993: 132). And the list goes on.

If there were not more SMs like the ones we observe today, it was not because of a lack of motivation (see below) but rather because it was not necessary from a technological point of view: at that time it was relatively easy to approach ministers or kings.

Anarchists and nihilists acted on their own, without relying on popular support. Their individualism was extreme. There was no organizational structure between the cells and within each cell an individual could act entirely alone. The Russian anarchist Sergei G. Nechaev, in his *Catechism of the Revolutionist* (1869), explicitly endorsed the isolation of the revolutionary. The second chapter, about the attitude of the revolutionary, proclaims several principles whereby the revolutionary is asked to cut all his links with society. According to one principle:

In the very depths of his being, not only in words but also in deeds, he has broken every tie with the civil order and the entire cultured world, with all its laws, proprieties, social conventions and its ethical rules. He is an implacable enemy of this world, and if he continues to live in it, that is only to destroy it more effectively. (Confino 1973: 100)

Likewise, according to another principle, the revolutionary ‘despises public opinion’. It is not that anarchists rejected, from a doctrinal point of view, a society that was seen as morally flawed and corrupt; anarchist terrorism increased after the masses failed to mobilize. In fact, terrorism was a desperate response to this failure (Pomper 1995: 76; Núñez 1983: 189–90; Linse 1982). Anarchist propaganda by the deed was both an attempt to shatter the mistaken convictions of the masses and an individualistic expression of rejection of an unjust society.

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Between these two extremes at which we find evidence of SMs—organizations with strong support in society on the one hand and organizations that act on their own in complete isolation from the masses on the other—lie the intermediate cases, like those of ETA or IRA, in which the degree of popular support is crucial but generally weak, at least compared with the support that organizations like Hamas or Hezbollah enjoy: in 2001, 92 per cent of Palestinians defended armed struggle against Israeli troops and 58 per cent approved of attacks against civilians (Human Rights Watch 2002*b*: 13–14). The lack of stronger popular support in the intermediate cases may explain their unwillingness to resort to SMs.²²

Technological Costs

Arguments stressing the technological cost of a terrorist action would explain the absence of SMs by pointing to non-suicide actions that can produce the same result at a lower cost or a better result at the same cost. On this view, the act of suicide adds no intrinsic value to the mission beyond advantages in terms of technical efficiency that implementation may offer. In other words, this is a cost-related ‘technological’ explanation of SMs as a weapon of last resort. This would help us understand the Kamikaze episode from 1944 onwards, or maybe Hamas and PIJ given their difficulties in penetrating Israel—though this would hold only after 1991, when the Palestinians’ freedom of movement was more restricted.

If this argument is correct, most organizations reject SMs because they can achieve their desired results without them. Note that this argument assumes that suicide is perceived to be a cost, which seems to be the case most of the time. It follows that organizations that rely on SMs cannot achieve similar results without suicides. The attack on the WTC is clearly an example of a mission that could not have been accomplished in the absence of suicide (in fact, terrorists had already tried and failed to blow the buildings up using a traditional method). Likewise, the Pentagon could have been attacked using non-suicide car or truck bombs only with great difficulty—and the same is true of the attacks against the US embassy and French and US marines in Beirut. As the former US Under-Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger pointed out in a congressional investigating committee about the 18 April 1983 bomb attack against the embassy, it ‘was virtually impossible to defend against if the driver was prepared to commit suicide’ (quoted in Jaber 1997: 76). The advantages of a human bomb were clear: ‘not only would it bring large-scale destruction, but it would incur minimum losses and ensure that no clues were left behind’ (Jaber 1997: 82).

