Why have suicide attacks not been adopted by a wider variety of actors?



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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations
Michaelmas 2022

Word Count: 98,526

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of my supervisor Stathis Kalyvas and his invaluable guidance throughout the research process. I am incredibly grateful for your time. I also wish to thank my two assessors for their insightful feedback, I greatly enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to discuss this work with both of you. I likewise owe a big thank you to fellow members of the T. E. Lawrence Program on the Study of Conflict, as well as friends and colleagues at St. Antony's College, the Department of Politics and International Relations, and the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment. Your encouragement and comments have improved my work a great deal. I would also like to thank my research assistant and all the people who helped guide me during my fieldwork and archival research. Not least, I am indebted to everyone who agreed to participate in this study – it would have been a much poorer thesis and experience without you. I am also grateful for the support of Aker Scholarship, whose backing at the early stages of this research was crucial for the thesis. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family, in particular my parents. The value of your encouragement, support, and open-minded attitude towards all my endeavors cannot be understated.

Abstract

In October 1983, Hezbollah drove two suicide trucks into the U.S. and French Marine barracks in Beirut. The first bomb killed 241 people, inflicting the largest single day loss of life in the U.S. Marine Corps since the battle of Iwo Jima in 1945. Soon after, the second truck crashed into the French barracks in West Beirut, killing another 58 soldiers. The attack was credited with influencing the U.S. to withdraw its troops from Lebanon the next year. Since Hezbollah demonstrated suicide attacks' potential merit, the tactic has crossed ideological and cultural boundaries only on rare occasions. Considering the tactical and strategic benefits identified in the existing literature as unique to the tactic, its narrow appeal is a puzzle. Why have suicide attacks not been adopted by a wider variety of revolutionary actors? This thesis argues that cross-country, cross-ideological spread should be considered analytically distinct from instances of domestic spread, like what occurred in Lebanon in the 1980's, or ideologically homogenous spread, as observed among Salafi-jihadis. Domestically, the high similarity between groups means that the use by one actor generates relevant information on audience costs that other groups in the same environment can use in cost-benefit analyses. Within an ideological frame, the tactic comes pre-justified and with expectations about status gains. Actors outside of these categories – the first movers in their respective social contexts and ideological frames – have little information to base their decision to adopt. Existing explanations posit that norms are an inhibiting factor for groups to use suicide attacks in these cases. I critically examine this contention and find that suicide attacks have never been normatively acceptable prior to adoption by a first mover. Based on fashion theory, I suggest that suicide attacks have spread to new social contexts based on the reputation and prestige of the group associated with the tactic, not its expected tactical and strategic benefits or conformity to local norms. The limited spread can therefore be tied to the limited prestige of the tactic's reference group.

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1 Introduction

In June 1982, Israel launched Operation Peace for Galilee, pushing its armed forces 40 km into southern Lebanon, and establishing a base in east Beirut. Soon after, U.S. military personnel entered the country as part of a multinational peace keeping force with the intent of negotiating a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. The presence of foreign militaries, especially Israel, was unwelcome among several Lebanese armed factions. One year later, in October 1983, two suicide trucks carrying several tons of explosives crashed into the U.S. and French Marine barracks in Beirut. The first bomb killed 241 people, inflicting the largest single day loss of life in the U.S. Marine Corps since the battle of Iwo Jima in 1945. Soon after, the second truck crashed into the French barracks in West Beirut, killing another 58 soldiers. A group calling itself the Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO) took credit for both attacks, but the armed actor landscape in Lebanon was chaotic at the time (Ottaway 1984). Both attacks were later credited to Hezbollah, for which the IJO was likely a front (Moghadam 2008, 20).

Following the 1983 attack, willing martyrs were suddenly omnipresent and ready to strike American interests at home and abroad. In December 1983, Ronald Reagan informed the American press that, "We have information right now that they have marshalled a force, particularly of Iranians in Lebanon, that numbers up to 1,000 who are all willing to sacrifice their lives in a kamikaze attack" (*New York Times* 1983a). At the same time, newspapers published reports on ground-to-air missiles being installed near the White House, concrete blocks being put up near the southwest gate to prevent truck bombs, and security forces on the lookout for 'human bombs' (*New York Times* 1983b; Getler and Atkinson 1983). Within a month, the Pentagon moved stinger antiaircraft missiles to U.S. navy ships off the coast of Lebanon, in the Arabian Sea, and the Persian Gulf, telling the crew to be on high alert for kamikaze-style jets, light planes, and helicopters (Getler 1984). In February 1984, five months after the attack on

the marine barracks, U.S. officials announced the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Lebanon. Shortly after, Italian, British, and French troops followed suit.

Twenty years earlier, in Vietnam on the 7th of May in 1963, protestors gathered in the South Vietnamese city of Hue to demonstrate against the recent ban of the Buddhist flag by President Ngo Dinh Diem. The protestors were met with violence by police forces, and several were killed. This led Buddhist monks across the country to embark on hunger strikes and organized demonstrations in protest of the political persecution. It was then that a monk named Quang Duc asked permission to burn himself as a donation to the "three jewels" of Buddhism: Buddha, teaching, and community (Giac Duc 1986: 142). A man named Thich Duc Nghiep saw the potential impact of this self-sacrifice for the protest movement. Being an English speaker with contacts in the foreign press, Nghiep contacted Malcolm Browne, an Associated Press journalist, to capture the moment on camera.

On June 11, 1963, Quang Duc lit himself on fire in a Saigon intersection. The photo taken by Browne was printed in countless newspapers and magazines. It achieved global circulation and even won the 1963 World Press Photograph Award. The event was later connected to the U.S.'s decision to support the coup overthrowing President Diem in November 1963, with Michael Biggs arguing that "The sacrifice of one elderly monk altered the calculations of a superpower" (Biggs 2013, 417).

Both Quang Duc and Hezbollah arguably achieved what they set out to do with bravado in a way that would have appealed to protest movements and rebel groups around the world. In Duc's case, he was seen to influence the U.S. decision to back a coup that would be favorable to the Buddhist community in South Vietnam. In Hezbollah's case, they were seen to influence the U.S. decision to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. Although a causal relationship between

these events and outcomes are difficult to establish, it was believed to exist in both cases.[1] Their respective successes notwithstanding, suicide protests spread to sixteen contexts in seven years while suicide attacks only spread to one other context, Sri Lanka, and whether that particular attack was intentional is up for debate.[2] Expanding the timeframe to ten years, suicide attacks spread to two other contexts: Egypt and Palestine.

Suicide protests by fire had a higher rate of adoption than suicide attacks and became what you might call 'modular' within a ten-year period, meaning that the tactic lost its context-specific associations and was employed in different areas for the pursuit of different types of aims. Suicide attacks did not. Instead, it spread to an ideologically diverse set of groups within Lebanon before it became a signature of Sunni Islamist groups, and gradually tied to the spread of one ideology, Salafi-jihadism.

It is possible that protest movements in the 1960's was far more common than armed conflict in the 1980's, making one and sixteen adoption cases relative equivalents. However, according to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), the 1980's saw between 36 and 47 active civil conflicts per year in the 1980's, meaning there was plenty of contexts where groups could conceivably have adopted the tactic. So why were suicide attacks not adopted by a wider variety of actors? Why did the tactic not become modular in the same way as self-immolation by fire?

[1] Judging whether a protest event or attack was successful, or a tactic effective is fraught with challenges. Moreover, in some cases, the mere perception of a tactic as effective at achieving the aim of a movement is sufficient for it to spread (Soule 1999).

[2] Following June 11th, 49 other instances of suicide protests were recorded in South Vietnam. In the next seven years, suicide protest by fire were conducted in sixteen other countries.

1.1 From human bombs to 'kamikazeal'

People intentionally dying to kill others has a long history. Bunker and Flaherty locates the first suicide attacks among the Spartans at Thermopylae in 480BC, and end their historical review in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in the 1990's and 2000's (Bunker and Flaherty 2013, 2-6). Robert Pape goes almost as far back, beginning with the Jewish Zealots' and Sicarii's attempts to liberate Judea from Roman occupation in 66 A.D. and the Shi'a Islamic order of the Assassins in the 10th century. Stopping by the Kamikaze pilots of the Second World War he finally arrives at 1980, which he characterizes as the dawn of "the modern era of suicide attacks". In *Suicide Bombing in Iraq*, Hafez identifies the genesis of suicide bombing in the Second World War and points to the 1980 as the genesis of non-state use (Hafez 2007, 6). Shaul Shay and Mia Bloom take a much broader approach, exploring early examples of terror and religiously inspired sacrifice as antecedents of the modern phenomenon (Bloom 2005, 8–12; Shay 2004). Drawing on Rapaport's account of early religious terrorism, Bloom highlights the Jewish Zealots, the Hindu Thugs, and the Shi'a Assassins (Rapoport 1984). Both point to Stephen Dale's account of religious sacrifice in Shi'a Muslim anti-colonial violence in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines from the 16th to 19th century (Dale 1988). Assraf Moghaddam's book *Globalization of Martyrdom* also gives a thorough historical account, including "cults of the fallen" from battles such as Karbala (680), Battle of Roncevaux Pass (778), the Battle of Sempach (1386), and The Battle of Alamo (1836) (Moghadam 2008, 8).[3]

Two features of suicide attack histories stand out. The first is that Lebanon in the early 80's is identified as the beginning of the modern use of tactic (Hafez 2007, 7; Hoffman 2006, 131–32; Pedahzur 2005, 9; Shay 2004, 1; Bloom 2005, 15). In a manner characteristic of this tendency, Gambetta states, "The inspired fervor of the Hezbollah, which was officially formed in 1982,

[3] His list of users is like Bloom's, although he starts with Samson in the Bible and includes the Vietcong in the second half of the 1960's.

added the final spice to an already preternaturally violent concoction. […] Virtually unheard of before, from that period onward Suicide Missions have grown in number and spread rapidly to other parts of the world» (Gambetta 2005, 286). Secondly, the period between 1945 to 1980 is left almost untouched, with some claiming that "Between the end of World War II and the Iranian revolution, there were no suicide attacks in the world" (Caschetta 2015, 2).

Compiling a list of state and non-state armed group adaptors from 1900 until 2012 based on existing literature, the Global Terrorism Database, and digitized English language newspaper archives, the two commonalities appear well-grounded in available empirics.[4] There is little going on between 1945 and 1980 and the use by Hezbollah does mark the beginning of the tactic's recent proliferation. After suicide attacks were adopted by groups in Egypt and Palestine in 1993, we observe widespread relational diffusion between a relatively ideologically homogenous set of actors bringing the tactic to a variety of conflict contexts.

Table 1 State and non-state armed actors that have employed suicide attacks

Actor[5]	***Type***	***Ideology***	***Year***	***Conflict***	***Term***
Chernoe Znamia	Non-state	Anarchist	1904	Anti-establishment Russia	Human bomb
Japan	State	Kokusui shugi	1905	Russo-Japanese war	Human torpedo (kaiten)
Novoe Vremya	Non-state	Anarchist	1907	Anti-establishment Russia	Human bomb
The Northern Flying Section of the Socialist Revolutionists	Non-state	Anarchist	1909	Anti-establishment Russia	Human bomb
Japan	State	Kokusui shugi	1932	Shanghai Incident	Human bullets
Oviedo miners	Non-state	Socialist	1936	Spanish Civil War	Human bombs
Japan	State	Kokusui shugi	1937	Battle of Shanghai	Airplane plunge

[4] The newspaper archives consulted were the British Newspaper Archive, the Library of Congress, the Australian TROVE collection, and the New Zealand National Library. To see the search methodology for exploring their digitized newspaper archives, consult Appendix 1.

[5] The list does not include groups that only used suicide attacks one time, but it does not distinguish between groups that used it three times and groups that used it three hundred times. It is not exhaustive, as the use by some organizations might have gone unreported, especially before the dawn of the modern mass media.

China	State		1937	Battle of Shanghai	Dare to die corp
Russia	State	Communist	1939	Winter War	Suicide attack
Russia	State	Communist	1941	Second World War	Suicide attack
Germany	State	Nazism	1944	Second World War	Suicide attack
Japan	State	Kokusui shugi	1944	Second World War	Suicide attack/ baka bombs/ kamikaze attacks/ kaiten
Vietminh	Non-state	Communist	1951	Vietnam War	Human bomb/suicide attack
China	State	Communist	1951	Korean War	Human bomb/suicide attack
PLO	Non-state	Nationalist	1973	Israel-Palestine	Kamikaze attack/ Suicide attack
PFLP-GC	Non-state	Marxist-Leninist (ML)	1974	Israel-Palestine	Kamikaze attack/ suicide attack
Iran	State	Shi'a Islam	1980	Iran-Iraq War	Suicide attack
Al-Dawa	Non-state	Shi'a Islam	1981	Lebanese Civil War	Suicide attack
Hezbollah	Non-state	Shi'a Islam	1983	Lebanese Civil War	Suicide attack/kamikaze attack/ human bomb
Syrian Social Nationalist Party	Non-state	Socialist	1985	Lebanese Civil War	Suicide attack
Lebanese Communist Party	Non-state	Communist	1985	Lebanese Civil War	Suicide attack
The Syrian Baath Party	Non-state	Socialist	1985	Lebanese Civil War	Suicide attack
Arab Socialist Nationalist Party	Non-state	Socialist	1985	Lebanese Civil War	Suicide attack
Lebanese National Resistance Front,	Non-state	Nationalist	1985	Lebanese Civil War	Suicide attack
PFLP	Non-state	Marxist-Leninist (ML)	1985	Israel-Palestine	Suicide attack
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam	Non-state	Nationalist	1987	Sri-Lankan Civil War	Suicide attack
Hamas	Non-state	Muslim Brotherhood nationalists	1993	Israel-Palestine	Suicide attack
Palestinian Islamic Jihad	Non-state	Islamic revivalist nationalists	1993	Israel-Palestine	Suicide attack
Egyptian Islamic Jihad	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	1993	Anti-government Egypt	Suicide attack
Armed Islamic Group	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	1995	Algerian Civil War	Suicide attack
Al Gama'a al-Islamiya	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	1995	Anti-government Egypt	Suicide attack

Babbar Khalsa International	Non-state	Sikh nationalist	1995	Anti-government India	Suicide attack
Kurdish Worker Party (PKK)	Non-state	Nationalist-ML	1996	Anti-government Turkey	Suicide attack
al-Qaeda	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	1998	Anti-establishment global	Suicide attack
Lashkar e Toiba	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	1999	Kashmir conflict	Suicide attack
Jaish-e-Mohammad	Non-state	Deobandi Salafi jihadists	2000	Kashmir conflict	Suicide attack
Special Purpose Islamic Regiments	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi nationalist	2000	Chechnya	Suicide attack
Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi nationalist	2000	Chechnya	Suicide attack
al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades	Non-state	Nationalist socialist	2001	Israel-Palestine	Suicide attack
Revolutionary People's Liberation Party	Non-state	ML	2001	Anti-government Turkey	Suicide attack
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine	Non-state	Nationalist-ML	2001	Israel-Palestine	Suicide attack
Lashkar-e-Jhangvi	Non-state	Deobandi jihadists	2003	Pakistan	Suicide attack
Ansar al-Islam	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2003	U.S. Invasion of Iraq	Suicide attack
Al-Qaeda in Iraq	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2003	U.S. Invasion of Iraq	Suicide attack
Iraqi Baathists	Non-state	Islamic nationalists	2003	U.S. Invasion of Iraq	Suicide attack
Taliban	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2004	War in Afghanistan	Suicide attack
Jamaatul Mujahidin Bangladesh	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2005	Anti-government Bangladesh	Suicide attack
Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2006		
Islamic State of Iraq	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2007	Iraqi insurgency	Suicide attack
Al-Shabab	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2007	Anti-government Somalia	Suicide attack
Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2008	Anti-government Algiers	Suicide attack
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2008	Insurgency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Suicide attack
Boko Haram	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2011	Boko Haram Insurgency	Suicide attack
Balochistan Liberation Army	Non-state	Nationalist-separatist	2011	Insurgency in Baluchistan	Suicide attack

Al-Nusrah Front	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2012	Syrian Civil War	Suicide attack
Caucasus Emirate	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	2012	Syrian Civil War	Suicide attack

However, looking at the history of the tactic in this way tends to downplay its diverse manifestations and how perceptions of the tactic has changed. The very term 'suicide attack', for example, is a relatively modern invention. Suicides for altruistic reasons were described by Emilie Durkheim as early as 1897, but the term suicide was not paired with people 'dying to kill' for another 40 years (Durkheim 1897). The first revolutionaries to gain international attention for conducting suicide attacks were the anarchists, but the suicidal component did not feature in the media coverage of their attacks at the turn of the century. They were simply described as 'human bombs'.

Putting explosives in everything from sardine boxes to the brass balls of bedsteads, anarchists gained a global reputation for inventiveness, indiscriminate killing, and romanticization of violence (*Pearson's Weekly* 1908). They were part of a broader trend emerging in the late 19th century, arguing for the spread of scientific knowledge among peasants and laborers to overcome the military weakness of the oppressed (Larabee 2015, 20).[6] Dynamite, patented by Alfred Nobel in 1867, was a particularly favored invention hailed for its emancipatory potential. An 1884-editorial in the anarchist magazine *The Alarm* succinctly summed up the expectation tied to this new weapon:

[6] This argument was made by two communities of revolutionaries in particular, the anarchists and the Irish. In the 1880's, Irish radicals associated with the United Irishmen and the Clan ne Gael founded at least two bomb making schools in the United States. The aim of this instruction was to challenge Britain at home and to give a tool to the oppressed peoples of the colonies. Its students went back to Britain with knowledge of how to manage nitroglycerine with timed- and chemical detonators, carrying out several attacks on government offices in the 1880's (Larabee 2015, 21–22). Some of these were organized from a laboratory run by Irish radicals in a phony paint shop in Birmingham (Larabee 2015, 30). Among the anarchists, high explosives were seen as the solution to the unequal competition between capital and labor, described as the "equalizing and emancipating agent of modern civilization" (Larabee 2015, 22).

> "Dynamite is the emancipator! In the hand of the enslaved it cries aloud: "Justice or-annihilation!" But best of all, the workingmen are not only learning its use, they are going to use it. They will use it, and effectually, until personal ownership-property rights-are destroyed, and a free society and justice becomes the rule of action among men. […] Hail to the social revolution! Hail to the deliverer-Dynamite"(C. S. Smith 1995, 117).[7]

The move from hiding dynamite inside objects to hiding them on people's bodies happened in Russia around the turn of the century. There is no exact date for the first attack, but between 1900 and 1910 reports emerged of anarchists strapping themselves with explosives to reach otherwise inaccessible targets. The first act of this kind is recounted by Geifman (1993, 132), who describes an attack by anarchist Nisan Farber on a police station in 1905, where his homemade bomb killed both himself and everyone present. News reports of similar incidents become available a couple of years later. In 1907 members of the group *Novoe Vremya* were captured right before they could execute their plan to blow up the St. Petersburg gendarmerie (*The People* 1907). The plan was to make a gendarme uniform wadded in pyroxylin and filled with dynamite, pick a volunteer by lot, have him dress in the uniform, and enter the building. As it happened, the police were alerted to the plot right before it was set in motion, so it was never carried out.

[7] Although there were plenty of textbooks available with instructions on how to manufacture different types of explosives, they were not easily accessible to the masses. To remedy this, anarchists would create their own manuals Among the most famous were German anarchist Johann Most, who collated, translated, and adapted the material into an accessible weapon manual in 1886, titled *Revolutionäre Kriegswissenschaft* (The Science of Revolutionary Warfare). Using available daily substances and writing instruction like a cooking recipe, it was supposed to facilitate for popular usage, but its recipes were often faulty (Larabee 2015, 24-25). Malfunctioning bombs is a recurring trope in anarchist attacks, and headlines such as "Anarchist blown to pieces" are recurrent in British newspapers between 1880 and 1920.

An even more elaborate attack was executed the same year when Evstolia Ragozinnikova entered a St. Petersburg prison and shot its director (*New York Times* 1907). She did this in part because she hoped to be interrogated at the secret police headquarter, where she planned to detonate thirteen pounds of explosives hidden in her corsage. Before she got that far, the officers who searched her found a cord in the pocket of her dress. According to one account, an officer asked what the cord was, to which she replied "Pull, and you will solve the mystery" (*Poverty Bay Herald* 1907). To her disappointment he did not, and being unable to reach the detonator herself, she ended up being arrested and executed instead. The incident gained international attention, with the Washington Evening Star publishing what was practically an ode to female Russian anarchists,

> "The prisons are full of them; Siberia has swallowed up a host of them; and yet their numbers are continually increasing. They are generally young, sometimes beautiful and invariably intelligent. There are hundreds of remarkable women among them. What in any other cause would be called self-sacrificing heroism is with them a commonplace. On that account the story of the girl terrorist who recently made a human bomb of herself attracted far more attention in America than in Russia" (*Evening Star* 1907).[8]

A few similar incidents were reported outside of Russia, but in these cases most perpetrators were reported as 'mad men' and it is difficult to tell whether they were in fact mad or merely portrayed as such. The most well-known case was perhaps a plot in America by an alleged German anarchist named Carl Reidelbarch – alternately called Carl Warr, Carl Marr, Carl

[8] The Russian females were apparently better at the plotting than the execution: "At hatching plots these feminine foes of autocracy are far more ingenious than the men. But in carrying them out the records show that they are distinctly inferior. Their failures are far more numerous. At the critical moment their over impulsiveness leads to the bungling of something, or their nervousness betrays them, and their prey escapes them, and they themselves get caught. But their places are immediately filled. Whatever their fate, it inspires no terror in those who take their places" (Evening Star 1907).

Farr, and Albert Henry Davis (*New York Times* 1912; *The Washington Post* 1912). On November 12, 1912, Reidelbarch walked into a Los Angeles police station carrying a "terrible infernal machine" with three fingers held on three triggers, threatening to blow it up to kingdom come. Reidelbarch allegedly demanded to meet with the president of the Pacific Electric Company to force through an unheard-of rise in wages to all company employees. His demands were not met, and the police moved one hundred prisoners from a nearby jail and emptied a hospital in anticipation of the explosion. After around an hour, Reidelbach was knocked unconscious by one police detective, while another successfully cut the fuse before the flame could reach the dynamite. After the incident, Reidelbarch commented that while the fuse was a bit too long, he was pleased with the overall design. He stated, "The machine is my own invention. I never heard of any like it. I don't want description of the thing to get into the newspapers for fear others will steal my idea"(*Hamilton Daily Times* 1912).

Anarchist human bombs were nowhere as prolific as more recent users, but they did have a place in the public imagination in the early 20th century and were seen as a threat beyond the countries where they were deployed. The "Notes and News" section of the Birmingham Daily Mail in1905, gives an indication of the level of alertness in Europe at the time,

> "The German Authorities appear to be suffering from a severe attack of Anarchist fright. Every citizen who neglects to observe the strictest circumspection in regard to his deportment in the public streets runs the risk of being arrested. Two typical instances of the zeal of the Erfurt police in this regard are recorded today. In the first, a man was hauled before the magistrates for dressing his dog in a red hat. This was regarded as evidence that the owner was a dangerous revolutionary. Another person in the same city was arrested for sneezing with what the policeman considered unnecessary violence.

> Evidently he took the man for a human bomb, who threatened the safety of the public buildings" (*The Birmingham Daily Mail* 1905).

Meanwhile in the U.S. and Australia, reports emerged from the Philippines about Shi'a Moros conducting what is perhaps best described as suicidal attacks. U.S. Army Captain C. D. Rhodes, stationed on the island during the U.S. occupation between 1899 and 1913, described the phenomenon in a manner typical of the time:

> "… Moros have occasionally slipped in with arms, and run 'juramentado' among the Christian population. […] Of course, they are great fanatics, and when they believe themselves injured or when they are determined to commit suicide, the 'go juramentado,' i.e. they are blessed by their priests, shave their hair, anoint the body, and then creep as close to Christians as they can. On a sudden they throw off their disguise, and go at it, hammer and tongs, killing and ultimately being killed, always" (*Abilene Weekly Reflector* 1909).

'Going juramentado' was not a new phenomenon, but a form of anti-colonial violence coined by the Spanish that began with their incursion into the Philippines two centuries earlier (Dale 1988).[9]

While 'Juramentado' was a term tied to a particular actor, the phrase 'human bomb' was not unique to anarchist attacks. A 'human bomb' was a catch all phrase to describe everything from

[9] Like with the anarchists, accounts of the juramentados were covered in all four newspaper archives, but most rarely in the British. The only story found pertains to juramentado being buried with a pig by the Americans following an attack (*Christchurch Times* 1904). The fact that the article does not explain the meaning of juramentado, however, suggests that the lack of articles is due to lack of digitization and not a lack of coverage at the time.

people accidentally blowing themselves up to those doing so with malevolent intent.[10] The first occurrence of the phrase in the four newspaper archives consulted dates back to 1895 when a Parisian named Albert Balthasar decided that traditional methods of suicide "were of too plebian a kind to be adopted by him" (*Nelson Evening Mail* 1895). Being a chemist and anxious to destroy himself along original and scientific lines he ingested chloride and brimstone to "seek relief from the worries and troubles of this terrestrial sphere." (Un)fortunately for him, no explosion occurred, so, depending on which account you believe, he either called for medical aid or, considering himself a threat to public safety, surrendered to the nearest police station (*Walsall Observer* 1896; *Nelson Evening Mail* 1895).

Another class of recipients of the label "human bomb" prior to 1940 were criminals. A famous case is Terrible Tommy Touhy, known for having expelled Al Capone from Chicago during the Beer Wars of the early 30's. Tommy was known for always carrying explosives to deter the police from approaching, much like the professor in in Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907).[11] As Tommy discovered the hard way however, carrying dynamite is not a permanent solution. The following two headlines sum up his demise: "Human Bomb vows death, warns police he will blow them up, fleeing gangster loaded with dynamite" and, two years later, "Terrible Tom, Human Bomb, Found Ill, Couldn't kill" (*Daily Herald* 1934; 1936). Criminal use was no everyday occurrence, but people did turn themselves into bombs to avoid arrest, extort, and commit bank robberies (*Keowee Courier* 1913; *The Washington Post* 1936).[12]

[10] Actual or near accidents making the headlines includes a Yugoslavian farmer who drank petrol and tried to blow out a match on a bet, a Kansas farmed who drank nitroglycerine on a bet and then built a fire, a cyclist whose satchel of nitroglycerine accidentally exploded, and a person entering a trolly cart with a stick of dynamite and a lighted cigar (*Daily Citizen Manchester* 1913; *Edinburgh Evening News* 1932; *The Washington Post* 1915; *The Goodland Republic* 1905).

[11] In this fictional book, an explosives' specialist called the Professor could walk past any London policeman by constantly threatening to blow up everyone in his vicinity.

[12] A less famous example of criminal use is 76-year-old Joe Gabriele, who was charged with "malicious use of dynamite" after attaching explosives to his waist before going to a friend's house to settle a dispute over money (The Washington Post 1936).

The term was also used about military tactics in war. During the Siege of Shanghai in 1932, a story emerged about three Japanese human bombs who sacrificed their lives blowing up barbed wire to clear the path for their fellow soldiers (*The Manchester Guardian* 1932). The three men became known as 'The Three Human Bullets' and were praised throughout Japan for their act of sacrifice. Songs were made in their honor, brands of sake were made in their names, and plays were written to celebrate their exploit (Young 1999, 77-78). The event was recounted in similar heroic terms in the British press, where headlines like "Heroic deeds in barbed Wire" described "the desperate courage typical of Japanese soldiers" (*Sheffield Independent* 1932; *The Leeds Mercury* 1932; *Nottingham Evening Post* 1932).

A few decades later it came to light that the Shanghai incident never happened – or at least not in the way it was retold. In 1965, Japanese Major General Tanaka Ryukichi admitted that the soldiers actually died by accident owing to the fact that their officer in charge miscalculated the length of the fuse (Young 1999, 78). At the time, however, the Japanese Army used the event as a propaganda opportunity and hushed local sceptics.[13] The official account was largely believed abroad, although, as noted by the correspondent from the *Manchester Guardian*, "Why the Japanese should not have shelled these [the barbed wire] to pieces before they advanced has never been explained" (The Manchester Guardian 1932).

[13] The propaganda effort on part of the Japanese should not be underestimated in understanding why this story became so widely known. A few years later, during the Battle of Shanghai in 1937, Chinese forces established suicide squads charged with carrying explosive belts and throwing themselves underneath Japanese tanks. The unit was known as the 'Dare to Die Corps', but in contrast to the three human bullets, no mention of them can be found in the newspaper archives consulted here. What we do find, however, are mentions of Japanese suicide pilots diving into Chinese military positions in "the traditional manner of Japanese airmen (*The Washington Post* 1937).

Reports using the term 'suicide attack' did not feature in English press before the late 30's and only began to proliferate during the Second World War. Initially, suicide attack was a word used to describe soldiers attacking in situations where the likelihood of death was perceived to be very high.[14] One of the earliest examples encountered is from December 1939, when it was used to describe Russia's efforts to breach the Mannerheim Line near Lake Ladoga during the Winter War (*Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 1939). From around 1942 the phrase began to take on its modern connotations, with articles specifying that the death of the perpetrator was an integral part of the attack.[15]

This shift is best seen in the press coverage of the Japanese. Although the link between the Japanese and sacrificial tactics pre-dates the war, Second World War led to the tactic being re-cast in the English media; their actions were no longer heroic, desperate acts of courage, but increasingly described as suicidal. By November 1944, when the in the Kamikaze Special Attack Corps had become an integral part of the Japanese war effort, phrases such as 'suicide plane' and 'suicide attacks' became widely used in English media (*New York Times* 1944; *Army News* 1944; *The Tribune* 1944).

The prolific use by the Japanese overshadows use and experimentation in other countries during the war. In early 1944, German Captain Hanna Reitsch proposed the idea of a suicide squad modeled of the Kamikaze fighters. Himmler approved but wanted to use criminals instead of soldiers. Hitler found the tactic unacceptable unless the pilot had a chance to escape alive (Lucas

[14] Before the 20th century, these types of operations were typically characterized as 'forlorn hope' attacks.
[15] Although not very common, some articles began to specify what they meant by "suicide attack". In an article describing the Japanese's use of submarines in the attack on Pearl Harbor, the reporter specified that, "It was a suicide attack, because, according to the announcement, no further word was received from the tiny sub marines after 7.14 pm that day. It was presumed that they had either been destroyed or had blown themselves up. Not one vessel returned"(*The Sun* 1942a). In the New Guinea campaign that same year, the Australian Minister of Air stated that the Japanese might send Paratroopers to the town of Salamaua. In the article the journalist specified, "They would be suicide attacks, as any forces dropped would find escape impossible, even if they accomplished their mission" (*Macleay Argus* 1942).

2014, 174). He nevertheless agreed to the establishment of the squad on the condition that he decide whether or not it would be used (Muller 2003). The suicide pilots were called 'The Leonidas Squad', pointing back to Spartan king Leonidas who led his army of 300 into a suicidal battle against Persian Xerxes in 480BC. Members of the squad would be tasked with guiding a manned version of the German V-1 cruise missile to its target. Seventy volunteers enlisted, signing a declaration which read, "I hereby voluntarily apply to be enrolled in the suicide group as part of a human glider-bomb. I fully understand that employment in this capacity will entail my own death" (Hyland and Gill 1998, 220–22). Despite the preparations, the squad was never used. By the time it was operational, squad leader Lt. Colonel Baumbach was persuaded that the men could be more fruitfully used in Operation Eisenhammer, bombing Russian power stations (Boog et al. 1990).[16]

There are a few reports about allied soldiers conducting suicide attacks, but they are rare. In September 1941 it was reported that the Russian air force used 'human bombs' in their defense of Kronstadt (*Weekly Times* 1941). Following the incident, articles were written in Britain in celebration of Russian sacrifice,

> "Do you doubt the story the human bomb? Do you doubt that in Russia single-engine planes are being loaded the limit with bombs, and flown off by pilots who volunteer to sacrifice their lives for Russia? Do you doubt that the pilot hurls not only his bombs but his body on to German ships, causing the bomb load to explode? Do you doubt that 12 of these planes were flung on 12 German ships, and that all of them were sunk? You have to leave doubt. Such heroism, such sacrifice, is well-nigh unbelievable. But we tell

[16] This operation never materialized either.

you that this story typifies the sacrifice which the people Russia are making in defense their soil" (Gloucester Citizen 1941).

Similar tales were told in Australia, where "A hero, yet unnamed, sacrificed himself by diving into an enemy vessel in an attack on shipping in the Frisian Islands" (*Weekly Times* 1942). A year later, British press described how the American cruiser Laffey "met a noble death," in the Solomons battle in 1943, "as she flung herself straight at the battleship in an apparent head-on suicide attack" (*The Newcastle Sun* 1943). There are more such accounts, but the appear to have been carried out on an ad hoc basis with the chances of escape being minimal.

Following the Second World War, suicide attacks were largely confined to Asia, with communist groups in the east being the main perpetrators during the 1950's and 1960's. Suicide attacks were part of the repertoire of both the Vietminh and Chinese allied Korean rebels in the 1950's and 1960's. While defending White Horse Hill in Central Korea in 1952, UN and South Korean Forces faced "Twelve Chinese soldiers carrying bags of dynamite (…) followed by two platoons of Communist troops"(Parrott 1952). A similar tactic was observed in Vietnam, where, "Suicide squads climbed over the bodies of hundreds of their dead comrades to clear a path through barbed-wire entanglements with explosives" (*The Herald* 1954). This was also observed by Americans in the 60's, with one base commander reporting: "At times, marine artillery men fired at point-blank range into fanatic suicide troops who had satchel charges lashed to their backs as they threw themselves at the camp perimeter to blow holes in the barbed wire" (*New York Times* 1969).

Communist groups also used suicide attacks in assassination attempts, although this appears to have been rarer than as part of their guerrilla assaults. In the summer of 1951, a "human bomb" was reported to have killed a French general and an Annamite provincial governor in a village

south of Saigon, Vietnam. The perpetrator, who carried two hand grenades, "sprang at the officials and carried out his attack with paralyzing surprise" (*New York Times* 1951). A year before, a similar attack was averted in North Korea, where "A rugby tackle by an Australian lieutenant picketing at Battalion Headquarters (….) saved the life of one of the guards when a Communist guerrilla attempted a one-man suicide attack on the position" (*Daily Mercury* 1950). Most commonly however, the terms suicide attack and suicide squad were used to describe (1) guerrillas ready to die while fighting or (2) that undertook suicidal attacks where the chance to escape alive was present.

That reports of suicide attacks were confined to the contexts of Vietnam and Korea in this period is in part coincidental.[17] It could have been quite different had it not been for three unrelated events in the U.S. in December 1960: two commercial planes colliding over New York on December 16th, Jacqueline Lee Kennedy's decision to accompany her husband to mass on December 11, and Richard Pavlick's penchant for sending angry letters. On December 11, 1960, American postal clerk Richard Pavlick was parked outside the Kennedy family mansion with enough dynamite "to blow up a small mountain" (Greene 2010). According to Pavlic, he was waiting for Kennedy to leave his house for Sunday mass so he could drive his own car into Kennedy's and detonate the explosives, killing them both (*The Washington Post*, 1960). As Kennedy left however, Pavlic could see that both Jacqueline and their two children were with him, so he decided to wait. When he returned to try again four days later, a postmaster in New Hampshire had grown concerned over Pavlic sending angry letters and decided to notify the secret service. Pavlick was arrested on Palm Beach on the December 15 before he could try to blow himself up again. What could have been among the most spectacular suicide attacks of the

[17] There are few traces of this phenomenon in Europe, but In the UK in 1969, two "known extremists", were overheard planning to strap a grenade to their bodies to kill Prince Charles (*The People* 1969). The police described the threat as "a vain boast," but did increase security around the prince.

post war era was hardly reported. This was partly because Pavlic was unsuccessful, but also because newspapers were dominated by the tragic plane crash over New York which occurred only 12 hours after he was captured (*New York Times* 1960).

Self sacrificial attacks of the variety seen in Vietnam were introducted through the Third World networks established in the 1960's and 1970's. On May 30, 1972, the Japanese Red Army (JRA) carried out an attack on Lod airport (*New York Times* 1972a). Twenty-five people died in the onslaught, including two of three perpetrators; the first was shot, the second blew himself up with a grenade, and the third - Kozo Okamoto - was arrested. Okamoto's survival was a mistake owing to the fact that his grenade failed to explode when he threw it on an airplane, allegedly denying him the opportunity to run into his own funeral pyre (Farrell 1990, 138-139). Okamoto did not give up, and after he was arrested, he kept repeating "Please let me die. I have completed my task. From now I am a Saint" (Silver 1972).

The JRA, which grew out of the 1960 radical-left student movement in Japan, had gradually developed ties to international terrorist networks in both Europe and the Middle East (Farrell 1990). In the early 70's they grew particularly close to the PFLP-GC, and received training by the group in Lebanon (Farrell 1990). Ozokomo saw the chance for a synergetic relationship, stating that, "This cooperation with the Popular Front was one jumping board for us to propel ourselves onto the world stage (…) The Arab world lacks in spiritual fervor, and, therefore, we felt that the Arab world could benefit from our cooperation" (The New York Times 1972).

A man who agreed with Ozokomo's assessment was Muhammar Gadhafi, who would recur in multiple plots during the 1970's (Posner 1987, 82–83). On February 22, 1973, Israel downed a Libyan airliner flying over the Sinai after it failed to make radio contact with the pilot. The communication failure turned out to be due to a technical error, but more than seventy civilians

died as a result. In an interview with *The New York Times*, an Israeli security official explained that the government had received intelligence of a guerrilla planning to carry out a suicide mission in Tel Aviv only a few weeks prior. He stated, "How could we guarantee that it wasn't a kamikaze plane loaded with explosives headed for an Israeli city?" (T. Smith 1973).

'Kamikaze-Palestinians' stirred the imagination of Israeli security personnel more than once during the 70's.[18] As noted by one reporter, 'kamikazeal' now appeared to be the new norm (Sastry 1974). Only two months after the Libyan airliner downing, in April 1973, the cruise Queen Elisabeth 2 was subject of one of the "tightest security operations at a British port in peacetime" (Sandiford 1973). The reason? Information suggesting that an Arab guerrilla would carry out a Kamikaze attack on the ship, which was set to transport 1,200 European and American Jews to Israel (J. Collins 1973). This link continued to the end of the decade, with Ahmad Jibril, the leader of PFLP-GC, claiming to receive Kamikaze pilot training in Libya and that they were "ready to fly suicide missions of Israel if it [Israel] resumed airs strikes against Palestinian areas in Lebanon" as late as in 1980 (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency* 1979; Gage 1980).

Besides the airplane plots that generated attention but ultimately never materialized, there were reports of suicide attacks by Palestinian groups infiltrating Israel from Lebanon (Y. Sayigh 1999, 339–42). In April 1973, three PLO-members were captured after they crossed the Lebanese border (Silver 1973). Following their capture, one of the perpetrators, Ahmed Mustafa Shehada, said they intended to carry out a suicide mission against a bus station in Safed following two previously failed attempts (*The Japan Times* 1973). In 1974, three members of the PFLP-GC infiltrated Israel from Lebanon, made their way to Kiryat Shmona and killed 18 people in a

[18] Placing the word "kamikaze -" in front of militant groups associated with the radical left was a small media trope during the 70's, regardless of whether or not they contemplated such attacks. In the U.S. the Weathermen were described as employing "kamikaze techniques" and the Black Panthers as "black kamikaze pilots" (Stearn 1970; Kifner 1970).

building before blowing themselves up as soldiers stormed the complex. Ricolfi identifies another nine suicide or quasi suicide attacks between '74 and '79, although the majority of these cannot be found in the newspaper archives and were not classified as suicide attacks at the time (Ricolfi 2005, 81).