It is also probably the case that some targets can be destroyed only with difficulty, if at all, by non-state actors in the absence of SMs. SMs could also

be seen as the weapon of organizations that lack access to even basic weapons, which would be consistent with a number of Palestinian actions. The argument that is sometimes made by wagers of jihad—that SMs constitute an ‘intelligent weapon’ that can match Israel’s superior arsenal—is of such a kind. Hezbollah explicitly says that SMs are justified because it does not possess Israel’s weaponry (Saad-Ghorayeb 2002: 132–3). A Hezbollah volunteer for an SM remarked in an interview that the only difference between US and Hezbollah combatants is that Americans ‘had at their disposal state-of-the-art and top-of-the-range means and weaponry to achieve their aims. We have the minimum basics, but that does not bother us because we know that if and when required we also have ourselves to sacrifice’ (quoted in Jaber 1997: 92). A similar argument has been advanced about Palestinian SMs: ‘A person wearing a bomb is far more dangerous and far more difficult to defend against than a timed device left to explode in the marketplace. This human weapons system can effect last-minute changes based on the ease of approach, the paucity or density of people, and the security measures in evidence’ (Hoffman 2003: 42).²³ Such an argument would be consistent with the non-use of SMs by Palestinian factions against each other (even when they are willing to resort to violence in such factional struggles). At the same time, it is difficult to make the case that many SMs in Israel could not have achieved the same (or even a better) result with no suicides.

Besides the advantages of resorting to SMs in terms of efficiency, the added value of suicide flows from its psychological effects on friends and foes. Many forms of terrorism can be conceptualized as a war of attrition between the terrorist organization and the state (Sánchez-Cuenca 2001: ch. 3). In the absence of terrorism or other forms of insurgency, the state has a monopoly of violence. When a group challenges the state with violent means, this monopoly is broken and the situation becomes one of duopoly. In a war of attrition, two firms become involved in a price war that makes the extension of the conflict costly for both firms. The firm with the greater resistance wins the war and becomes the new monopolist. In the context of terrorism, each party tries to inflict as much pain as possible on its rival in order to expel it from the market for violence. In many cases (ETA, IRA, LTTE, Hamas, Hezbollah) the war of attrition focuses on control over a territory.²⁴ ETA wants Spain to withdraw from the Basque Country; IRA wants the British out of Northern Ireland; Hamas wants Israel out of the Palestinian zones; and so on and so forth.

In a war of attrition it is important to signal resistance capacity. Apart from their efficacy, SMs could also have a somewhat more elusive signalling value. On the one hand, when an organization resorts to SMs it shows that it has large pool of potential volunteers. The organization will be willing to

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sacrifice the life of its members only if it is certain that it can reproduce itself despite wasting its own human capital. On the other hand, if members of the organization are ready to die, the organization's resolve is augmented. This may help to terrorize and weaken the resistance capacity of the population that suffers from SMs. Both effects—resolve and terror—stem from the same feature of SMs: people understand that suicide bombers cannot be deterred, that their willingness to die frees them from the constraints that the love of life imposes on the rest of humanity. Willingness to die, therefore, implies that the suicide bomber will do anything to pursue the organization's goal and this provokes fear or terror among the targets of the SMs. This may demoralize the enemy and ultimately it may lead the state to make substantive concessions to rebel organizations.

Obviously, not all forms of terrorism involve wars of attrition. Anarchist terrorism or al-Qaeda's attacks are not aimed at any obvious person or persons. They are rather aimed at raising consciousness, attracting attention, mobilizing supporters, or simply destroying the social order. Given that terrorism that does advance any cause involving national liberation has less clear goals, it is hard to identify the psychological impact of SMs, since terrorists are not offering to make the cessation of their activities conditional on certain state action, such as withdrawal from a territory. Probably, by launching SMs an organization is seeking the greatest possible publicity or to make itself attractive to potential extremist recruits. In this sense, SMs are compatible with several scenarios: an insurgent organization that is losing ground and wants to signal that it is not (for example, Chechen rebels); an international organization that cannot rely on a compact population base and needs different ways to market itself, so to speak, and attract recruits (for example, al-Qaeda); or an insurgent organization that cannot launch an insurgency or even rely on standard bombing techniques because of constraining factors such as population density or its opponent's enormous military superiority (for example, Hamas).