The PFLP-GC appears to have been the most avid Palestinian proponent of suicide missions during this decade. In a 1975 interview with *The New York Times*, Ahmad Jibril described how suicide missions had become ritualized in the organization in a very similar manner to how Islamic-oriented organizations would act twenty years later (Saab 1975). The main difference was that their preparations involved military instruction combined with political education in Marxism and self-criticism instead of religious introspection.

The PLO was more ambiguous towards this mode of attack. Sunday September 8, 1974, TWA Flight 841 crashed *en route* from Tel Aviv to New York, killing everyone on board. That same evening, the 'Nationalist Youth for Liberation of Palestine' – a hitherto unknown group – stated that one of its operatives, Eduardo Santo from Chile, blew himself up with explosives he managed to smuggle onboard (*Corriere Della Sera* 1974). The purported reason was that, "Flight 841 carried six members of the Phalanges of Death who were going to Europe and the United States to make their way to Arab countries and liquidate the leaders of the Palestinian revolution" (U.S. Navy 1974).[19] The claim was quickly dismissed by the PLO as Zionist fiction aimed at discrediting the Palestinian cause, and airline authorities initially believed an airplane malfunction could have caused the crash (Within 1974).[20] British Investigators eventually

[19] It is unclear what/who the Phalanges of Death were supposed to be, but they seem to have claimed it was an Israeli assassination squad of some sort.

[20] That the PLO saw suicide attacks as potentially delegitimizing the Palestinian cause is peculiar given Shehada's operation in Safed only a year earlier. However, it is quite possible that the PLO drew a distinction between suicide attacks conducted against Israelis and attacks against civilians at large. Most of the passengers on the TWA flight were American, Japanese, and European, there were only two Israelis onboard.

concluded that the crash was caused by an explosive device in the baggage hold. The Nationalist Youth were never heard from again.

Suicide attacks remained an incredibly marginal phenomenon for leftist groups outside of Asia and the Middle East. There are some indications that suicide attacks were discussed in European leftist circles. Following the civil unrest during May 1968 in France, a debate ensued between communists, Marxist-Leninists, socialists, and Maoists of whether to engage in violent action and how that would look like. Among the more prominent groups that emerged was the Maoist organization Gauche Prolétarienne, which advocated for different forms of guerrilla warfare.[21] Speaking of the possible violent development, Victor Fay, journalist and member of the Unified Socialist Party, wrote:

> "As much as organized mass action, supported and approved by the workers, makes it possible to resort to new methods of struggle and to lay the foundations for a new legality, the actions of isolated groups are doomed to failure. Because no one can artificially speed up the process of awareness of workers. Believing in the virtue of example, of propaganda by deed, of the sacrifice of the "suicide bombers" of the workers' vanguard, can only increase the passivity of the mass, some believing that we are fighting for them are content to approve; the others turning away from people who disrupt their habits and risk dragging them into an adventure" (Fay 1970).

Similarly, there are practically no traces of suicide attacks in Latin America although the one reported example was tied to the left. On June 8, 1971 members of People's Organized

[21] The organization denied being "putschist", i.e. someone who seeks to overthrow the government, and many of the actions included in their definition of "guerrilla warfare" were quite unusual. This included taking the metro collectively without paying for it, strikes, and sabotage of work equipment.

Vanguard (POV) ambushed and killed Edmundo Pérez Zukovic, a conservative right wing politician and Chile's former minister of interior (*New York Times* 1971). Two of the alleged perpetrators, Ronald Riviera Claderon and Arturo Riviera Claderon, were killed shortly after in a police shootout (Onis 1971). One week later, Heriberto Salazar Bello, "a well-dressed, educated man" and alleged third perpetrator, stormed the police headquarter in Santiago (Onis 1971). Bello killed one policeman with a machinegun before he detonated a grenade to blow himself up, killing a nearby detective in the blast (*The Japan Times* 1971).

Whereas mentions of leftist groups in Europe and Latin America are rare, there are even fewer traces among nationalist and secessionist groups. The closest any individual affiliated with a nationalist group came to carry out such an attack seems to be the famous actor Richard Johnson in his role as a dispossessed Northern Irishman turning himself into a human bomb to blow up the House of Lords in the movie *Hennessey* (*The Guardian* 1975).[22] There were articles describing IRA suicide squads and suicide attacks in this period, but these merely captured a tendency towards more heedless tactics (*Daily Mirror* 1971; *Newcastle Journal* 1972). As noted by a British Army officer, "They have been more reckless than I can ever remember. It almost suicidal the way they have been coming at us" (*The Aberdeen Press and Journal* 1972).

The only record found of a right-wing nationalist inspired suicide attack was perpetrated by a Japanese ultra nationalist. In 1976, Japanese porn actor Mitsuyasu Maeno drove an airplane into the house of Yoshio Kodama, a prominent right-wing leader and organized crime pin. Only a few days earlier, Kodama was implicated in the Lockheed scandal as one of the Japanese officials that had accepted US bribes. Many in the right-wing community considered Kodama's

[22] In the film, the IRA opposed Hennessey's plan, objecting that it would "set the cause back 50 years". The movie caused an outrage in the UK, not because of the human bomb component, but because it used news reel footage of the Queen, making it seem like she reacted to the bomb. Buckingham Palace had consented to the use of the news reel but misunderstood how the footage was going to be used (*The Guardian* 1975a).

actions a national disgrace, and Maeno was among them. On March 23, Maeno put on a Kamikaze uniform, brought two cameramen to Chofu airport, and rented two single-engine airplanes under the pretext of shooting an action segment for a Nikkatsu Corporation film (*The Japan Times* 1976). After circling over Kodoma's home ten times, airfield crewmen heard Maeno shout "Tennoheika banzai!" (Long live the Emperor!) as he crashed into the building (Roderick 1976).

Unfortunately for Maeno, Kodoma escaped unharmed. Maeno belonged to a segment of the Japanese population authorities described as the "closet" right (Roderick 1976). These regarded the emperor as divine, disapproved of the US inspired 1947 constitutions, and idolized the tenets of samurai chivalry (*Bushido*).[23] Although his attack resonated with parts of the population, most saw it as a relic. Reflecting the latter sentiment, Yosei Amano, editor in chief of one of Japan's largest newspapers *Mainichi Shimbun,* commented that, "Coming more than 30 years after the end of World War II, Maeno's kamikaze flight revived the ghost the Japanese wanted to forget" (in Roderick 1976).

Suicide attacks re-emerged with force in the 1980's, starting with the use by the Basij militia of Iran in the Iraq-Iran war in 1982 and then Hezbollah's attack against the U.S. and French army bases in Beirut. As the above outline of historical manifestations of suicide attacks illustrates, the phenomenon has been quite diverse. Why then, did the tactic spread to such an ideologically homogenous set of actors following Hezbollah's successful demonstration of its potential in 1983?

[23] Like many 'closet rightists', Maeno was also an admirer of Nobel Prize winning novelist Yukio Mishima (1925-1970). Mishima had formed an unarmed civilian militia called Tatenokai to restore the dignity to the Japanese Emperor. On November 25, 1970, he and four other members attempted to get authorities to overturn the 1947-constitution by taking the commandant of a Tokyo military base hostage. When the operation failed, Mishima committed ritual suicide (*Seppuku*). Between Mishima's death and 1976, eleven people committed suicide leaving notes stating they agreed with his actions. Another thirteen tried to commit suicide, but failed in their attempts (Roderick 1976).

1.2 Why have suicide attacks not been adopted by a wider variety of actors?

Suicide attacks have unique tactical and strategical advantages that make them a desirable method for waging asymmetric warfare. Not only are they more lethal than conventional tactics, they have proven more successful against military, police, and government targets, and are often relatively cheap (Berman and Laitin 2005; Enders and Sandler 2012; Santifort-Jordan and Sandler 2014; Piazza 2018) One of the most common explanations for why suicide attacks did not gain wider traction after 1983 is that they violate the social and cultural norms of most societies (M. Bloom 2005; Hoffman and McCormick 2004; Bakke 2013). While this might be the case as normative constraints need to be taken seriously by revolutionaries for their organizations to survive and thrive they are neither static nor impervious to influence (Enders and Sandler 2012; Dolnik 2007).[24]

An implication of the norm-centric argument for limited adoption is that suicide attacks are more in line with the norms of some societies and cultures than others. However, as this thesis will show suicide attacks have rarely, if ever, been uncontroversial. Norm-centric explanations arguably take for granted something that should be explained, namely how suicide attacks became acceptable anywhere in the first place. This thesis suggests that social acceptance is not a pre-existing condition that can explain a group's decision to introduce the tactic to a new social or ideological context, it is an outcome of a group electing to attempt it. Because suicide attacks tend to create the conditions for their own demand, it quickly seems like societies with groups that risked employing the tactic were favorably disposed all along.

[24] Social movement theory recognizes that revolutionaries sometimes try to shape norms to accommodate new tactics they believe will be advantageous to their struggle. Most prominently, it takes into account that processes endogenous to struggle can lead groups to escalate and populations to accept previously condemned levels of violent intensity. What it gives less attention, however, are the factors shaping the types of violence groups select to escalate. For example, why do some groups escalate using a potentially controversial tactic like suicide bombings when they could use a tactic already in their repertoire, like a car bomb, and make it more powerful?

Based on the above, this thesis argues that cross-country, cross-ideological spread should be considered analytically distinct from instances of domestic spread, like we saw in Lebanon in the 1980's, or ideologically homogenous spread, as observed among Salafi-jihadis.[25] Domestically, the high similarity between groups means use by one actor renders relevant information on audience costs that other groups in the same environment can use in cost-benefit analyses (M. Bloom 2005; Hoffman and McCormick 2004). Similarly, within an ideological framework, the tactic comes pre-justified and often with expectations about status gains (Acosta 2016; Moghadam 2008). To understand why the tactic did not become modular and free from its context specific associations, the interesting groups to focus on are those that fall into neither of these categories. These are the 'first movers' in social or ideological contexts and are characterized by having little information on which to ground their decision on whether to adopt.

To understand when first movers might decide to adopt suicide attacks despite uncertain returns, the thesis draws on theories about herd behavior and fashion. A central contention in this literature is that when information is scarce and people are in doubt, they are more open to imitate others. This has created the idea of reference groups and fashion leaders. Whereas reference groups are actors that are closely associated with a particular act or product, being a fashion leader also implies being recognized as having more information than other people. The type of 'acknowledged expertise' that renders someone a fashion leader is often referred to as prestige. This can be defined as a non-coercive currency earned by possessing socially valued attributes that elicits admiration and a desire to imitate in onlookers (Henrich and Gil-White

[25] This is not the same as distinguishing between relational, non-relational, and mediated diffusion. Each type of diffusions can occur within a domestic and transnational setting. i.e. diffusion among groups in the same conflict environment or ideologically category can be relational or not-relational.

2001). If a reference group is considered a fashion leader, its influence can typically take three forms: (1) informational, where imitation is motivated by a belief that other people are better informed, (2) value expressive, where one imitates because other people represent an idealized self-image, and (3) normative, where imitation is motivated by fear of community sanctions.

Which type of influence is exerted, if any, depends on the similarity between the reference group and the onlooker, as well as the onlooker's self-perception of competence. The theory chapter exploits variation along these two dimensions to create a typology of revolutionaries indicating which ones are likely to experience admiration and be moved to imitate. The more experience a group has and the less similar to the reference group it perceives itself, the less eager it is to take on new practices based on faith in the reference group alone.

Groups that share a low degree of similarity with the reference group and have a high self-perception of competence are labeled conservatives. These are unlikely to be moved to imitate. Groups that share a high degree of similarity with the reference group and have a high self-perception of competence are labeled fence sitters. These will likely await information on pay-off before imitating and are therefore unlikely to introduce suicide attacks to new social and ideological contexts. Groups that have a low degree of similarity with the reference group and a low self-perception of competence are labeled vanguards. These might imitate despite lack of information and are theorized to be most likely to introduce the tactic to new contexts. Finally, groups that have a high degree of similarity with the fashion leader and a low self-perception of competence are called disciples. These are most likely to imitate, but unlikely to introduce the tactic to new places as the high degree of similarity with the reference group suggests that they operate in the same ideological or social context.

The underlying hypothesis is the following: an organization's willingness to adopt suicide attacks under conditions of uncertain tactical and strategic returns is mediated by their view of the tactic's reference group. This generates two expectations:

1. Revolutionaries that do not admire the reference group associated with suicide attacks are unwilling to imitate in the face of uncertain tactical and strategic returns.
2. Revolutionaries that admire the reference group associated with suicide attacks are willing to imitate despite uncertain tactical and strategic returns.

To examine whether these have value for explaining suicide attack spread, I look at three contexts where revolutionaries exhibited variation on the dependent variable (adoption of suicide attacks) and similarity across independent variables used to predict adoption. These are Palestine, Afghanistan, and Northern Ireland. The period in focus is the 1980's and early 1990's, a time when the tactic was largely void of its current ideological and geographical connotations.

The study takes a methodologically individualist approach, privileging individuals' behavior over environmental factors to understand macro-level results (Schaefer 2021, 1214). As leadership generally hold sway over decision making in revolutionary organizations, they are the focus of the study. To unpack the discussions and decision-making processes within the groups, the thesis consults research on general forms of cognitive processes, personal biographies, interpersonal networks, as well as interviews with and material written by group members where available. The source types are based on similar research on political and business elites. While this line of research does not discard the importance of external opportunities and constraints, it focuses on unpacking the "black box" of leadership to shed light on why organizations that face similar challenges often react differently.

The types of data considered and not considered in this thesis is in large part a function of external constraints, both related to the pandemic and the covert nature of the actors in focus. Data was collected from different of sources, including online and physical archives, as well as from fieldwork between January 2020 and January 2022. Collection was complicated by travel restrictions and access limitations grounding in the COVID-19 pandemic. The main ramification was that the thesis had to rely more on secondary sources than planned and that the types of sources used in each chapter varies. For example, physical and digital archives were used for the chapters on Palestine and Northern Ireland, but less in the chapter on Afghanistan. The reason is that digital archives held little material written by mujahideen between 1980 and 1990, which was the main period of interest.[26] In this case, the solution was to rely on secondary sources built on extensive libraries of primary sources from this period, such as David B. Edward's *Caravan of Martyrs*. Similarly, I was able to conduct interviews in Northern Ireland, but COVID-19 travel restrictions made it difficult to access to both Palestine and Afghanistan. As a consequence, I have interviews with former revolutionaries in only one empirical chapter.

That said, a more deliberate aspect of the data selection can be found in the use of qualitative data. The thesis makes little direct use of conflict datasets as it aims to understand the process of suicide attack adoption rather than adoption patterns. However, while datasets on political violence are not directly employed in the empirical chapters, they form an important part of the foundation underlying the thesis's theory and qualitative approach. This project builds on my MPhil thesis completed at Oxford in 2018. This examined the correlation between territorial control and suicide attack adoption based on a dataset constructed from the Global

[26] In the University of Oslo Taliban Sources Project (TSP), for example, there are eight documents available from before 1994, the year Palestinian groups and Egyptian Islamic began employing the tactic, compared with several hundred after. The Harmony Program at the Combatting Terrorism Center (CTC) have some documents from the 1980's, but like the TSP most are dated to the 1990s and 2000s.

Terrorism Database (GTD), other conflict and state-capacity datasets, and secondary sources.[27] That work was important to this thesis as it enabled a critical examination of theories in the existing literature and some potentially interesting theories at early stages of the research. Beyond this, the thesis also draws on the quantitative work by Acosta (2016), who used fashion theory to examine whether the adoption pattern of suicide attacks can be explained by attempts to gain status. Whereas he examined whether there was a correlation between the desire to gain status and the adoption of suicide attacks, this thesis looks closer at how issues related to status shape within-group discussions.

1.2.1 Aims and limitations of the thesis

This thesis does not aim to disprove existing theories on variation in suicide attack adoption, but to highlight a limit to their applicability and suggests an alternative explanation for the cases where they fall short. It points to a tendency for explanatory overdetermination in our understanding of the early spread of the tactic, where its narrow geographical and ideological appeal is accepted almost deterministically by referencing social and cultural norms (George and Bennett 2004, 188). To challenge this, I propose that social environments favorable to suicide attacks are a product, not a precondition, of a group introducing the tactic. It is therefore insufficient to understand why the tactic did not spread to a wider variety of actors.

With this in mind, the thesis aims to provide an explanation for why some groups risk introducing suicide attacks to a new social or ideological context despite violating local norms, while others do not. To do this, it develops a novel theoretical framework based on herd behavior and fashion theory to generate a hypothesis that structures an examination of three cases. These explore whether admiration is a relevant mechanism for explaining the suicide

[27] See Appendix Two for the different sources used and a brief outline of the methodology.

attacks' narrow appeal. The cases are carefully selected as representative of the sub-category of groups it is seeking to understand, revolutionaries with incentives, opportunity, and ability to carry out suicide attacks in the 1980's. The case studies aim to make an empirical contribution by using primary sources, fieldwork in Iraq and Northern Ireland, and area studies literature to deepen our knowledge of the legitimization-processes of novel forms of violence in revolutionary groups. Although the process-focus exists in some area studies literature, these chapters systematize the insights to further develop our theorical understanding of how controversial tactics might spread.

However, the material presented in this thesis is not sufficient to prove the theory, and as such are best regarded as indicative and exploratory. This is both due to the methodology as well as the nature of the question. Qualitative studies based on a low number of cases, such as this one, have limited generalizability and challenges related to establishing external validity. Moreover, due to the decision to approach the puzzle through a negative question – why suicide attacks are not adopted by a wider variety of actors – it faces an issue of causal overdetermination. There is simply a plethora of reasons why a certain course of action is not taken. Establishing with any certainty that one factor holds precedence over others requires access and sources that are difficult to obtain when studying covert actors such as revolutionaries. That said, the fact that the thesis turns an often-asked question, "why do groups employ suicide attacks?" on its head, makes one think about the phenomenon in new ways and challenge commonly held assumptions about its appeal.

1.2.2 Structure

The thesis is structured in seven chapters. Following this introduction, chapter two provides a review of existing political violence and social movement literature concerned with

understanding the spread of suicide attacks. The literature is organized into four categories: (1) explanations centering on awareness of suicide attacks' existence as a tactical option, (2) factors that affect a group's ability to carry them out, (3) factors that influence a group's opportunity to do so, and finally (4) factors that have been found to influence a group's desire to employ suicide attacks. The chapter ends with a section on shortcomings in existing explanations. It highlights two key issues, the static view of norms found in much of the diffusion literature and the tendency to not distinguish between groups based on their position in the adoption chronology in a particular context.

Chapter three introduces a novel theoretical framework for understanding why some groups risk introducing suicide attacks to new social and ideological contexts despite uncertain returns. As described above, it draws on research about fashion and herd behavior, as these fields are specifically geared towards explaining the spread of peculiar practices under conditions of limited information. I then propose the hypothesis that suicide attacks spread to new social contexts based on the prestige of the tactic's reference group, not based on information about the tactic's merits. If the reference group of suicide attacks is considered prestigious in some way, the admiration triggered in onlooking revolutionaries might inspire them to downplay salient identity differences, challenge local norms, and imitate.