Individual Incentives

The cost of SMs is relative not only to the cost of other methods, but also to the availability of willing 'disposable' individuals. One could hypothesize that the smaller the organization, the lower is the likelihood that SMs would be adopted, either because the pool of possible members is small or the cost of recruitment is high. That would certainly explain cases such as the Red Brigades in Italy or Baader Meinhof in Germany,²⁵ whose membership was small and whose members' lives were accordingly highly valuable—though not the case of PIJ in the Palestinian occupied territories, a small

organization that has resorted consistently to SMs.²⁶ However, these examples raise the broader issue of individual incentives, to which we now turn.

Certain organizations may be willing to resort to SMs but are unable to do so because of a lack of individual volunteers. In other words, organizational ability hinges on individual willingness to participate in SMs. Individuals may be willing or unwilling to participate in SMs. Figure 6.1 maps four possible outcomes.

An instance of outcome 3, the one that concerns us in this section, might be the FARC episode: the organization could not find a volunteer to crash the plane into the new president of Colombia. Individuals may decline to sacrifice themselves for the same reasons that organizations reject SMs (outcome 4): for instance, it may be possible to achieve the same results with a car bomb as with an SM. But what if the organization has decided that it should resort to SMs? Why would individuals refuse to commit suicide if such an action would further their cause?

From the evidence presented in this book, it seems clear that a belief in the afterlife is neither a necessary nor a sufficient motive to commit suicide: not necessary, because there have been cases of SMs in which such a belief was absent (Chapters 1 and 2 and Kanthan, in this volume), and not sufficient because Catholics in the IRA or in ETA have not participated in SMs. Yet this does not mean that religious beliefs and values are irrelevant to motivating individuals to commit suicide for a collective cause. They can contribute to persuading individuals that they must fulfil some obligation, that sacrifice for the cause is a worthy deed. However, such religious beliefs or values do not have to refer to the afterlife. Indeed, the whole idea of martyrdom can be expressed in secular terms, as attested by the anarchist movement. As Hobsbawm (1959: 163) argued, ‘anarchists are chiefly interesting in that they show millenarianism wholly divorced from traditional religious forms, and indeed in a militantly atheist and anti-Christian shape.’

The motivations of anarchist terrorists were not so different from those of contemporary participants in SMs. It is true that cases of SMs were rare among anarchists (except in Russia), but quite often, after provoking a massacre or participating in a ‘magnicide’, the perpetrators did not try to

AQ4

FIGURE 6.1. Organizational choices given individual choices

		Individuals	
		Willing	Unwilling
Organizations	Willing	1	3
	Unwilling	2	4

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escape, but waited to be arrested by police, knowing beforehand that they would certainly be executed. This is the case of Paulino Pallás, a Catalan anarchist tried in 1893 for the failed attempt to assassinate a general by throwing two bombs during a military parade (Núñez 1983: 52, 132). Pallás caused only injuries. Although he survived, he did not try to run away: he let the police arrest him and was executed that same year. Before his execution he sent a letter to the press in which he made clear his suicidal intention (the letter is reproduced in Núñez 1983: 200–4): ‘There cannot be any doubt that I acted with the intention of dying, either being killed by the pieces of shrapnel that injured the general, or, in case of surviving, by the people who were around the general.’ One of the reasons he did not escape was that he did not want to be mistaken for a criminal. Angiolillo, the Italian anarchist who travelled to Spain solely to kill Prime Minister Canovas del Castillo, in 1897, did not try to escape either; he was executed only twelve days after his action (Núñez 1983: 60). Carl Nobiling, a German anarchist, committed suicide after failing to kill Bismarck (Miller 1995: 40). Russian anarchists ‘often chose to end their own lives with their last bullets rather than fall into the hands of the authorities’ (Geifman 1993: 130). As Camus showed in *L’Homme révolté* (1951), anarchists and Russian revolutionaries embraced suicide because of its supposed redeeming effect. In fact, people who wanted to become members of the People’s Will had to answer the following question: ‘Are you prepared this instant to offer your life, your personal freedom and all you possess for the liberation of your country?’ (von Borcke 1982:57).