To explore whether admiration is a relevant mechanism for cross-cultural diffusion, I present three case studies of conflicts taking place between 1980's and 2000's: Palestine, Afghanistan, and Northern Ireland. These are selected because they have groups that were similar in terms of independent variables used to predict adoption: tactical incentives, awareness, ability, and opportunities to adopt. They also exhibit variation in whether suicide attacks were adopted. Using analytical process tracing based on interviews, and primary- and secondary sources, the three chapters look at leadership-level debates about suicide attacks in the years following Iran

and Hezbollah's attacks. Looking at ability, opportunity, normative and cultural environment, as well as external inspiration, it tries to determine the relative weight of these factors in the groups' decisions about whether to adopt.

Chapter four looks at Palestinian Islamists and asks how suicide attacks became an acceptable form of violence among formerly quietist Sunni Islamists. Both Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Palestinian Islamic Brigades integrated suicide attacks into their repertoires of violence during the 1980's. The decision to adopt was not supported by a pre-existing cultural and normative basis in the society. On the contrary, Islamists in Gaza and the West Bank were skeptical of the use of violence in general, and suicide as a form of self-immolation was considered a sin. Fashion theory leads us to expect that these revolutionaries would nevertheless be willing to challenge local norms if they admired those they associated with the idea. In this case, the reference groups were Iran and Hezbollah.

The reception among segments of Palestinian society of the Iranian revolution in 1979 and Hezbollah's attack in 1983 indicates that admiration was present. While Khomeini's pan-Islamism has often been depicted as failing to resonate in the Middle East due to theological disputes and historical animosity, it found space to grow in activist factions of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood and former Maoists (Hatina 2014, 99). For groups like Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Palestinian Islamic Brigades, the Iranian revolution appears to have had inspirational force by manifesting an idealized self-image. The gradual legitimization and incorporation of suicide attacks into their repertoires was arguably symptomatic of this inspiration.

Chapter five looks at Afghanistan and asks why the tactic was discarded by Sunni mujahideen in the 1980's but adopted in the 2000's. During the 1980's, Afghan mujahideen did not adopt suicide attacks nor justify them as part of their developing ethos of martyrdom. Several

organizations in the environment had tactical incentives, ability, and opportunity from the mid-1980's onwards, but cultural and normative sensibilities spoke against adoption. In contrast to groups in Palestine, however, the mujahideen defined themselves as warriors and highly competent fighters. They also considered Iran and its proxies more of an enemy than an idealized self-image. I find no indications that Iran and Hezbollah's achievements trigger the admiration theorized to spur legitimization and imitation of suicide attacks.

What changed by the 2000's was not the characteristics of the tactic nor so much the strength of the occupying adversary, but arguably the identity of the suicide attack emissary. During the period of pan-Islamic rapprochement in the 1990's, it altered from Iran and Hezbollah to al-Qaeda. While members of al-Qaeda actively advertised for the tactic in Afghanistan, the chapter finds few indications that the Afghan mujahideen were *inspired* to use suicide attacks. On the contrary, the early 2000's saw mujahideen being skeptical of the tactic, which they considered foreign, cowardly, and sinful, despite being on friendly terms with al-Qaeda (Williams 2007). While imitation was not triggered by admiration, active convincing and demonstrations of local utility by al-Qaeda convinced some Taliban mid-level commanders to argue in favor of adopting.

Chapter six looks at Northern Ireland and the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and asks why suicide attacks were discarded during the Troubles. Like the groups in the other two cases studies, the PIRA had tactical incentives, ability, and opportunity from the early 1980's onward, but cultural context and social norms spoke against adoption. While Hezbollah's attack against the marine barracks inspired discussions in the organization about carrying out that type of attack, people interviewed for this chapter claimed it was not seriously considered. Given that the PIRA had a self-perception of high competence and low similarity with the suicide attack reference groups of the 1980's, the absence of inspiration is not surprising. While Hezbollah's

1983 attack spurred wonder in the PIRA, the group was neither regarded as better informed nor seen as an idealized self-image. Like the mujahideen in the 1980's, it appears that the PIRA had too much history and belief in their own ability to adopt suicide attacks based on the example provided by a new and relatively unknown group.

Chapter seven concludes by summarizing findings and outlining some contributions and limitations of the theory, most importantly issues of external validity and confirmation bias. The three case studies indicate that the revolutionaries' views of the suicide attack reference groups did influence their view of the tactic's potential merit. The fewer indications of admiration a group displayed, the more skepticism it expressed towards the potential of suicide attacks. While the analysis has important shortcomings, the findings suggest that a reason suicide attacks did not spread to a wider variety of actors was because its early proponents, Iran and Hezbollah, had limited appeal. This could explain the different trajectories of Duc's self-immolation by fire and Hezbollah's' suicide attack. While Duc's suicide by fire came at the start of a global wave of protests loosely connected to the civil rights movement, Hezbollah's attack came towards the end of the era of leftist and secularist national liberation militarism. Revolutionaries in the 80's therefore tended to be quite experienced. Those that were not began basing their mobilization around more locally grounded identities, in particular Islam. As such, the reason the tactic proliferated within that network and not others, might in part owe to the fact that Islamist groups happened to be new to the revolutionary scene at that time. Once the tactic caught on among actors identifying as Islamist, it created the basis for the tactic's narrow perpetuation by becoming a symbol of the Salafi-jihadi movement.

2 Literature review

The literature on suicide attack adoption can be organized in four categories: explanations centering on awareness, ability, opportunity, and desire. This chapter suggests that while existing explanations give important insight into many aspects of suicide attack spread, they fall short in explaining the tactic's narrow ideological and geographical appeal. While they are very useful for understanding why suicide attacks are adopted once groups have information about audience cost and status gains, they are less useful for understanding spread before this information is available.

Existing scholarship tends to assume that revolutionaries have reliable information on audience costs before using the tactic and underestimate their agency in shaping norms of acceptable behavior. As a consequence, many theoretical frameworks struggle with accounting for first movers, the groups that are first to adopt suicide attacks in their respective social and ideological contexts, those that take the tactic to heart before it has grown roots in the networks from which they draw support. These first movers are the type of groups that contribute to making a tactic modular. Understanding what shapes their decision to adopt in the face of uncertain returns is the key to understand why suicide attacks did not spread to a wider variety of actors.

Most scholars seeking to understanding how suicide attacks spread engage with social movement theory's framework for repertoires of contention. From the 1960's, the focus in the social movement literature gradually coalesced around four main concepts: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, collective action frames, and repertoires of contention (Tarrow 2005, 23). Repertoires of contention as a concept was developed by Charles Tilly to describe the constellations of acts used to make claims on the behalf of some collective against people in power. He defined repertoires as the product of learned and historically grounded

performances, and more specifically as "a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice" (Tilly 2016, 42). Ontologically the routines are conceived as signals, instruments that can be used to communicate intention, capabilities, or strength (Tilly 2008, 4-5). Observing that the range of actions considered for expressing particular grievances change over time despite the grievances and abilities staying the same, Tilly wondered how these repertoires emerge, evolve, and travel (Tilly 1978, 153).

Social movement theorists divide the spread of a new tactic into three phases: invention, diffusion, and adoption. This terminology has been adopted by multiple scholars focusing on suicide attacks, including Bloom (2005), William Lewis (2012), and Bakke (2013), as well as social movement theorists that use suicide attacks as a case study of diffusion, such as Sidney Tarrow (2005).[28]

Invention, or tactical innovation, refers to social movements creating new tactical forms and often occurs in response to structural changes and technological advancement (McAdam 1983, 736). Several scholars have pointed to changes in structural conditions increasing the likelihood of new tactics being invented in response. Tilly (2016) focused on macro processes related to state formation and capitalism which altered the feasibility and efficacy of tactics like demonstrations and strikes. Sewell (1990) pointed to the French Revolution as an event which transformed the basis of legitimacy and claims making. Looking at invention in terrorist groups, Enders and Sandler (2012) pointed to security countermeasures as a factor driving rebels to innovate new tactics.[29]

[28] Others refer contentious acts simply as tactics, such as Sidney Tarrow in his chapter on suicide attacks as an example of transnational diffusion, or Doug McAdam in his study of creativity and innovation in the black movement between 1955-1970 (McAdam 1983).

[29] Innovations might also be accidental, as when the IRA discovered the car bombs, or in response to new technology becoming available to the masses, such as in the case of 19th century dynamite assassination (Larabee 2015; M. Davis 2017).

Organizations do not have to re-invent the wheel in every location – rather, they may find inspiration in other conflicts and decide to adopt those to their own ends (Mcadam and Rucht 1993, 58). The transfer of a tactic from one context to another presupposes the spread of information about it, this is called diffusion. The literature distinguishes between three types of diffusion: relational, non-relational, and mediated (Tarrow 2010, 209). Relational diffusion is the spread of information between an actor and an innovator where there is a pre-existing relationship of trust, essentially where organizations learning directly from other organizations they know. Non-relational diffusion describes organizations learning through impersonal interaction, for example through seeing or reading about other organizations in the media. Mediated diffusion indicates that an information was given to a group through contact with third parties who maintain relationships of trust with both themselves and the innovators. These processes can take place between groups in a domestic setting (i.e., one movement adopting a tactic from another movement in the same country), between countries, and between domestic and transnational movements (Bakke 2013; Tarrow 2005; Mcadam and Rucht 1993).

The spread of information enables other groups in different contexts to learn about the tactic, but it does not predicate that they will use them. While some tactics remain highly localized and tied to a particular cause, tactics that are widely adopted are described as 'modular', meaning that they are generalizable to other issues and transferrable from one set of circumstances to another (Tilly 2008, 71).[30] The main question for adoption is this: assuming diffusion of know-how, what explains whether the tactic is incorporated into the repertoire of a particular group?

[30] In Tilly's exploration of 18th century Britain, food seizures did not become modular, but remained tethered to one particular cause (food prices) and a limited number of contexts. In contrast, demonstrations did not become tightly connected to a single cause, but was adopted in different contexts to advocate for a range of causes (Tilly 2008, 78).Tilly traced how the food price issue persisted while the types of popular claims making used to protest it changed. Over the period of around 50 years, a repertoire characterized by food seizures and blockades was gradually replaced by demonstrations and public meetings as the ties between local and national authority in

Perhaps the most fundamental insight from the repertoires literature is that adoption is more likely to ensue when another group has demonstrated successful use of the tactic (Tilly 1978, 155). That said, what constitutes success varies and is notoriously difficult to judge. Sometimes the mere appearance of impact can lead to widespread adoption despite the tactic not actually having the intended effect (Soule 1999). The other important factor found to predict adoption is the tactic's conformity to prevailing norms. Norms can be defined as "collective expectations for the proper behavior of actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein 1996, 5).[31] In the diffusion framework, norms are primarily seen to have 'regulative' effects, meaning that they operate as "standards that specify the proper enactment of an already defined identity" (Katzenstein 1996, 5). When violating these norms, groups risks losing legitimacy unless they can convincingly justify their action towards their constituent community or unless circumstances lead the community to change its assessment of what behavior is acceptable. For example, periods of instability and processes endogenous to conflict can change what is considered acceptable behavior, whether through acute feelings of insecurity and threat, involvement of foreign fighters (Bakke 2013), or government repression (Della Porta 2013).

Britain strengthened (Tilly 2016). More specifically, the old repertoire associated with the food riots in 1758 and onwards were taxation populaire, blockages of shipments, touring and commandeering, posting of threats, and displaying symbols of dearth. The repertoire which gradually replaced it consisted not only of demonstrations and public meetings, but the petition drive, the press statement, display of symbols denoting personal affiliation and the formation of associations devoted to the pursuit of cause.

[31] He proceeds to define identity as, "a shorthand label for varying constructions of nation- and statehood," created in political processes that set conflicting actors against one another (Katzenstein 1996, 6).

The literature on suicide attacks looks at desire to adopt more broadly, considering both tactical and strategic incentives. Based on the diffusion framework, tactical innovations are expected to spread to groups in different contexts following a successful demonstration of the innovation's potential. Assuming the diffusion of information, groups then consider whether to adopt by judging, on the one hand, if they have the opportunity and ability, and at the same time, whether it is desirable. We might visualize the diffusion model in the following way:[32]



Figure 1 Illustration of adoption process

The below presents the literature organized around each of these categories to see how they account for suicide attacks limited spread.

2.1 Awareness

Establishing that a group was actually aware of suicide attacks as a possibility is important because in the absence of information, the non-occurrence of an event cannot be attributed to choice (Elster 2015). If it is the case that a wider variety of actors did not adopt suicide attacks because they were unaware of the possibility, this will be a short thesis. However, Hezbollah's attack against the marine barracks, like Duc's protest in Vietnam, gained widespread international attention in virtue of its novelty and perceived effectiveness. An important part of what caught people's attention about Duc's suicide protest was its form – suicide by fire. The same can be said about Hezbollah's attack, the then relatively new idea of packing explosives into a truck together with a driver. As the historical review illustrated suicide attacks were not

[32] The linearity of the model is not meant to reflect linearity in the decision-making process.

new, but apart from the Kamikaze pilots in the Second World War, no other actor had mounted an attack causing comparable international stir. An important reason the Marine Barrack attack is credited as the start of the 'suicide attack era' is the unprecedented impact, both in terms of death and perceived effect. It also happened at a time when increased speed of media exchange and the introduction of satellite television meant that the news the marine barrack bombings could be broadcasted faster and more widely than, for example, the use of suicide attacks in Asia in the 1950's.

Given the magnitude of the event and the state of the media, it is not unreasonable to assume global media diffusion, but that does not mean that all revolutionary groups heard about it. After all, they often have more pressing concerns than reading international news. Because assuming global diffusion to revolutionaries is unreasonably optimistic, being informed about suicide attacks has usually been operationalized as network connections between groups (Bakke 2013; M. Horowitz 2010a). Unfortunately, the increased reliability of using network connections as an indicator comes at the cost of underestimating the number of negative cases. In the case of Duc, for example, Biggs found that the spread of suicide by fire to other countries did not involve personal networks, "…it was nonrelational diffusion, with information conveyed by news media" (Biggs 2013, 420).

Regardless of what assumption we make we get a bias. If we assume global diffusion, we likely overestimate the presence of negative cases and if we assume only relational diffusion, we likely underestimate them. Finding out exactly who heard about the tactic in the 1980's and 90's with any certainty is difficult short of case studies of revolutionaries in different continents. This issue notwithstanding, we do know that having information is not a perfect predictor of adoption. The fact that actors that we know heard about the tactic both inside and outside of Lebanon did not adopt is a clear indication that, for many groups, non-adoption was indeed a choice and

not simply a matter of lacking information of better alternatives (Pape 2003). The point might seem pedantic, but it is important to point out for two reasons. First because it means there is something – a choice – to study, and second because it makes us aware of the importance of establishing the presence of information in the cases selected for study.

2.2 Ability

The second branch of the literature on suicide attack spread takes an ability-centric approach. These studies explore to what extent variation in adoption can be attributed to technical expertise and organizational characteristics necessary to carry them out. Conducting a cross-sectional analysis of 233 terrorist organizations from 1955 to 2006, Horowitz (2015) found that expertise, measured as direct tactical diffusion, is an important indicator for whether or not groups will adopt suicide attacks. Unlike relational diffusion, discussed above, Horowitz uses tactical diffusion to mean the transference of expertise or training. This seems sensible all the while a group that has information about suicide attack's existence but not about how to construct the necessary equipment, nor how to execute the attack, might be wise not to attempt it. After all, most people these days know that it is possible to fly an airplane, but those of us with a mere driver's license are understandably hesitant to get behind the yoke. In both cases, the cost of trying might very well be fatal.

However, the airplane-suicide attack analogy does not really hold. Or that depends on what type of expertise is necessary to carry out suicide attacks and what kind of expertise the group in question already holds. After all, most revolutionaries know how to use explosives (IEDs) and many have tried their luck with the car bomb (VIEDs) (M. Davis 2017). Based on descriptions of explosives used in suicide vests and vehicles, the technical step from manufacturing an IED and VBIED to a suicide vest, jacket, or vehicle is not insurmountable (Tveteraas 2022;

Moghadam 2003). In these cases, attempting a suicide attack without being trained by a pre-existing user is not really the same as trying your luck in an airplane after having passed your driver's license test. It is more like jumping straight into a semi-trailer; there are plenty of things that could go wrong, but many of the skills you acquired in your experience driving a car are transferrable to the trailer. Still arguably ill advised, but not a guaranteed catastrophe.

Besides expertise, suicide attacks place a demand on an organization's human resources and structure, as it requires a separation between operatives and those involved in different stages of the preparation in order to carry it out systematically (Tveteraas 2022; Moghadam 2003). However, most armed operations carry significant risk to the perpetrator, so some variation of the organizational characteristics required to carry out suicide attacks likely already exist unless the group is entirely new.

Like awareness, ability is a necessary condition for using the tactic, but it does little to help us understand variation in adoption patterns. There are multiple examples of groups in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin American that received training from avid users of suicide attacks but nevertheless never manifested the tactic. Examples include organizational links between Palestinian groups and the ETA and IRA, Hezbollah and the FARC in Columbia, Jemaah Islamiyah and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Hassam in Egypt and Hamas in Palestine. We do not know whether these groups received the know-how for suicide attacks and chose not to employ it or whether they had the opportunity to request the expertise but did not have the desire to do so. The first suggests that know-how is not a perfect predictor for use, the second that availability of expertise does not equal a desire to integrate the tactic into the repertoire. Either way, we need to look elsewhere to understand why the tactic did not gain wider traction.

2.3 Opportunity

Assuming awareness and ability, the next category of explanations look to opportunity structures to understand the tactic's limited appeal. Opportunities to employ suicide attacks are limited if an organization does not have the material or human resources to carry them out. The availability of either is to an extent a function of the group's operational environment, the context in which it carries out its operations. Revolutionaries that are forced to operate underground by a high functioning security apparatus are often characterized as clandestine. An often cited predicament for clandestine groups is 'the terrorist's dilemma', the tradeoff between secrecy and operational capacity (Bell 1989; Shapiro 2015). Owen and McCormick describe it as follows: "The problem, (…) is that the "capacity" and "security" of secret organizations are inversely related. For any given operating environment, the actions the group must take to improve its short run effect are antithetical to what it must do to improve its security" (McCormick and Owen 2000, 176).

Analyzing cross-sectional data from the Global Terrorism Database on both clandestine and territorial groups that have been active between 1982-2012, shows that groups that have had to operate clandestinely for most of their lifespan use suicide attacks less often.[33] While the fact that they are less likely to carry out more than ten can be attributed to size associated with territoriality, it is curious that they are also less likely at lower thresholds. For example, in terms

[33] For an overview of the dataset and code underlying these findings, see Appendix 2. Model 1 excludes the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score, which is a statistical measure for state power. Model 2 runs the same specifications as Model 1, but on a subset from 1970-2012. This subset was selected because the data available in that period is better. It also conveniently excludes the effect of the Arab spring. Model 3 includes the CINC score. It is difficult to disentangle the effect of controlling territory from the effect of state weakness, and, visa versa, state strength from operating clandestinely. However, the fact that the clandestine/territorial variable remains statistically significant despite the inclusion of the CINC measure suggests state strength/weakness in itself is a poor predictor for suicide attack occurrence.

of absolute probability, clandestine groups are around 45% less likely to conduct up to five suicide attacks than their territorial counterparts.[34]

Table 2 The effect of operating clandestinely on groups' propensity to carry out suicide attacks at different thresholds of adoption

	Clandestine Coefficient		
	Model 1 1982-2017	Model 2 1982-2012	Model 3 1982-2012 (CINC)
1 Suicide attack	−0.780	−0.921	−1.021*
2 Suicide attacks	−0.993**	−1.013*	−1.084**
3 Suicide attacks	−1.246**	−0.993**	−1.317**
5 Suicide attacks	−1.943***	−1.868***	−1.950***
10 Suicide attacks	−1.728***	−1.571**	−1.625**
15 Suicide attacks	−2.010***	−1.538**	−1.657**
20 Suicide attacks	−1.996***	−1.772**	−1.915***
50 Suicide attacks	−2.432**	−2.373**	−2.544**
60 Suicide attacks	−2.427*	−2.025*	−2.444**
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

From an opportunities' perspective, this could be due to constraints on recruitment, logistics, and coordination. Constraints on recruitment means clandestine groups have a smaller pool of 'easily-replaceable' members, making the cost of intentionally blowing up one member steeper than for territorial counterparts. As mentioned in the previous section, organizing suicide attacks can also be a complex affair, and the coordination involved might expose clandestine organizations to a higher degree of risk. Depending on how the group or cell is structured, the discovery of one part of the organization could lead to unraveling the entire network (Enders and Sandler 2012; Bakker, Raab, and Milward 2012).

That said, clandestine groups often have international networks and state backers that aid their ability to operate in high repression environments by providing them with sanctuary and support (Byman 2005). Cooperation can take a variety of shapes and be aimed at increasing a

[34] Looking at the marginal effect on Islamist and non-Islamist groups respectively while also modelling incentives, it is clear that they respond to strategic and tactical incentives to use suicide attacks differently.

group's operational capacity through sharing money, materiel, expertise, and safe havens, or at promoting common ideological and political objectives.[35] Ideological and logistical cooperation occurred among left-wing groups operating in Europe and the Middle East during the 70's and 80's as well as for jihadi groups at the turn of the century (Moghadam 2017; Sterling 1981). Many spectacular suicide attacks conducted after 1980 have had a cooperative component. The most lethal attack on the CIA in a quarter-century was a suicide attack in Khost, Afghanistan, organized by al-Qaeda, Tehreek e-Taliban Pakistan, and the Haqqani Network (Warrick 2012). The September 11 attacks were pitched to al-Qaeda and prepared by an outsider to the organization. Preparations for Hezbollah's attack on the marine barracks in 1983 were conducted with the help of Iran and Syria, so was the attack perpetrated by the Shi'a Iraqi group al-Dawah against the Iraqi embassy in Lebanon in 1981.

These potential confounding factors make opportunity structures a poor predictor for adoption or use. This is not to mention that there are plenty of groups that have achieved territorial control that never adopted the tactic. There are several examples of this in Latin America, Asia and Southeast Asia are other examples, as well as in Northern Ireland during some periods of the Troubles.

The above looks primarily at constraints, but other studies have looked at how some societies might provide a more fruitful context for suicide attacks than others by producing willing volunteers. If there are common denominators in societies prone to experience suicide attacks, we might deduce that people are less willing to conduct them in their absence. An early belief

[35] Ely Karmon has provided a typology which divides the phenomenon into (1) ideological cooperation, such as written statements of solidarity, (2) logistical cooperation, including information sharing, safe heavens, and material support, and (3) operational cooperation, joint planning of attacks (Karmon 2005). Taking into account the actor scope of terrorist agents, Moghadam makes the additional distinction between networked and organizational cooperation (Moghadam 2017, 48–67). Whereas the latter captures inter-group or group-state relationships, the former denotes that at least one of the actors is an informal network or individual entrepreneur.

was that perpetrators were predominantly drawn from a pool of recruits that were of a lower socioeconomic standing: unsuccessful in work or studies, alienated from their families, and with low self-esteem (Israeli 1997). In other words, all else equal countries that are poorer were believed to present more favorable suicide attack terrain because desperation will lead people to volunteer. However, quite to the contrary empirical studies found that suicide attackers are more often found in the higher and educated social echelons (Krueger 2007; Krueger and Malečková 2003).[36] Some cross-national studies have nevertheless identified a link between suicide attacks and national poverty levels. Sandler and Santiford-Jordan (2014) reconcile these findings by arguing that while poverty creates incentives to use the tactic, its use in complex operations against hard targets lead organizations to select people with education that are more likely able to execute the missions. This last point notwithstanding, the number of poor countries and low-income communities that have never experienced suicide attacks nor fostered suicide attackers suggests that this is not the entire story.

Other studies have sought to broaden our understanding of why individuals agree to carry out suicide attacks. Japanese soldiers left behind a corpus of diaries, revolutionary suicide attackers have often recorded videos or statements prior to their departure (Ohnuki-Tierney 2002; Cook 2007). In contrast to Japanese diaries, however, these serve more to understand group propaganda than the mindset and motivation of the attacker. In lieu of access to the perpetrator's inner life, interviews with those arrested before they were able to complete their mission, as well as with family members of successful bombers, have nevertheless served to weaken the myth of suicide attackers as irrational fanatics.[37] One prominent way of viewing

[36] In Palestine suicide bombers in both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad were better educated than their non-suicide attack counterparts, with 56% percent of all suicide attackers having begun their tertiary education compared to 44% of non-suicide attackers (Sabri and Schulze 2020).
[37] There are conflicting findings about mental health, however. For different arguments, see: Merari 2010; Moghadam 2009; Sprinzak 2000; Pedahzur 2005; Brym and Araj 2008

suicide attackers today is as rational altruists, with suicide attacks modeled as an inter-generational investment aimed at improving life for future generations (Azam 2005). That said, motivations are so diverse and context dependent that it has been impossible to create a general profile. Scholars have suggested altruism, strong adherence to a cause, peer-pressure, revenge, benefits after death, and depression as reoccurring motifs (Pedahzur 2005, 124; Binmore 2008; Berko and Erez 2008; Iqbal 2015; Jurgensmeyer 2003). As a clear perpetrator profile does not exist, it is difficult to use this as a variable to explain variation in adoption.

This leads us to the final category of explanations, namely those focused on desire to adopt. Why would any organization want to intentionally blow up their members and why do people volunteer to such an operation?

2.4 Desire

The desire to use suicide attacks is commonly operationalized as tactical and strategic incentives. The majority of group-level studies considers the use of suicide attacks as strategic (Enders and Sandler 2011; Hoffman and McCormick 2004; Sprinzak 2000; Azam 2005; Crenshaw 1987; Hafez 2007). This implies that the tactic is used instrumentally when a group believes that it will increase its chance of success in the short or long term. To understand why some groups might turn to suicide attacks it is therefore necessary to understand the possible advantages that might incentivize a group to use the tactic. That said, whether the use of suicide attacks increases a group's chances of (1) operational success and (2) achieving their outcome aims is disputed.[38]

[38] This in large part depends on what we understand as the objective of a given group. Max Abrahms have questioned the very foundation of the strategic understanding of terrorism, asking whether terrorist groups are motivated by political aims and whether it can ever be successful (Abrahms 2006; 2008). Others have responded with broadening the definition of 'success' beyond a group achieving its ultimate political aim. Organizational process theory, for example, assumes that the fundamental purpose of a political organization is to maintain

2.4.1 Tactical incentives

Evolving operational environments and changes in government countermeasures can lead groups on a search for new tactics. Whether an organization is legal or illegal, this kind of adaptation and learning is important for both short-term survival and long-term success (Argote and Miron-Spektor 2011). New tactics can be developed through innovation or by adopting methods used by revolutionaries elsewhere.[39] The term innovation is usually used to describe radical departures from current methods, but it also captures incremental modifications of existing techniques and technologies (Dolnik 2007; Gill et al. 2013). For example, while Hezbollah's 1983 suicide bomb against the marine barracks can be characterized as a radical innovation, the gradual modifications of suicide vehicles by the Islamic state are more accurately described as incremental innovations (Tveteraas 2022).

The literature on innovation has typically focused on identifying the external conditions and group characteristics that can serve as indicators for predicting innovative and conservative behaviors (Jackson 2001; Gill et al. 2013; Jackson et al. 2005a; 2005b). The organizational factors that influence the creative processes and shape innovation outcomes are less explored, possibly because gaining the requisite insight into revolutionary organizations is fraught with difficulty and because such questions are less interesting for counter terrorism efforts (Gill et al. 2013). When it comes to explanations for why groups sometimes venture to explore new tactics and attempt to innovate however, a reoccurring factor is the insufficiency of existing methods to achieve short- or long-term aims.

itself. Consequently, suicide attacks can be seen as a means, not to achieve a political aim, but to sustain the organization itself. Staying operational as a terror group or rebel organization is often a feat, and this is an aim that suicide attacks have proven rather apt at realizing (M. C. Horowitz 2015, 75–76; Acosta 2016).

[39] What social movement literature calls diffusion, research on innovation and adaptability in terrorist groups tends to call contagion.

With around 40 years of data on suicide attack use available, scholars have theorized several tactical advantages unique this type of operation. Suicide attacks are more lethal than conventional tactics and more successful against military, police, and government targets (Berman and Laitin 2005; Enders and Sandler 2012; Santifort-Jordan and Sandler 2014; Piazza 2018). Moreover, the perpetrator can respond to unexpected challenges, he cannot be captured and interrogated after the attack, and the practice is relatively cost-effective (Hoffman 2006, 132–33). Suicide attacks are believed to be relatively cheap compared to their impact and so offer a greater return on investment (Hoffman 2006, 133). This rationale has been proposed by groups themselves, who view it as an efficient way to inflict damage disproportionate to their resources (Moghadam 2006). Relatedly, some argue that suicide attacks are particularly advantageous for groups operating in repressive and competitive environments as it signals resolve and can trigger indiscriminate state repression, positively affecting both support and recruitment (Rosendorff and Sandler 2010; Bueno de Mesquita and Dickson 2007; M. Bloom 2005; Nemeth 2014; Conrad and Greene 2015).

Suicide attacks are also theorized to be particularly beneficial against military and police targets because the perpetrator can act as a 'smart missile' and react to obstacles that might occur on the way (Berman and Laitin 2005; 2008). This argument is reflected in statements by groups themselves. The famous image of suicide bombers as a 'poor man's smart bomb' emerged from Israel around the time of the second intifada. Hamas's leader in Gaza, Abdel Aziz Rantissi, stated, "Hamas uses these tactics and means of struggle because it lacks F-16s, Apaches, tanks and missiles, and so we use any means that we have (…) It is not just for paradise, or the virgins [the legendary reward for martyrs], but because we are under occupation and are weak" (Goldenberg 2002). A few years later, Piazza empirically tested whether suicide attacks had a higher rate of success against military, police, and government targets than other tactics and found that this was indeed the case (Piazza 2018).

With these insights in hand Gilli and Gilli (2014) criticized Horwitz's expertise centric diffusion model for failing to take tactical incentives, or desire to adopt, into account.[40] Seeing suicide attacks as a primarily tactical innovation, they argued that groups are more likely to conduct suicide attacks when other methods are unlikely to succeed. Specifically, they suggested that the more powerful a country is vis-a-vis terrorist or rebel group, the more likely the group is to resort to suicide attacks in order to compensate for its tactical weakness. Gilli and Gilli found that this incentive does indeed matter, with groups being between 34 and 49 percent more likely to adopt the tactic if they are up against highly mechanized adversaries (2014, 537). This corresponded with earlier theoretical work by Enders and Sandler, who argued that changes in the cost-benefit analysis for one tactic might lead groups to substitute that tactic with something that provides greater expected utility (Enders and Sandler 2012).

Despite the merits of tactical incentive arguments, there are several examples where groups have either been involved in highly asymmetric conflicts or focused on primarily hard targets and still refrained from employing suicide attacks. Two such cases are the ETA in Spain and the IRA in Northern Ireland, another is the Afghan mujahideen during the Soviet invasion. As rightly pointed out by Gilli and Gilli (2014, 544-545), the IRA did employ "proxy bombs" on a couple of occasion during the 1990's, where they would kidnap the family of the prospective bomber and force him to act as a human bomb. However, forcing people to be human bombs at gunpoint is a highly peculiar instantiation of the tactic and does not conform to the strict definition of suicide attack as described in the next chapter. Muslim Brotherhood inspired groups in Egypt from 2013-2017 is another example of groups that were engaged in highly asymmetric conflict, focused on hard targets, but nonetheless abstained from using the tactic.

[40] Their findings resonate with earlier arguments about the tactical advantages of suicide attacks.

Conversely, we also find adaptors among groups focusing their suicide attack campaign on civilian, not military, targets. One prominent examples is the Boko Haram, which started using the tactic in 2011.[41] Moreover, there are also examples of groups, such as the Islamic State during their reign in Iraq and Ansar Beit al-Maqdis in Egypt, that used suicide attacks against infrastructure where a conventional bomb would likely have had the same effect (Whiteside and Mironova 2017).

A possible reason for this variation is found in the literature on organizational learning. People often take the 'wrong' lessons from their own and others' experiences and, even if they extract the right ones, organizational modalities tend to inhibit them from implementing learning (Huber 1991; Kenney 2007; Shapiro 2015). Learning requires information processing, a task that is challenging to accomplish in lawful organizations, much less in those that attempt to operate clandestinely. Add to this the frequent turnover of members and leadership in revolutionary groups, and the expectation that they should draw optimal lessons from either their own or others' experiences seems unreasonable.[42]

That said, a problematic assumption underlying tactical incentives arguments is that some situations call for suicide attacks more than others. While it might be the case that they have proven more successful in some contexts and against some targets, the variation in types of use, targets, and context, suggests that this logic is insufficient to understand why some groups use them and others do not (Acosta 2016; Conrad and Greene 2015; Abrahms 2008). A more fundamental problem with using tactical incentives to model desire is that they are not stable.

[41] According to the CTC, civilian areas such as markets, bus stations and IDP camps were targeted in 32.8% of Boko Harams suicide attacks (Warner and Matfess 2017, 16).

[4242] That said, while one would expect membership attrition would make it harder for revolutionary organizations to learn because expertise and other organizational human capital is frequently lost, it sometimes has the opposite or little effect (Dominic Johnson 2009).

It ignores the fact that the actors that have employed suicide attacks, the nature of the conflicts where they have been employed, and adversary types, constantly change. Warfare, whether regular or irregular, is a dynamic phenomenon where the ability to adapt, innovate, and outsmart the adversary is essential for survival, not to mention winning (Johnson 2009). Therefore, theories based on data from one decade might be valid for that timeframe but fail entirely to account for observations in the subsequent ten years, much less predict them.

Theories that do not take the dynamism and interactive nature of relationships between revolutionaries and security forces into account are therefore bound to become dated (Moghadam 2008; Acosta 2016). This is arguably why Robert Pape's theory, which saw suicide attack spread as a function of adversary type, became dated quite quickly. The same is arguably the case about outbidding: what mobilized the population in one decade is not bound to do so the next. Ricolfi made an excellent point when he noted that "it is fruitless to ask oneself in general why SMs are carried out, (…) It makes more sense to acknowledge the versatility of SMs in as much as an SM can serve purposes that are thoroughly different from each other depending on the context and on the 'technology' employed" (Ricolfi 2005, 104).

2.4.2 Strategic incentives

Others focus strategic incentives to understand why some groups have opted to use suicide attacks and others abstained. In these works, suicide attacks are conceptualized as a form of signaling, and the use of the tactic a form of communication. First there is outbidding theory, which posits that suicide attacks signal strong resolve towards a population and thereby increase the user group's market share of support. As such, suicide attacks are attractive for groups seeking to outperform their rivals and mobilize their constituent population (M. Bloom 2005;

Hoffman and McCormick 2004).[43] The second looks at suicide attacks as a form of dirty bargaining with the state, with the tactic being used as a means to increase the cost of non-compliance (Hoffman and McCormick 2004). Here, suicide attacks are used by groups seeking to intimidate opponents and their supporters. The third looks at suicide attacks as a symbolic act, specifically a signal of group-character, intended to signal belonging to a particular type of ideology and gain material benefits associated with it (Acosta 2016). By this account, the tactic is employed symbolically to gain status and position the group alongside a broader ideological and political movement. Mobilizing the population, intimidating opponents, and gaining status are all appealing aims for revolutionary groups. Therefore, scholars seeking to understand the spread of the tactic do not primarily focus on identifying which groups had these incentives, but on understanding why some groups choose to signal with suicide attacks and others not.

It is possible that suicide attacks achieved less spread than suicide by fire because the former presuppose a victim, something that could contradict prevailing norms of behavior and damage the legitimacy of a group. This speaks to the norm congruence of the act, which is the most frequently employed explanation for the limited appeal of the tactic despite its strategic promise. In Everett Rogers's famous theory on the diffusion of innovations, he suggests that adoption of a new innovation depends on whether it is perceived as consistent with existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters (Rogers 2003, 240).

Drawing on this and similar norm-centric arguments, both Jeffrey William Louise and Kristen Bakke argue that a suicide attacks will only be adopted when they are compatible with cultural

[43] Bloom's case study on Palestinian groups has been critiqued and large-N studies of the outbidding mechanism cast doubt on whether the competitive mechanism. However, these studies operationalized competitive escalation as a quantitative increase in attacks (Brym and Araj 2008; Findley and Young 2012b). Conducting the same statistical analysis while operationalizing competitive escalation as a qualitative increase in brutality, Conrad and Greene (2015) found support for the competitive mechanism.

and social norms (William Lewis 2012, 204; Bakke 2013, 39). Mia Bloom also posits that the tactic will not be adopted unless it has 'resonance' in the revolutionary group's community, stating "if suicide bombing does not resonate among the larger population the tactic will fail. If it is applauded, it will flourish" (Bloom 2005, 78). Hoffman and McCormick make a similar claim, noting, "Popular acceptance of suicide tactics is clearly an essential prerequisite if a group expects to advance its position by killing off its membership and still find the follow-on volunteers needed to sustain its campaign over time" (Hoffman and Mccormick 2004, 250).

While one can hardly argue against this, it begs a few questions. First, given that revolutionaries employ norm-breaking behavior as a matter of course, why does it matter what type of violence they use? Second, if some types of violence are more acceptable than others, what exactly is the problem with suicide attacks compared to other tactics? Third, and most importantly, how can groups know if suicide attacks will resonate before introducing them to the conflict environment?

2.4.2.1 The benefits of keeping it normative

To start with the first question: why should revolutionary groups care about norms of acceptable behavior? As briefly discussed, adhering to norms is important to generate and maintain public support. Revolutionaries can obtain several benefits from a positive perception among its stakeholders, whether these are found in the local community, among foreign audiences, or in foreign states. Groups that are successful at marketing themselves to these audiences can obtain either active or passive support, which has been empirically linked to both increased operational capacity and organizational longevity (Bakker, Raab, and Milward 2012; Malečková and Stanišić 2011; Boyns and Ballard 2004; Faria and Arce M. 2005).

For clandestine revolutionaries as well as those in civil war, active support by local communities in the form of logistical and operational aid is linked to increased operational capacity through local recruitment, improved counterintelligence ability, and access to material resources (Burton 1978; Faria and Arce M. 2005; Paul 2010). Local sympathy for the cause makes day-to-day actives easier by decreasing the probability of informants and also works as signals of group legitimacy to potential supporters abroad (Criado 2011; Bakker, Raab, and Milward 2012; J. B. Bell 1989).[44] Active forms of state support has been linked to survival of group-controlled areas and improved operational capacity in groups operating underground, especially through provision of sanctuary (Caspersen 2009; Byman 2005; Riedel 2011). More passive forms of state support have been found to improve the chances of groups with separatist aims obtaining international recognition (Coggins 2014). In other words, public support can offset some of the constraints related to opportunity structures discussed in the previous section.

Different tactics and targeting practices come at different costs depending on the audience one seeks to impress. Because of its importance to group survival, popular support is frequently highlighted as a factor influencing the cost benefit analysis for violent tactics. Research on violence in civil war shows that whereas targeting civilians can be a tool to enforce compliance, establish order, and extract resources from the population, it can also damage domestic and international support levels (Lyall, Blair, and Imai 2013; Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood 2014; Kalyvas 2006). Research on terrorist groups show that particularly lethal tactics can generate local and external support by signaling extreme resolve, but, as mentioned, only if it conforms to the norms of those communities (M. Bloom 2005; Hoffman and McCormick 2004).[45]

[44] Being able to trust that the population will not inform on the group is valuable to mitigate the terrorists' dilemma. As Bell observes, "absolute secrecy guarantees absolutely that nothing works properly" (J. B. Bell 1989, 17).