The language of martyrdom was strangely similar to that of Hezbollah or Hamas today. An anarchist article referred to the failed attempt to kill the Emperor of Germany in the following terms (quoted in Joll 1980: 107):

Humanity will preserve the memory of the tinsmith Hoedel, who was prepared to sacrifice his life to make a superb act of defiance against society, and, as his blood spurted beneath the executioner’s axe, was able to inscribe his name on the long list of martyrs who have shown the people the way to a better future, towards the abolition of all economic and political slavery.

It seems, then, that the motivations for participation in SMs need not include a belief in afterlife. For instance, by substituting in the above quotation ‘Allah’ for ‘Humanity’ and ‘the destruction of Western imperialism’ for ‘the abolition of all economic and political slavery’, we have a proclamation that looks very much like those produced by Islamic fundamentalists after an SM. As Goldman (1911:86) remarked, ‘it is among the Anarchists that we must look for the modern martyrs who pay for their faith with their blood, and who welcome death with a smile, because they believe, as truly as Christ did, that their martyrdom will redeem humanity.’

Yet, apart from the motivating force of these beliefs and attitudes, additional factors must be adduced in any convincing explanation of SMs. After all, why are such beliefs ascribed to in the first place? Why are they not present in all cases of rebellion or insurgency? Opportunity costs and objective conditions may help here. The following conditional hypothesis can be advanced: the worse the level of political repression and economic misery, the more likely it is that an organization will find volunteers for an SM. This hypothesis provides a necessary but not a sufficient condition. Obviously, it does not imply that individuals who participate in SMs must themselves be poor or miserable. The variation in the socio-demographic traits (except, perhaps, age) of the suicide bombers shows this very clearly (Jaber 1997: 90).²⁷ What matters is not that the individual personally experiences political repression or economic deprivation but, rather, that the living conditions of the community are so grim and hopeless as to move people to extreme acts.

This hypothesis is consistent with the absence of SMs among rebel organizations operating in affluent societies. ETA is probably the terrorist organization that operates under the 'best' conditions, from both economic and political points of view (here we leave aside the extreme left terrorism of the 1970s in Western Europe). The Basque Country is a wealthy region of Spain, with per capita income over the Spanish mean. Basque families have dominated the banking system in Spain for decades and the Basque economy is completely integrated with the rest of the country. The decentralization process, from which the Basque Country has benefited more than any other region, began in 1978 when the democratic constitution was approved; it has its own parliament, police, fiscal resources, education system (run in the Basque language), health system, public TV channels, and so forth. Except for defence, foreign relations, social security, and some secondary issues (like a Basque football team for European competitions), the Basque Country is almost a sovereign entity. There is no political oppression whatsoever, but ETA claims that only full national independence will bring about peace. Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that members of ETA have shown little inclination for heroic acts of self-sacrifice. Although they have tried to imitate Irish hunger strikes, they have systematically failed (Domínguez 1998a: 176–85). And it is possible to detect many attempts on their part to minimize the risks of being caught or killed by security forces, even if this means that the terrorists had to resort to tactics that were highly unpopular among their community of support.

It is well documented that ETA decided to use car bombs from 1985 onwards because the conditions under which terrorists operated had worsened considerably (Letamendía 1994: iii, 27, 100; Domínguez 1998b: 56). First, France started to cooperate with the Spanish government in the fight against ETA. Until 1984, members of ETA circulated without hindrance in

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the south of France, which was referred to as the terrorists' 'sanctuary'. Second, in those years the Spanish government was involved in 'dirty war' against ETA (the GAL affair), making the lives of the terrorists much less secure, while the greater part of the leadership was arrested. ETA decided that car bombs carried fewer risks for the terrorists than shooting at the security forces.

In 1991 ETA placed a booby trap in the car of a policeman. The explosion killed his 2-year-old son. The outcry in society was universal. Even some imprisoned members of ETA complained about the killing of children. The authors of the attack provided the following explanation: 'We shouldn't unnecessarily risk the lives of our fighters which are a hundred times more valuable than the life of a *txakurra*'s son' (quoted in Domínguez 2002: 295) (*txakurra* means 'dog' in Basque and it is the word commonly used by terrorists and their followers to refer to the Spanish police). Domínguez (2002: 299), an expert on ETA, concludes that 'members of ETA have never shown suicidal behaviour when preparing their attacks. The rule has been to act under maximum personal security and, when in doubt, not to act.'

The degree of repression and deprivation was higher in Northern Ireland than in the Basque Country. The Catholic community lived under worse economic conditions than the Protestant—a consequence, to some extent, of discriminatory practices (in the housing system, in access to civil service careers, and so on). Moreover, Catholics could not effectively voice their grievances in a political system that was clearly designed from the beginning to favour Protestants. This contrasts sharply with the Basque Country, where nationalists have been in the regional government since the first regional elections in 1981. Though we do not find SMs in the IRA case either, self-sacrifice and martyrdom are clearly evidenced in the hunger strike of 1981, when ten people, most of them members of the IRA along with a few of members of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA, an organization whose members had defected from the IRA) died of self-imposed starvation (Beresford 1987; Sands 1997). Hunger striking has a long tradition in Ireland (Sweeney 1993*b*), yet its effects are unclear. Some think that hunger strikes, like SMs, signal resolve and therefore induce fear in the enemy. Father Denis Faul, a priest involved in the campaign against the bad conditions under which Republican prisoners lived, said that the Protestants 'couldn't understand it, it terrified them that these men were prepared to go so far' (quoted in Sharrock and Devenport 1997: 180). For others, the effects of hunger striking to death are different: it mobilizes supporters because it shows that terrorists' motivations are 'pure' in the sense that 'the cause' is more valuable than life itself (Beresford 1987: 38–9). Indeed, electoral support for Sinn Fein increased extraordinarily as a consequence of the 1981 hunger strike. Whereas

SMs are a kind of instrumental self-sacrifice, hunger striking is a more expressive form of self-sacrifice (see Chapter 5, this volume).

The life conditions of Shia Muslims in Lebanon, Palestinians in Israel, or Tamils in Sri Lanka are scarcely comparable to those of Basques in Spain or Catholics in Northern Ireland. Hezbollah was born among Shiites living in the slums of Beirut, reflecting not only the Iranian revolution in 1979 but also the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon in 1978, the presence of international troops, and the massacres of Palestinians and Shiites in the camps of Sabra and Chatila (Kramer 1994; Jaber 1997; on the conditions of Palestinians in Israel or of Tamils in Sri Lanka, see Chapters 2 and 3, this volume). Economic deprivation and political repression are not sufficient conditions for the formation of motives leading to SMs, as the Algerian case shows, but they may well be necessary ones. Individuals may well be ready to sacrifice their lives only if they consider that the cause is sufficiently urgent and important. This insight is consistent with recent cross-national research by Krueger (2003) which suggests that the extent of civil liberties, along with country size, are the only variables that predict whether a given country's population is more or less likely to take part in international terrorism.

A complementary (or potentially alternative) explanation to structural conditions revolves around revenge as an individual motive to participate in SMs. The act of vengeance may be aimed at the general repressive conditions—for instance, Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories. But revenge is more often specific than generic in the sense that some particular act by the enemy triggers emotions of anger that move the agent to seek vengeance. When a person acts from this motivation, political or religious interest is transmuted into passion (Elster 1999: 355). For example, the first Hamas SM in 1994 was a response to the killing of twenty-nine Palestinians by the Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein. Many other Hamas SMs have been acts of retaliation, provoked by the killing of the organization's leaders or Palestinian civilians. A hypothesis here would be that the more radicalized the conflict becomes, the stronger are the emotions that may lead to suicide as a form of vengeance. An empirical implication is that SMs should be absent from the initial stages of terrorist campaigns or from countries where the conflict causes few casualties among civilians and does not affect most people. The empirical record is mixed in this respect. In any case, revenge as an individual motivation has to be coupled with SMs as an organizational strategy to explain its translation into SMs.