[45] These studies have provided insight into movements' decisions of whether to employ violence as well as variation in targeting. However, it is quite rare to find studies that increase the granularity, looking at variation within the category of violent tactic rather than contrasting it against non-violent alternatives. Because the latter

Recently, studies have also looked more closely at how violent and non-violent tactics are perceived by international audiences, and how social services can offset the public cost of civilian targeting among them (Arves, Cunningham, and McCulloch 2019; Huff and Kruszewska 2016; Flynn and Stewart 2018).[46]

How sensitive a group needs to be to the normative environment depends on whether they have control over territory or operate clandestinely. This is because revolutionaries that have full or partial control over a territory can use coercion to ensure things usually associated with active support, such as compliance, recruitment, and material resources (De la Calle 2017; Zhukov 2013; Kalyvas 2006). For the population living in areas controlled by the Shining Path, for example, refusing to support the group could end in a People's Trial and a very painful death (Quainton 1991, 4).[47] This being the case, the Shining Path did not really need to cultivate support because its benefits could be gained by coercion and active opposition could be swiftly and effectively halted. In this context, constituency defection is both less probable – because of a credible threat of death or mutilation – and less dangerous to the group as the state does not have complete territorial reach.

However, despite being less of an immediate concern there can be long-term negative effects that create incentives for constituency cultivation among territorial groups. As an example, the IRA's political wing Sin Fein was the main provider of policing and security in some areas of Northern Ireland during the Troubles. In this environment informing on the group was done

is likely to be a lot less controversial, violence tends to be left as a homogenous category captured in 'terrorism' or 'bombing' contrasted to a variety of non-violent alternatives.

[46] An issue in some of the studies focusing on perception is that they do not sufficiently consider the respondents' frames of reference. In the Arves et. al. paper, one of their surveys look at public perception in the U.S. and U.K. of stone throwing and terrorism. Stone throwing, being a tactic commonly associated with the Palestinian intifada, and terrorism, being a highly loaded term, are both problematic. Due to these decisions, we do not know if the negative perception stems from the tactic or from the actors associated with them.

[47] Depending on who they killed and whether the state was seen to have permitted a long period of impunity, this sort of punishment would either elicit or decrease public support (Heeg 2017).

at one's own peril. If someone were to oppose the IRA and subsequently request protection from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC),[48] they faced a problem best described in Anna Burns's fictional account, *The Milkman*:

> «According to the police, of course, our community was a rogue community. It was we who were the enemy, we who were the terrorists, the civilian terrorists, the associates of terrorists or simply individuals suspected of being but not yet discovered to be terrorists. That being the case, and understood by both parties to be the case, the only time you'd call the police in my area would be if you were going to shoot them, and naturally they would know this and so wouldn't come» (Burns 2018, 362).

Their power notwithstanding, the IRA was keenly aware of the fine line between being a policing force and being oppressive force, as well as the potential drawbacks of the latter. As Frank Burton (1978, 109) noted:

> "... the IRA did show an awareness that for the guerrilla, social control is a double-edged sword. Through their authoritarianism frequently contradicted the will of the community, the IRA appreciated that there were boundaries of tolerance which it could not overstep. If the movement persistently violated community norms, doors would stop opening, billets would be harder to get, informing would rise and their isolation would increase. Volunteers understood this because they were themselves part of the community."

[48] The Royal Ulster Constabulary was the Northern Irish police force associated with the British Army during the Troubles.

In other words, even if the benefits of support can be gained by coercive means, the potential long term negative effect on operational security cautions against it. Cultivating a positive perception among the population remains important, because, as noted by Sluka, "while a guerrilla campaign may be possible even without the active support of the majority of one's own people, it cannot survive their active hostility" (1989: 65).

Clandestine revolutionaries, on the other hand, cannot coerce the benefits associated with support from the population and are more vulnerable than territorial groups to constituency opposition. For the population of West Germany, rejecting the RAF was the relatively simple exercise of informing the police and relying on the protection offered by the government. In this context, where government repression is high, the risk posed by people turning against the group is high. Knowledgeable informants can easily and with little risk to themselves provide the government with information and the security apparatus can action it effectively. In such environments, groups tend to 'go underground', centralizing and closing their structure off from its constituency, essentially enhancing group security at the cost of functionality and connectivity (Della Porta 2013, 150–53; Enders and Sandler 2012, 249–54). The German Red Army Faction described being forced to do this in 1971:

> "Our initial concept of the urban guerrilla implied a link between urban guerrilla and mass work. We all wanted to work in the factories, in the neighborhoods, in the existing socialist groups, we wanted to influence the discussion, to experiment, to learn. It became clear that this was impossible. The control of the political police over these groups, their meetings, their discussions is so widespread that it is impossible to take part in them without being singled out and put into their dossiers" (in Della Porta 2013, 155).

Cultivating a constituency as a clandestine group can be counterproductive because of the implied exposure to the security apparatus and potentially less committed individuals. Widespread police presence does weaken the link between the group and outside sympathizers forcing the group to limit its outreach activities, relying on an increasingly narrow support network, and taking higher risks when reaching out. In 1972, a year after closing down their structures, RAF member Stephan Aust recounts a story that illustrates this precarious situation:

> "In the middle of February Emiliane M., a qualified psychologist, was asked by an intermediary if she was willing to help a couple who were in difficulties. These people might approach her and ask if they could stay the night. The psychologist agreed. She soon realized who the couple with the difficulties were, namely Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin. She had recognized Baader from a Wanted poster, and Gudrun Ensslin said her father was a Stuttgart pastor. […]
>
> In a way Emiliane felt sorry for them. The very fact that Baader and Ensslin had to fall back on people like herself seemed to show that the number of their helpers must have decreased a good deal recently. "Otherwise," she said later, "they would have picked people who could take more of the weight and were ideologically more convinced" (Aust 2008, 154).

The above was not unique to the RAF but can be found in other clandestine groups both in and outside of Europe (Della Porta 2013). Although operating underground might change the forms of outreach and decrease interaction group members and the constituency, it does not make the existence of the latter less important. If anything, they are more reliant on cultivating their image and reputation than their territorial counterparts.

Foreign state support can offset the need to maintain a favorable impression among constituents, but local support is nevertheless something that will enable to group more operational freedom and room to grow. With the above in mind, Kalyvas and Sánchez-Cuenca theorize that there might be a U-shaped relationship between the desire for support and the proclivity to adopt suicide attacks (Kalyvas and Sanchez-Cuenca 2005, 218–19). Groups that are not reliant on public support, like Al Qaeda, and groups that are firmly rooted in the local population, like Hamas and the LTTE, can use suicide attacks without fear of harming the organization and recruitment base. Groups with a more uncertain standing in the local population might be less likely to adopt the tactic because of their fear of losing public support. While it is a mediating factor, both territorial and underground groups have an interest in steering clear of actions and statements that are at odds with what is seen as acceptable by supporters. This leaves the second question: What exactly is so problematic about suicide attacks? Why are revolutionaries that are willing to kill with a bomber unwilling to kill with a suicide bomber?

2.4.2.2 Norms on suicide and killing

The first uniquely problematic aspect of suicide attacks that comes to mind is the 'suicide' aspect of the operation. Suicide is frowned upon in most religions and cultures, which renders the tactic problematic for two reasons. First, because groups operating in environments where suicide is seen as a cowardly or sinful act might have difficulties finding volunteers. Secondly, because even if they can find volunteers, employing them might contradict the normative sensibilities of the population writ large and damage the group's support as described above.

The first injunction is interesting because it assumes that some societies are ok with suicide and therefore have volunteers while others do not. The idea that some organizations have a ready-

made army of volunteers arguably came to prominence during the Second World War. The American horror at seeing Kamikaze operations transformed pilots from individuals into icons of otherness and the 'inscrutable Japanese' (Ohnuki-Tierney 2002). This is a form of attribution bias, where the behavior of the Japanese was attributed to personality or cultural traits rather than circumstances, which led to the volunteers becoming a stereotype of fanatical soldiers. This image of suicide pilots as indoctrinated fanatics was further reinforced after the war and has remained 'sticky' for subsequent users of suicide attacks.[49]

The American perception of kamikaze pilots is reflected in an interesting U.S. air force discussion about ways to strengthen its deterrence vis a vis the Soviet Union after the Second World War (Norris 1947). After the war, Col. Dale O. Smith (1947) presented an idea he coined "one-way combat" in Air University Quarterly Review. He pointed out that the air force did not have enough long-range B-36 bombers to make a round trip against enemies on the Eurasian continent nor enough time to build the advanced bases needed to do round trips with B-29 and B-50 planes. Consequently, he argued, the U.S. should plan to conduct one-way missions, where the crew bails out of the aircraft and go into enemy territory after dropping the bomb. Smith did not think troops would be persuaded to volunteer for such missions based on military necessity alone. He therefore suggested that "We must begin today a reeducation of our Air Force personnel on the advisability of one-way combat" (D. O. Smith 1947, 8).[50]

On what basis Smith made this remark is unclear, but a little-known fact about the genesis of the Kamikaze program is that, upon its establishment, *none* of the professional soldiers who had

[49] Reports on the Kamikaze attacks themselves abound, but newspapers would also report on related rumors, such as a suicide college where the Japanese allegedly trained soldiers to be human torpedoes, living bombs, plague carriers, and suicide pilots (*The Sun* 1942c).
[50] The proposal was met with skepticism, with most arguing that the U.S. should focus on expanding the range of bombers rather than sacrificing pilots (The Washington Post 1947).

graduated from the naval and army academies volunteered (Ohnuki-Tierney 2002, 166). Leaders therefore had to order professional officers to be kamikaze pilots. The most famous 'volunteer' in this early batch is perhaps Captain Seki Yukio, who – in line with Smith's expectation of American soldiers – was not at all persuaded by military necessity. According to Onoda Masashi, a reporter for the imperial navy at the time, Yukio explained that "If it is an order, I will go. But I am not going to die for the emperor or for Imperial Japan. I am going for my beloved wife. If Japan loses, she might be raped by Americans. I am dying for someone I love most, to protect her" (Ohnuki-Tierney 2002, 166). Very quickly, the volunteers used to carry out the attacks were not drawn from the pool of professional soldiers, but from university students drafted from into the Japanese army (Ohnuki-Tierney 2002, 166).[51] Their motivations were not uniformly idealistic nationalism, but often a mix of personal, social, and ideological factors.

Interestingly, the Second World War also saw some calls for the use of suicide attacks in Australia. In the 1940's, Australian newspapers published reports on Australian individuals publicly volunteering for suicide missions, sometimes using rumors about Japanese use during the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 as examples of its possible merits. The most prominent volunteer is perhaps Sidney engineer T. A. White, who on March 23, 1942, sent a letter to the Australian Minister for Air volunteering to be a human bomb. The Minister responded, saying that while the sacrificial courage was admired, the armed services were capable of dealing with the situation without enlisting such aid (*The Sun* 1942b). The rejection notwithstanding, several others made similar offers in the weeks that followed, and the ministry kept receiving letters into

[51] Ohnuki-Tierney's account of the many forces that affected the inclination of these student pilots to volunteer (and be volunteered) does not deny the importance of national symbolism in influencing people to volunteer – she studies it in depth – but it does add an important human dimension to the decision.

the summer of that year (*Examiner* 1942; *Northern Star* 1942; *Advocate* 1942).[52] In a proposal submitted to the press, one volunteers argued:

> "The government should set aside its repugnance to the idea and accept men who are - (1) over military age, (2) not serving in any capacity with His Majesty's forces, and (3) single or widowers with no dependents. Virtues in taking men with these qualifications are that no pensions would have to be paid to the next-of-kin (they would have none), no special training would be necessary, and the loss of such men would in no way affect manpower, as accepted men should be quite useless for other war purposes. 1 am certain that if a suicide corps was called for the Government would have no trouble in recruiting hundreds of men like myself who are willing to do their bit in defense of their country," (*Sunday Times* 1942)

The Australian government remained unconvinced. So, in the early 1940's we have Australia, a country with volunteers but no desire to adopt among decision-makers, and Japan, with a desire to adopt among decision-makers but no volunteers. As it is the latter that is famous for industrial scale use of the tactic, volunteers can clearly be manufactured, they do not need to be found.

You might nevertheless say that the propaganda of the three human bullets story ten years prior indicates that suicide missions were integral to the cultural sensitivities of Japanese society, and that this is a trend that can be traced back centuries (Morris 1975). Along this line, some studies have suggested that suicide attacks are more likely to occur in cultures with collectivist values

[52] There were also examples of young students offering the same thing, such as the 17-year-old Australian youth wrote to the Prime minister, offering to serve as a 'human torpedo'. The government replied that "Such methods will not be countenanced by the Federal Government at this stage" (*Evening Post* 1942).

because they are more accepting of self-sacrificial attacks, which lowers the cost associated with employing the tactic, such as loss of support and recruitment. (Argo 2009; Weinberg and Eubank 1994). Braun and Genkin therefore theorized that groups are more likely to adopt suicide attacks when they are embedded in cultures that value the community more than the individual (Braun and Genkin 2014).[53] "Being embedded in societies where individual-for-group sacrifice is more broadly and deeply accepted," they suggest, "makes all the relevant parties—decision makers, organizational members, and sympathizers— approving of the tactic's legitimacy" (Braun and Genkin 2014, 1278). In her study of Palestinian resistance, Argo similarly found that willingness to engage in high-risk types of resistance was positively correlated with a communal orientation.

The cultural-collectivist theory provides a plausible explanation, but it fails to sufficiently discuss the role of Islamism in the spread of the tactic and is less convincing as a consequence. While Braun and Genkin include Islam as a control variable in two of their models and collectivism remains statistically significant, they exclude it from most of their models with minimal discussion. This is despite their finding that Islamist groups adopt suicide attacks at a rate that is six times higher than non-Islamist groups, an effect which dwarfs the impact of collectivism. It also seems likely that the effect of collectivism is driven by a few cases, such as the LTTE, which are rather peculiar exceptions to the diffusion pattern observed since 1993. Moreover, if collectivism exerts an independent force in driving adoption, it would also have been interesting to see a discussion of why groups in Latin America, a continent with higher scores on the collectivism scale than the Middle East, have been impervious to the tactic.

[53] They calculate a collectivity score using data on the ethnic group level, relying on sources such as Hofsede Scores of Individualism-Collectivism (Braun and Genkin 2014, 1266) They account for the fact that collectivism might be susceptible to external shocks, such as civil wars, by including controls for civil wars as a possible confounder with collectivism (Braun and Genkin 2014, 1268).

Focusing on religious group ideologies rather than collectivist communities Berman and Laitin (2008) makes a similar argument as the above, suggesting that religious ideologies inspire a particular kind of commitment that eases recruitment and lowers the likelihood of defection before especially challenging attacks. Although this might be the case, groups like the LTTE and the PKK – which were predominantly secular – still managed to carry out sizable suicide attack campaigns. The same can be said about the Kamikaze pilots, although they were conducted under the auspices of a state. That being said, Hofmann (2016) has pointed out that both the LTTE and the PKK were led by particularly charismatic personalities that inspired a near religious fervor in their groups' members. It might therefore be that it is not about religion per se, but about a force (religion, charisma) strong enough to excerpt a powerful influence on individuals. While this is likely important, it does not account for the fact that the tactic has also been used systematically by decentralized, secular organizations. The most well-known example is perhaps the anarchists during the early 20th century, but one could also include the lesser-known use by left-wing groups in Asia discussed in the previous section.

That said, the fact that Hezbollah justified suicide attacks within a religious context, not a national or ethnic one, presumably makes shared religion the most potent mechanism for diffusion. As was briefly touched on above, most cross-sectional studies of suicide attacks agree on the importance Islam in the tactic's spread. The below graphs are based on available data on suicide attack use from the GTD between 1983 and 2012 and shows that, holding assumed tactician incentives constant,[54] the probability of a group conducting at least five suicide attacks is highest for territorial Islamist groups.[55] Having a cut-off in 2012 means that this was true prior to the widespread use of suicide attacks by the Islamic state.

[54] It models incentives based on tactical utility, operationalized as percentage of attacks directed at hard target and level of regime repression in main country of operation, and opportunity as territorial control.
[55] For an overview of the dataset and code underlying these findings, see Appendix 2.

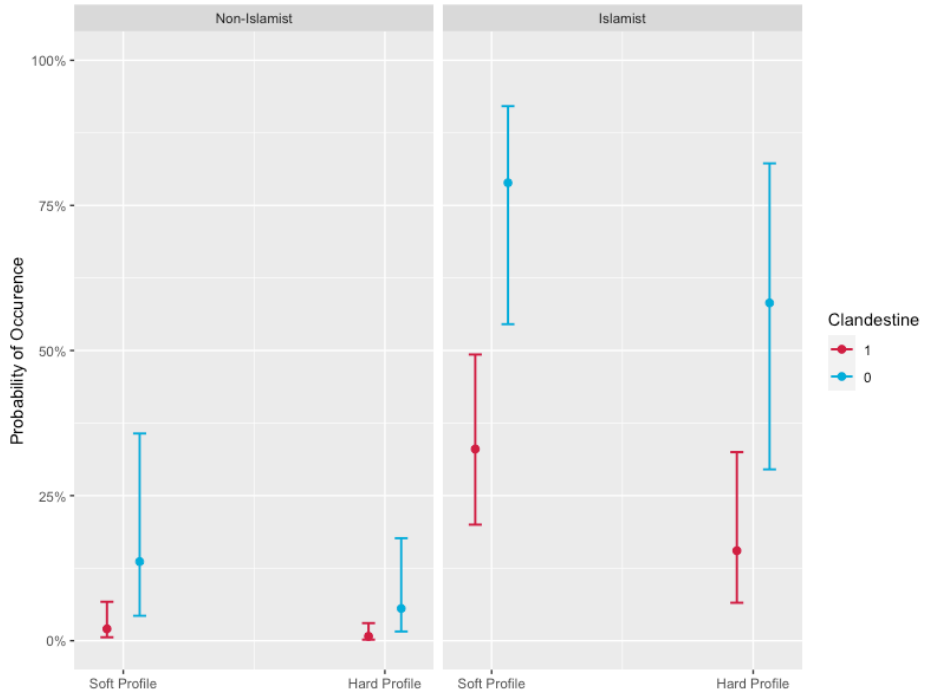


Figure 2- The marginal probability of non-Islamists and Islamists using at least 5 suicide attacks based on target profiles

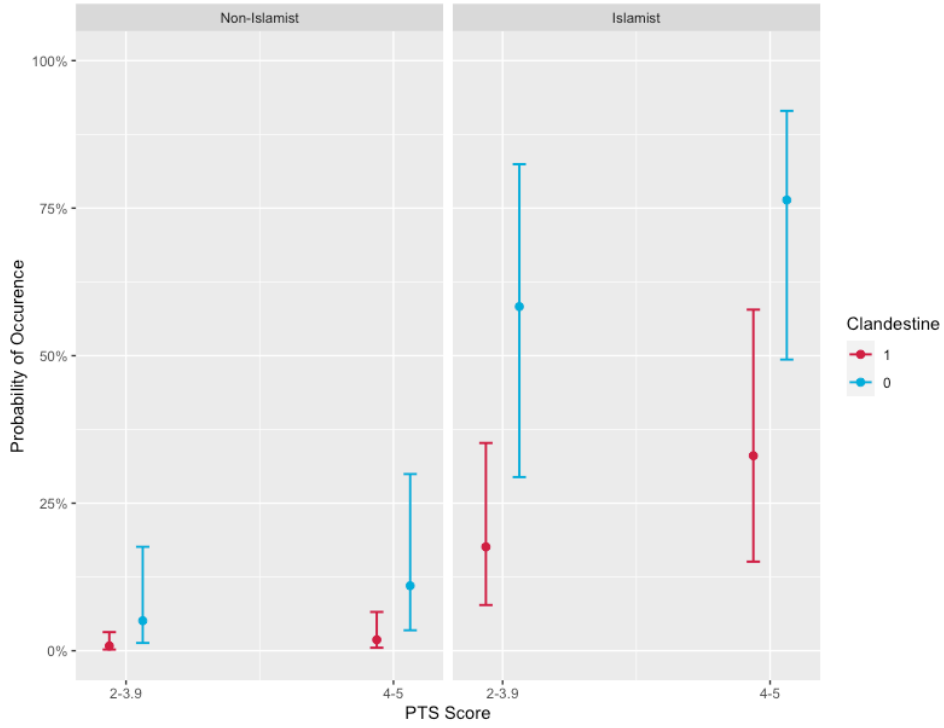


Figure 3 - The marginal probability of Islamists and non-Islamists using at least 5 suicide attacks based on level of regime repression

These figures have important limitations, but they indicate three basic insights. Firstly, the well-known fact that that Islamist groups have dominated use. Secondly, that non-Islamists are

'immune' to what is traditionally seen as tactical incentives. Thirdly, that among Islamists, suicide attacks are more likely to be employed by territorial groups than clandestine ones.[56]

Two important reasons why Islam have served as a basis for diffusion is that it provided an ideological framework for justifying use of the tactic as well as international networks through which expertise could travel (Moghadam 2009b). Based on this we might attribute the reluctance of leftist groups to the absence of religious overlap, as Marxists could not draw on Hezbollah's religious framework as a source of legitimacy but had to make their own. Kalyvas and Sanches-Cuenca entertain the idea of ideological constraints, suggesting that there might be something in the substance of particular ideologies that go against the use of the tactic. Taking Marxism and Maoism as an example, they suggest the following: "SMs [suicide missions] 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" (Kalyvas and Sanchez-Cuenca 2005, 214). Conversely, we might say that martyrdom is an integral part of the history of Islam. Therefore, the idea of suicide attacks might be more easily integrated into a militaristic Islamist ideology.