The discussion has so far focused on the decision to undertake SMs. A distinct, but possibly related, discussion could focus on the factors that sustain the practice once a campaign of SMs has begun. A key mechanism in this respect, operating at both individual and organizational levels, is emulation. In so far as participation in SMs is advertised and celebrated, it

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may spawn a process of emulation among individuals. As a friend of a British volunteer who joined the Taliban in Afghanistan (and is now held in Guantánamo Bay) pointed out: 'He was fascinated by Arab suicide bombers. He talked about how brave they were and said he thought he had the guts to be one' (quoted in Lyall 2002: 14). There is an obvious possibility of SMs turning into some sort of fashion. However, this fact alone should not lead to a multiplication of SMs, for outcome 2 in Figure 6.1 (individuals willing and organizations unwilling) is likely to obtain. While it is possible that individuals may undertake SMs on their own, without organizational backing and planning, such actions are likely to remain marginal.

Another mechanism that would also make SMs self-sustaining at the individual level is the sense of posthumous obligation that the deaths of members of a group engenders among surviving members, who feel compelled to act in such a way as to make the demise of their companions meaningful. This simplifies the explanandum, which is reduced to encompass only the initial outbreak of SMs. The same effect emerges from situations of organizational fragmentation, in which the use of SMs may generate organizational competition and outbidding as long as it is perceived to signal boldness and is thought to attract recruits. All these mechanisms can be observed in the Palestinian case (Bloom 2003*b*).

Conclusion

Hoffman (2003: 40) argues that 'the fundamental characteristics of suicide bombing, and its strong attraction for the terrorist organizations behind it, are universal: Suicide bombings are inexpensive and effective. They are less complicated and compromising than other kinds of terrorist operations. They guarantee media coverage. The suicide terrorist is the ultimate smart bomb.' If this is true, why do we not observe many more instances of SMs? For, even if SMs have multiplied recently, they remain a marginal phenomenon overall. This chapter suggests a number of reasons why insurgent organizations do not launch SMs.

On the one hand, SMs will not be carried out if members of the insurgent organization do not volunteer for such actions. In our view, understanding the willingness to participate in SMs requires an analysis of the level of political repression and economic misery rather than belief in the afterlife. Unless repression is great and/or the surrounding (rather than individual) economic deprivation severe, the proper motivations leading to participation in SMs are unlikely to emerge.

On the other hand, organizations may refrain from SMs, even if there are volunteers willing to die, because SMs lead to indiscriminate violence which

is counterproductive, its potential supporters reject such methods and are likely to be alienated by their use, or organizations can achieve the same (or more desirable) results by other methods that are less costly than SMs. In addition, we have identified the set of organizations that appear most likely to resort to SMs, using a hypothesis positing a U-shaped relationship between strategy and support. Organizations that act independently of the community in whose name they act, such as nineteenth-century anarchists and organizations that are firmly grounded in their community like Hamas or LTTE, may resort to extreme tactics, including SMs. In contrast, organizations that depend crucially on the support of some community but whose actual degree of support is weak, like ETA or IRA, face higher costs from launching SMs: they know that such extreme tactics will provoke a decrease of support and are, therefore, likely to refrain from them. The empirical implication of this argument is that most insurgent organizations enjoy intermediate levels of support.

Conversely, we are sceptical, mainly on methodological grounds, about arguments stressing the normative rejection of SMs, though we can see their merits; we have also rejected the hypothesis that organizations do not resort to SMs because they do not know about them. This last point suggests that we are unlikely to see a broad and sustained adoption of this method. Even if SMs were to become attractive or fashionable among dispossessed youth across the world, they are unlikely to be adopted by the great majority of organizations that use violence to further their political aims. If we are correct, the trend in suicide bombing that has been observed in the early years of the twenty-first century may be more of a temporary aberration than a sign of things to come.

AUTHOR QUERY

- AQ1 It is 'Sedlickas' in the ref. list. Pl. clarify which is the correct spelling.
- AQ2 It is 'Trotsky' in the ref. list. Pl. clarify which is the correct spelling.
- AQ3 Pl. check page no.
- AQ4 No chapters in this volume. Pl. resolve
- AQ5 Pl. provide the expansion of 'GAL'