There are two issues with this argument. First, there are several groups with martyrdom cultures to which the tactic did not travel. Among the groups that had pre-existing traditions of sacrifice in the 1980's were the mujahedeen in Afghanistan, the Moros in the Philippines, and republicans in Northern Ireland. None of these jumped on the suicide attack bandwagon. On

[56] You might wonder how territorial revolutionaries can be more likely than clandestine ones to use the tactic under high levels of state repression. The answer is that category five in the political terror scale is also used for situations of civil war, so these likely have more opportunities to use them.

the flip side, it does not appear that a weak pre-existing culture of martyrdom is necessary for suicide attacks to flourish either. It would also be an understatement to say that Palestinians did not have an established culture of martyrdom in the 1980's. The LTTE, one of the groups that were the first to adopt outside of Lebanon, was also known for handing out cyanide pills to its cadre before Hezbollah blew up the marine barracks (Biziouras 2014). In other words, you find groups with pre-existing martyrdom cultures on both sides of the adoption divide.

Second, following Hezbollah's attack in 1983, suicide attacks were in fact primarily adopted by leftist groups inside Lebanon, so clearly having to produce a non-religious justifications did not preclude adoption.

Table 3 Early suicide attack adopters

Group name	***type***	***Ideology***	***Suicide attack year***	***Conflict***
Hezbollah	Non-state	Shi'a Islam	1983	Lebanese Civil War
Syrian Social Nationalist Party	Non-state	Socialist	1985	Lebanese Civil War
Lebanese Communist Party	Non-state	Communist	1985	Lebanese Civil War
The Syrian Baath Party	Non-state	Socialist	1985	Lebanese Civil War
Arab Socialist Nationalist Party	Non-state	Socialist	1985	Lebanese Civil War
Lebanese National Resistance Front,	Non-state	Nationalist	1985	Lebanese Civil War
PFLP	Non-State	Marxist-Leninst	1985	Lebanese Civil War
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam	Non-state	Nationalist	1987	Sri-Lankan Civil War
Hamas	Non-state	Muslim Brotherhood nationalists	1993	Israel-Palestine

Palestinian Islamic Jihad	Non-state	Islamic revivalist nationalists	1993	Israel-Palestine
Egyptian Islamic Jihad	Non-state	Salafi-jihadi	1993	Anti-government Egypt

Moreover, despite what the eventual adoption by the PIJ and EIJ suggests, suicide attacks were not uncontroversial in Egypt and Palestine. In fact, the mere suggestion of violence was causing controversy in the Palestinian Muslim community in the 1970's and 80's (Moghadam 2008, 79). As is evident in the table below, which presents a list of Islamist groups active between 1983 and 1993, only a very small subset of Islamist groups that were active at the time that adopted the tactic. The tactic did not take root in Afghanistan among the Arab foreign fighters, the Shi'a Hazara, or the Sunni mujahideen, nor in Pakistan or among groups in Asia and North Africa. In other words, while Islam became important for diffusion once Salafi-jihadis came to dominate use, it has less value for explaining early spread.

Table 4 Islamist groups active between 1970 and 1993

Group name[57]	***Year of establishment***	***Country of operation***
Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK)	1965	Iran
Harakat-I Inqilab-I Islami	1970*	Afghanistan
Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya (IG)	1970*	Egypt
Komando Jihad	1970*	Indonesia
Takfir wal-Hijra	1971	Egypt
Amal	1974	Lebanon
Hizb-I Islami Khalis	1975	Afghanistan
Jamaat-E-Islami (Bangladesh)	1975	Bangladesh

[57] This list does not claim to be exhaustive. It is compiled using the Global Terrorism Database and area-specific literature and gives an indication of the variation that existed. The years with an asterisk are approximate.

Hizb-I Islami Gulbudin	1975	Afghanistan
Jamiat-I Islami	1977	Afghanistan
Harakat-i Islami	1978	Afghanistan
Mahaz-i Milli Islami	1979	Afghanistan
Shura-i Ittifaq Islami	1979	Afghanistan
Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Al-Jihad)	1979	Egypt
Ittihad	1980	Afghanistan
Jabha-I Nejat-I Milli Afghanistan	1980	Afghanistan
Hizballah	1980	Afghanistan
Harakat-ul Jihad Islami	1980	Afghanistan/India
The Haqqani Network	1980*	Afghanistan
Sazman-i Nasr	1980*	Afghanistan
Lashkar-e-Taiba	1980*	Pakistan
Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)	1981	Israel
Sepah-i Pasdaran	1983	Afghanistan
Hezbollah	1983	Lebanon
Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)	1984	Philippines
Sipah-e-Sahaba/Pakistan (SSP)	1985	Pakistan
Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)	1987	Israel
Hizb-i Wahdat	1989	Afghanistan
Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)	1989	India
Hizbul Mujahideen	1989	Pakistan/Kashmir
Al-Umar Mujahideen	1991	India
Al-Qaida	1992	Afghanistan
Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)	1992	Algerie
Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami Bangladesh	1992	Bangladesh
Armed Islamic Group (AIG)	1993	Algerie
Ahl al-kitab wal-sunna	?	Afghanistan

Afghanistan overrepresented. Syria, Egypt, Jordan, heavily repressed (Hegghammer.) The emergence of global jihad, people prioritized fighting the soviets over their own domestic regimes.

Many of the groups in the above table began using suicide attacks eventually, some in the late 1990's, most in the 2000's, but if Islam is the basis on which normative acceptance was built, why did it take so long? It could be a case of religious granularity. Most of the Islamist groups on that list were Sunni and Hezbollah was Shi'a. Yet, Shi'a groups in Afghanistan fighting the Soviet invasion did not adopt and the Islamist groups that eventually did were Sunnis, so clearly bridging that divide was possible.[58] The answer could that diffusion was hindered by cultural differences, but is it really the case that Egyptian, Palestinian, and Lebanese culture is so similar that a practice accepted in one can be accepted in all? Certainly not – and in fact, there is little reason to suspect that suicide attacks were broadly accepted in any of them.

As General Ibrahim Tannous, Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, emphasized in 1983: although suicide attacks were typical for irregular forces, they were not typically Lebanese (*The Washington Post* 1983). Following Hezbollah's attack, an important point of debate was why the Marines were not better prepared. To this, commander of the U.S. Marine Corps, Paul X. Kelly noted,

> "Did Col. [Tim] Geraghty [the local marine commander] have sufficient cause or reason to suspect that kind of threat existed? I have to tell you not. I must repeat the words of Gen. Tannous and the other multinational force commanders. He said to me

[58] The reason Afghani Shi'a mujahideen did not adopt will be discussed in the chapter of Afghanistan in the 1980's. The two main reason appears to be the phase of the conflict the Shi'a mujahideen were in after 1983, combined with the improving relationship between Iran and Soviet Union in the 1980's.

> – I have heard no one question this that this type of kamikaze assault is unprecedented in his experience in Lebanon. The French commander, Gen. [Francois] Cann, a man of significant experience in counter-terrorist operation, said "Never in a million years would I ever have expected this kind of threat. Collectively they were all trying to sit and agonize: how did we miss this one? The answer is that it happened but we had no reason to believe that it was going to happen"(The Washington Post 1983)

Just as suicide attacks were not considered typically Lebanese, they were not typically Shi'a. While martyrdom was an integral part of Shi'a Islam, cultivated through traditions such as the *Ta'ziyah* – the re-enactment of the death of Husayn Ibn Ali in the battle of Karbala – suicide attacks were not considered to fall within its boundaries until the late 1970's. It changed after the Iranian Revolution of 1979, when Ayatollah Khomeini began to recast martyrdom as an aggressive doctrine (Cook 2007, 140). In other words, the norm congruence was generated parallel to the use of the tactic, it was not a pre-existing feature of either society or Shi'a Islam.

The problem with using ideology and history as explanatory devices for adoption and non-adoption is that they leave significant space for *ex-post* rationalization (Kalyvas and Sanchez-Cuenca 2005, 215). Ideological explanations tend to obscure the fact that martyrdom in the form of suicide attacks have rarely – if ever – been seen as 'natural' prior to adoption. Actors might look for culturally specific historical antecedents to legitimize their decision to adopt, but such a pursuit in an academic context opens the door to both determinism and hindsight bias (Berlin 1954; Carr 1964). Most cases of adoption in the 20th century have been highly controversial decisions and only merged with the notion of martyrdom over time. Just as the 'naturalization' of the idea must be explained in the context of Islamism, it similarly needs to be explained why martyrdom could not be seen as a "proper action" by a population forming the support base of other types of groups.

This controversy was also the case for self-immolation in Buddhism. Although Quang Duc could find legitimacy for his act in an ancient version of Mayahana Buddhism, it was far from uncontroversial. Chinese Mayahana Buddhist texts from the fourth century onwards describe monks choosing death, usually by fire, but other texts described the act as suicide, and therefore condemned it (Biggs 2013, 416). Following Duc's act, however, Buddhist leaders began endorsing suicide protest, arguing that it did not constitute the kind of suicide forbidden by religious teaching (Biggs 2013, 417). All of this to say that religiously inspired commitment, ideological content, and particular cultural features might increase suicide attack recruitment, reduce the likelihood of defection, and reduce the cost of using it on public support. However, the absence of these factors is not satisfactory for absence of the tactic.

What these discussions bring to the fore are some broader questions about what is seen as acceptable forms of martyrdom and how these evolve in different communities and under different conditions. In her chapter "The Ethics of Self Sacrifice: What's Wrong With Suicide Bombings", Margaret Pabst Battin, philosopher and medical ethicist focused on assisted suicide, argues that Western societies view suicide bombings with moral repugnance because,

> "…the long cultural traditions of what has been called Judeo-Christianity not only revile suicide, but draw the line between suicide and martyrdom in a way that would preclude suicide bombing of the sort employed by the Palestinians and others. It is not that the West does not have this weapon; rather it cannot have it and cannot use it, because its cultural underpinnings provide no respect for it at all" (Battin 2005, 247).

This is similar to the cultural collectivist argument, but, as she also acknowledges, literature looking at Semitic traditions have challenged two of its components. First that suicide was

reviled and, second, that the Judeo-Christian tradition has drawn a line between suicide and martyrdom.

In G. W. Bowerstock's (1995) exploration of martyrdom during the Roman empire, he finds that the line between suicide and martyrdom has not always been neat.[59] Christians' eagerness for martyrdom in the pre-Augustinian period came very close to the suicidal, and even contemporary theologians who condemned voluntary martyrdom went to their death with "conspicuous enthusiasm" (Bowersock 1995, 62). According to Bowerstock, it was exactly the mounting enthusiasm for voluntary death during the Roman Empire that ultimately led Augustine to denounce suicide and martyrdom as incompatible.[60] Along a similar line, Droge and Tabor who researched the notion of 'a noble death' among Christians and Jews in Antiquity, argue that neither community absolutely condemned suicide, but focused on whether or not it was committed for noble reasons (Droge and Tabor 1992).[61]

It is quite possible to construct a genealogy of people committing suicide for noble reasons in the Western tradition to summon cultural underpinnings for suicide attacks. This has been done with various degrees of depth, perhaps most engagingly by Antonio Preti (2006). It is also possible to point to Christians conducting suicide attacks, as they constituted a not insignificant portion of both the Japanese Kamikaze corps and suicide attackers during the Lebanese Civil War (Ohnuki-Tierney 2002; Pape 2006). One can also find modern organizations drawing on

[59] The death of a woman named Perpetua in the amphitheater at Carthage illustrates the blurry line. As narrated by a Latin observer: "She took the trembling hand of the gladiator and guided it to her throat. Perhaps so great a woman could not have been killed ... if she herself had not wanted it" (Bowersock 1995, 61).
[60] The condemnation is usually tied to Augustine's argument in *The City of God*, where rejects suicide in no uncertain terms, concluding "It only remains for us to apply the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' to man alone, oneself and others. And, of course, one who kiIls himself kills a man" (Augustine et al. 2008, 52–54).
[61] In fact, the Hebrew did not have a noun corresponding to 'suicide' nor a verbal expression for committing it until the 19th century, when it was incorporated under the influence of European usage (Droge and Tabor 1992, 58). Descriptions of acts that we today characterize as suicide, such as the death of Salomon and Saul, were not given a label but simply described in terms of how the act was performed.

Western mythologies to create suicide squads, such as Nazi Germany's short lived project 'The Leonidas Squad', although that particular scheme never took off (Boog et al. 1990). However, the search for antecedents is in many cases anachronistic. The concept 'suicide attack' is most obvious, it being a term invented during the Second World War that we then started projecting backwards, but even 'suicide' and 'martyr' are terms that were foreign in some ancient traditions. With this in mind, it is perhaps more interesting to try to understand how stories of fatal self-sacrifice sometimes and in some places generate tales of heroism and martyrdom and at other times and in other places generate reports of mindless fanaticism.

Social movement theorists suggest that novel and previously controversial tactics might gain acceptance and even veneration after critical events endogenous to the conflict change perceptions of what is considered acceptable behavior. In the case of suicide attacks, it is often assumed that they become accepted when groups have 'tried everything else' or some act by the state warrants radical escalation. However, there is little basis to say that Egyptian Islamic Jihad had 'exhausted more options' against the Egyptian state than the Afghan Mujahedin against the Soviets. Moreover, by the time the Tamil Tigers began using suicide attacks in 1987, they were in a position of domestic strength (M. M. Bloom 2003; Cronin-Furman and Arulthas 2021). The same can be said for Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas in the early 1990's compared to the previous decade.

Another argument is that escalation by adversaries can generate a broader popular acceptance of radical forms of escalation. There is, however, no reason why this automatically entails an acceptance of suicide attacks. Rather than spurring innovation, such escalation can just as well manifest in groups amplifying more tried and tested tactics, like building more or bigger bombs.

Besides violating norms on suicide, suicide attacks are also considered controversial because of its association with civilian victimization. In her book on outbidding, Bloom explains the fact that neither the IRA nor the ETA used suicide attacks based on this logic. "In the cases of Ireland and Spain," she writes,

> "Public opinion rejected the use of civilian casualties, including the rejection of suicide terror. This led the IRA to alter tactics that involved civilian deaths resulting from their bombing campaign. […] To that end, symbolic attacks were far more valuable to the IRA and civilian casualties did not resonate positively the way attacking British military targets did. In Spain, the ETA never made civilian indiscriminate targets on the scale of the March 11, 2004, train bombings. Its highest known death toll was 21 persons in June of 1987, when it attacked a Barcelona supermarket in what it later termed a "mistake"" (Bloom 2005, 134).

The conflation of the technique and the target leaves one wondering why neither organization employed suicide attacks against the military, police, or politicians. Such attacks could have symbolic value and there is no immediate reason to believe that their respective communities would have rejected them on the same basis as indiscriminate bombing attacks against civilians. They might still have rejected it because it violated the norms of suicide, but that was a risk taken in Northern Ireland during the hunger strikes in the early 80's. The problem with both norm-centric arguments presented above is that they rarely consider group agency in shaping their social and operational environment. While norms are an important constraint on rebel group behavior, they are also something revolutionaries negotiate both internally and towards its constituency. What we need to explore to understand the pattern of suicide attack adoption therefore is what inspires groups to challenge them with uncertain returns.

2.5 Shortcomings

So why did suicide attacks become a Palestinian phenomenon and not an Afghan phenomenon? A tactic among Egyptian jihadis, but not Afghan jihadis? A Tamil Tiger phenomenon, but not an Irish Republican phenomenon? A Middle Eastern phenomenon, but not a Latin American one? The above explanations point in so many different directions that they make one wonder why suicide attacks did not spread further and how they spread at all.[62] Indeed, the pattern requires so many caveats to fit with existing explanations that it either defies simplification, or we are missing something.

Awareness, ability, opportunity, and desire are all necessary conditions for groups to adopt suicide attacks, but they are not sufficient for explaining variation in spread. There are plenty of groups that were aware of suicide attacks as a tactic, had the expertise and organizational capital to carry them out, and the opportunity to do so. Many of these groups were faced with conditions that are theorized to give them both tactical and strategic incentives. Yet, most have not adopted. Scholars tend to point to norms as an intervening variable, arguing that if the tactic is seen as somehow unacceptable to a population, the strategic incentives will be void and the public cost of adoption will likely outweigh any tactical benefits. However, this assumes that some societies, cultures, and ideologies are more accepting of suicide attacks than others. This is a problematic. Acceptance of suicide attacks cannot be assumed a static feature of any society or culture, it can only emerge after a group claiming to represent a particular social group has used it successfully and generated a positive response. Once that has happened, other groups claiming to represent the same constituency have information that indicates whether suicide attacks will mobilize or alienate supporters. Before that, groups are taking a risk with largely

[62] This is no novel insight, the same has been pointed out by Acosta (2016).

unknown returns. The availability of incentives will vary depending on a group's position in the adoption chronology.

The reason for this shortcoming in the existing literature is arguably that it does not consider revolutionary group agency in challenging and shaping local norms. Violence employed by revolutionaries is often controversial, spurring the leadership to exert significant efforts to justify choices both internally and towards the people they lay claim to represent. This can be thought of as part of groups' identity and image management. All organizations, whether engaged in violence, politics, or retail, have an idea of who they are and how they want to be perceived and actively shape an image through the use of symbols, actions, and different forms of communication (J. M. T. Balmer and Soenen 1999; Gray and Balmer 1998; Albert et al. 2000).

Most revolutionaries have a vision and a set of values that are seen as integral to the organization. Just as Nike's vision is to "bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the work," the Islamic State's (ISIS) vision was "Establish a Caliphate now", while al-Qaeda's was closer to "Establish the Caliphate eventually". Answering "who we are" is a matter of defining organizational identity. In organizational theory, this is defined as the uniqueness of an organization – what the organization *is* – captured in a combination of its strategy, philosophy, culture and organizational design (J. Balmer and Wilson 1998; Gray and Balmer 1998). Others have emphasized the role of members in creating identity, defining it as a shared understanding of the organization's values and characteristics, essentially made up of what members perceive, feel, and think about their organization (Hatch and Schultz 1997). These are not antithetical, as ideas at the leadership level aimed at carving out the essence of the organization are understood and processed by members who in turn react and provide feedback to the leadership.

If we judge by the quantity of material published, revolutionaries are consumed by the question of who they are, what they stand for, and how it (creatively) aligns with existing normative frameworks. The Italian Red Brigade and West German Red Army Faction (RAF), published enough communiques in their lifespan to fill several volumes of documentary histories (Smith et. al. 2009; Dunne et.al. 2009; Ruggiero 2007). In the Middle East, current Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri surpassed Osama bin Laden in the number of statements published on behalf of the organization as early as 2005 (Holbrook 2019, 4).[63] The Shining Path in Peru was engaged in teaching of Marxist-Leninism and Maoism for almost a decade before it actually initiated violence in 1980 (Heeg 2017). Going back a century, anarchists would publish their own newspapers, with one popular paper in Paris – *La Revolt* – circulating around 8,000 copies bi-weekly in the 1880's (Jensen 2008, 55).

Statements are propaganda, but also contain traces of internal debates showing that group identities are often up for debate. At times, members' perceptions mirror the groups' official statements and material. Former Red Brigadier Gianluca Codrini, for example, described himself and his comrades as "knights of a bloody apocalypse" (Orsini and Nodes 2016, 4). Similarly, his colleague Enzo Fontana characterized those who embrace their revolution as "the Christ who sacrifices himself to redeem humanity" (Orsini and Nodes 2016, 4). However, such harmony is not always the case. Hans-Joachim Klein, who joined the Germany group Revolutionary Cells (RZ) in 1974, openly criticized the RZ in the late 70's for what he considered "the unprincipled and foolhardy politics of RZ's international wing" (Smith mfl. 2009, 267). After Klein had gained notoriety participating in Ilich Ramírez Sánchez's famous raid on OPEC in '75, the RZ saw fit to respond publicly and issued a statement titled, "The dogs are barking and the caravan moves on" (Smith mfl. 2009, 267).

[63] Other forms of communication include video, images, magazines, and so on.

As with Klein and RZ, internal disputes often surface when they become insurmountable. When Cathal Goulding, the IRA Chief of Staff, wanted to orientate the organization further left and de-emphasize the military aspect of the IRA in the late 60's, traditionalist elements protested rather vocally (Hanley og Millar 2010). Goulding and others saw the failure of the 1950's Border Campaigning as an indication that the IRA would not be able to achieve its aims solely through the use of arms (Hanley and Millar 2010, 28). This created a tension between orthodox militancy and a new socialist radicalism within the republican movement, where the latter looked to the left and increasingly believed the 32-county republic could only be achieved through democratization, mobilization, and class struggle (Hanley and Millar 2010).

These disagreements also extended to choices of tactics and targets. As old-timers were replaced by new recruits, this saw the IRA engage in novel forms of action and take on new types of targets, addressing socio-economic issues rather than confronting the British occupation head on. In 1968 the group even blew up a lobster boat at the center of a fishing dispute to "protect the Irish shell-fishing industry against exploitation by foreign interests" (Bell 1998, 350). Ultimately, the diverging visions contributed to tearing the organization in two, resulting in the coexistence of two IRAs in the early 70's, the Provisionals (PIRA) and the Officials (OIRA).

Such discussions abound. Further east, in a well-known letter sent by al-Zawahiri to al-Qaeda commander in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in the mid 2000's Zawahiri made his views clear on issues ranging from legitimate combat, what he saw as excessive violence, and what role of sectarianism should play in the Iraqi conflict (Zawahiri, 2005). Zawahiri objected to the use of suicide bombings against Shi'a civilians in Iraq in particular. Zarqawi did not agree, and this letter is now considered one of the precursors to the al-Qaeda - ISIS split in the mid-2010's (Holbrook 2019, 4).

External manifestations of such debates are akin to image and reputation management. In contrast to the organizational identity, image and reputation pertain to the impression of an organization that resides in the public mind.[64] Whereas an image is the immediate mental picture an audience has of an organization, corporate reputation indicates a value judgement about the organization's attributes (Alvesson 1990, 376; Dowling 1993, 103; Gray and Balmer 1998, 697). A reputation is typically formed over time by consistent performance, while an image can is created quickly through different forms of communication.[65]

Revolutionaries usually claim to execute its violent vision on behalf of someone, the so-called "third party with an assumed interest" (Colvin 2009: 121). The claim to representation puts the idea of legitimacy at the center of rebel group activities. As pointed out by Gould (1995), revolutionaries seek to mobilize a population cannot do so along entirely arbitrary lines, there has to be some resonance with the experienced social reality. According to Weber, legitimacy originates from charismatic, traditional, and/or legal-rational sources and exists as long as people follow a political actor and consider its order as binding (M. E. Spencer 1970, 123). Revolutionaries rely on a combination of the three to align the organization with their community and to persuade its members and community about the rightfulness of its vision, aim, and struggle (Duyvesteyn 2017; Malthaner 2015).

[64] The distinction between identity, reputation, and image is useful, but they are interlinked. In the corporate realm, effective management of an organizational identity can result in the acquisition of a favorable image and, over time, a favorable reputation (J. Balmer and Stotvig 1997; Gray and Balmer 1998). This, in turn, is found to increase the perception of attractiveness and heighten the chance that key stakeholders will be favorably disposed towards the organization in the long term (Burke, Martin, og Cooper 2011; John M. T. Balmer og Wilson 1998, 12). For companies, happy stakeholders – be they partners, investors, or customers – often translate into a competitive advantage, which in turn increases financial performance (Duhé 2009; Gray and Balmer 1998).
[65] Scholars disagree on the extent to which an organization can control its image and reputation. Ernest Dichter (1985) saw it as something an organization produces, Gray and Balmer did not disagree, but emphasized that it is also function of audience perception (1998), while Waddington and Earl (2012) recently likened managing a corporate reputation to anarchy.

Schneckener (2017, 805-807) makes the analytical distinction between symbolic and performance-based sources of legitimacy, with the first centered on what groups say and the second on what they do. Looking at what groups say to establish themselves as legitimate, he finds recurring references to communal myth-symbols, belief systems, traditions, and cultures. He also finds attempts to embody the socioeconomic, cultural, and political aspirations of their respective communities. Among the elements that make up the performative sources of legitimacy are charismatic leadership, the willingness of members to sacrifice their lives, pre-existing structures of legitimacy, and the supply of goods and services.

One of the most frequent avenues of claiming legitimacy is to situate the organization in a shared communal history. Menachem Begin, the leader of Irgun Zvail Leumi, an organization that operated in the 30's and 40's Mandatory Palestine, anchored its campaign in the history of Jewish revolts. He likened the group to the Sicarii-Zealots for their heroism, while pointing to the Maccabean revolt in 165 BC for the group's common sense and logic (Begin, Katz, and Greenberg 1951, 47). He also used the Sicarii-Zealots as an example of what Irgun was not, portraying their emotional zeal as what landed them in the siege of Masada where the entire rebel community committed mass suicide in the face a Roman incursion (Begin, Katz, and Greenberg 1951, 47). While describing it as heroic, Irgun manifestos repeatedly stressed "No Masada" because their goal was precisely to preserve the community (Rapoport and Alexander 1989, 32)

Similar efforts to anchor groups in a shared past can be seen in the IRA and its use of the Easter Rising and the Shi'as and their use of Ali Bin Talib at Karbalah. There are also examples of groups taking a marginal aspect of a communal identity and contributing to its revival through its activities. The Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) is arguably an example of such a group, where its activity not only contributed to an ethnonationalist wave in the Baskland, but also shifted the

conception of ethnicity from racial to linguistic (Della Porta 2013, 91). These stories are not necessarily stable, but as noted by Cronin-Furman and Arulthas in the case of the LTTE, "change due to the tellers' teleological instinct to create consistent narratives, highlighting those threads in the past that appear consistent with a current status quo" (Cronin-Furman and Arulthas 2021, 3).

Claiming legitimacy based on acts or ideas that are entirely foreign to the community is possible but comes with challenges. As a somewhat successful example, the Shining Path managed to sustain a peasant revolution grounded in the Maoist tradition in Peru for several years from 1980.[66] Prior to this, however, the organization had been running *escuelas populares,* teaching Marxist-Leninism, Maoism, and related subjects since 1976 and had utilized the existing school system to do the same since the early 70's (Heeg 2017: 114). When the organization initiated its violent campaign in the 80's, the justification was therefore not entirely foreign to the population. Had it been, they might have faced challenges similar to The Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). Following its adoption of a Marxist-Leninist doctrine in 1977, FRELIMO would organize town meetings with what can, at best, be called partial success. As one member described:

> "Sometimes out in the zones, when we held meetings with the population, we would say Viva Marxismo-Leninismo. And the population would say, what's all this about Marx and Lenina? When are they coming? And sometimes, for lack of better words, the translator would explain about Carlos Marx and his wife, Lenina"(Manning 2002, 53).

[66] The importance of Marxist-Leninist doctrine in the Shining Path declined over time, but was a significant part of the organization in its early years (Starn and La Serna 2019).

The ways in which groups seek to make themselves attractive is about more than legitimacy, it encompasses all the ways revolutionaries try make themselves relevant and likable. Rebel group image management can be seen as consisting of several components, one of which is in the way the group portrays its leaders and members. Although leaders of armed groups tend to possess a natural charisma, this is readily amplified by an organization's propaganda apparatus (Matusitz 2018; Hofmann 2016). Andreas Baader, one of the founders of the Red Army Faction, was known as being, "the charming rogue of the Berlin hipster scene" prior to establishing the organization (Dunne et.al. 2009, 31). After he assumed leadership, was arrested, and committed suicide in 1972 however, his legend grew larger in the hands of subsequent generations of the RAF. Similarly, the first leader of the Shining Path, Abimael Guzman, was known as a very appealing figure from youth, but only gained a cult following as the organization began crafting his persona in various propaganda campaigns (Heeg 2017: 212).[67]

This glorification is also reflected in the way organizations portray their members and the way those members portray themselves. A factor sometimes discussed in the radicalization literature is the importance of terrorists appearing – in lack of better words – cool, to attract new members to their group groups (Picard 2015). ISIS faced a rather momentous challenge in its early days in this regard: how do you attract people to join an organization which prior image has been dominated by bad photos of ragged fighters in Afghan caves?[68] Fast forward to 2015 and terms such as 'jihadicool' and 'jihadichic' had come into existence (Picart 2015). Meanwhile, ISIS members linked the group to youth and hipster culture and even capitalized on the global love for cats under the hashtag #catsofjihad. Coolness is of course culturally and historically contingent, but the appeal of appearing to be so prevails. In Northern Ireland in the 70's, being

[67] Also known as 'the Fourth Sword of Marxism', following Marx, Lenin, and Mao, 'Doctor Paka Inti', which translates to 'the doctor of the red sun', 'El Maestro', for his strategic and calculating mind, and 'President Gonzalo'.
[68] Of course, it had several momentous challenges, this was merely a drop in the ocean.

an IRA volunteer was, for a time, seen as so prestigious that people in pubs would emulate their behavior to produce an aura of importance (Burton 1979: 113). Being a common phenomenon for a time, this had the rather amusing side-effect of confusing undercover British Agents who wasted time following false leads (Lewis 1999).[69]

Effort, whether on a member or leadership level, does not necessarily mean that the creation of a favorable image is successful. If there is a dissonance between how an organization sees itself and how it is perceived by stakeholders it often lead the former to take corrective action (Hatch and Schultz 1997, 358). In the organizational literature this gap is sometimes referred to as the difference between desired identity, the vision of leaders, and the communicated identity, what the community understands (J. M. T. Balmer and Soenen 1999, 83–34).[70]

The IRA – which identified as the protector of the Catholic community - often found itself confronted by members of that community who perceived the organization as an instigator and provocateur. As lamented by one Belfast man, "They blow the fuck out of the city center, madden the Oranges, bring down the Brits on our backs and then claim to be our protectors" (Burton 1978, 92). In response to these allegations the group would publish leaflets explaining their intentions, values, and actions following attacks – albeit with mixed results (Burton 1978, 96-103). It also took on the role as a community police, preventing everything from theft to children skipping school, a role which arguably exposed the organization to added risk and endangered volunteers (Sluka 1989, 90).

[69] This could have been a clever counter-intelligence tactic on the part of the IRA, but Burton (1978, 113) argues that people would emulate IRA members – pretending to be "one of the boys" – in a genuine attempt to gain social status.

[70] In a well-known study of the New York Port Authority (NYPA) for example, Dutton and Dukerich (1991) found that the NYPA was forced to take measures to deal with the homelessness problem after facing community pressure expressed through negative organizational image.

Even when taking corrective action, a group can only control its image to a certain extent. Factors beyond the organization's control, such as rumors, outside discourse, actions of other actors, and the reputation of partners, still introduces a measure of unpredictability (Earl and Waddington 2012). The RAF discovered this after publishing a statement applauding the Black September's Munich attack in 1972. By publishing the statement, the RAF intended to align the organization with the broader international anti-imperialist movement, especially in the third world (Dunne et.al. 2009, 307). Parts of the public however, saw only a German organization lauding an attack against Jews and interpreted the statement as an indication that the RAF was anti-Semitic (Dunne et al. 2009, 313).

The above is not to say that norms do not matter to regulate behavior, but simply to illustrate that groups do try to actively create normative and social resonance inside and outside of the organization. Therefore, while the diffusion literature is useful to understand how the tactic travels within ideological or social frameworks where it has proven 'resonant', it falls short in explaining how it spreads to places where this is not the case. The next chapter provides a theoretical framework based in fashion theory that distinguishes actors based on their position in the adoption chronology. After all, if the aim is to understand why suicide attacks were not adopted by a wider variety of actors, we need to understand why there are not more first-movers.

3 What do suicide attacks and tonsillectomies have in common?

The forms of protest and tactics employed by revolutionaries ought to have a basis in the local normative and social environment if the group aspires to generate and maintain local support. However, while such constraints need to be taken seriously by organizations for them to survive and thrive, they are neither static nor impervious to influence. While social movement theory has explored how critical events endogenous to conflict can change norms of acceptable behavior, a factor less frequently considered is the agency of groups to mold acceptance and build tolerance for their activities among their own members and among outsiders. The focus on both norms and status are useful to understand how suicide attacks travel within ideological or social contexts where they have proved 'resonant', but they fall short when explaining why anyone would labor to make them accepted in the first place.

This chapter uses theories of fashion and herd behavior to provide a framework for understand the spread of suicide attacks in conditions of limited information about tactical and strategic returns. It proposes that it is useful to think of the spread of suicide attacks in the same way as the spread of certain medical procedures of dubious merit (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1998, 1012). Take tonsillectomies, which gained wide popularity in the 60's and 70's despite what can at best be described as weak positive information indicating their utility (R. L. Taylor 1979). During a recent period of introspection, medical professionals have argued that the spread of tonsillectomies and other ostensibly unwarranted procedures was a consequence of the fact that most doctors are generally ill-informed about cutting edge medical research (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1998, 1012). When in doubt, they tend to band-wagon based on the reputation of the procedure's source. As described by John F. Burnum in the *New*

England Journal of Medicine, "Consider the irony, as professed scientists and proponents of Cartesian doubt, we physicians find ourselves, like lemmings, episodically and with a blind infectious enthusiasm pushing certain diseases and treatments primarily because everyone else is doing the same"(Burnum 1987, 1222).

This dynamic is far from unique to the medical community, but can be found in other fields of research, as well as in finance, in culture, and – as this chapter will suggest – in violent conflict. The premise is the following, when information is scarce and people are in doubt, they tend to imitate those whom they believe are better informed. As such, it is possible that the idiosyncratic and narrow spread of suicide attacks grounds in it being based, not on information about its merit, but on the reputation of its early exponents. Before developing this theoretical framework in more detail, the below provides a definition of suicide attacks as well as a description of actors of interest.

3.1 Definitions

3.1.1 Suicide attacks

The definition of suicide attacks remains elusive despite being a focus in the political violence literature for the last two decades. In part, this is because suicide attacks have never been a unified method of violence, but an umbrella concept which captures a variety of actions where the perpetrator dies as a result (Crenshaw 2007). Suicide attacks are not a tactic, but rather a class of tactics where the death of the perpetrator is a necessary component of the mission. To establish conceptual boundaries, it is therefore common to define suicide attacks as operations where success is dependent on the death of the perpetrator (Pedahzur 2006, 18-19). This has the benefit of differentiating suicide attacks from high-risk operations where the perpetrator might be prepared to die but has a chance of surviving.

This boundary notwithstanding, it is often difficult to determine when the death of the perpetrator is "a necessary part of the mission" and when it is a likely consequence. For example, most would agree that it is not a suicide attack if a perpetrator bombs a building with the expectation of being caught and receiving the death penalty. Here, the time lag between the attack and the death is simply too long, in addition to the fact that the perpetrator has a chance of carrying out the mission and escape alive. However, if a perpetrator enters enemy territory and goes on a shooting spree until he is killed, it is less clear. This ambiguity have led some to focus on the intent of the perpetrator, arguing that "operational success is not contingent upon the perpetrator's death, but on their proactive disregard for life" (Charlie Winter 2017, 4). This definition is shared by the Global Terrorism Database, which contains the most comprehensive dataset on suicide attacks between 1970 and 2020. This has the benefit of capturing both modern and historical instances of the tactic. Before the introduction of explosives, making the death of the perpetrator a necessary component of the definition excludes almost all types of self-sacrificial attacks because death could seldom be guaranteed.

With the use of the tactic among non-state actors, some also use the term 'suicide terrorism'. This has the drawback of introducing the term 'terrorism', which is yet another term fraught with definitional controversy (Crenshaw 1987; de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2011). Although using 'suicide terrorism' is a suitable characterization in some instances, it comes with the normative connotations associated with terror. It also obscures that the tactic is used by different types of groups in different kinds of conflicts, as terrorism is commonly associated with clandestine actors (Fortna 2015; Findley and Young 2012a). Moreover, as some definitions of terrorism only include attacks against civilians, such a term risks excluding the high proportion of suicide attacks employed against military targets (Moghadam, Berger, and Beliakova 2014; Piazza 2018).

As is evident from the first chapter, the term 'Suicide attack' also has etymological baggage, being grounded in the Second World War and exclusively used by either the victim or onlooker. Perpetrators themselves consistently draw a distinction between the act of suicide and the act of self-sacrifice. In Arabic, the nuance is captured in the difference between *Istishad,* which connotes martyrdom, and *Intihar,* meaning suicide (Cook 2007). Before Islamic groups infused the tactic with religious meaning, secular Arab groups used the term *Fida'i* to describe martyrs that died in either suicide attacks or battle. Similarly, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) made the distinction between *thatkolai*, which means suicide, and the word *thatkodai*, which means 'to give yourself' (Waldman 2003).

Despite the loaded nature of the term, 'suicide attack' is used consistently throughout this thesis. Because intentions are difficult to infer, it is defined as operations where not dying implies that the mission has failed. This is distinct from suicidal attacks, where there might be a high risk of death, but the perpetrator has a chance of getting away. This entails a focus on suicide bombings, where the perpetrator makes use of explosives and vehicles. Whether the death is inflicted by a vehicle loaded with explosives, suicide belts, a grenade, or an airplane crashing into a building is a secondary concern.

It is not uncommon to further specify that suicide attacks have to be undertaken voluntary, meaning that the perpetrator cannot be deceived about their prospect of survival nor coerced into carry out the operation (Gambetta 2005, vi).[71] While this is a good distinction in theory, it is implausible to verify empirically. There are some cases where it is known that the perpetrator

[71] Some would interject that this is excessively restrictive and will inhibit looking at the phenomenon in a historical perspective. This is a valid point but choosing this definition does not need to render the argument incognizant of historical context nor of the term's etymological baggage. Quite on the contrary, the hope is that this bounded definition will highlight its many instantiations.

was threatened to conduct the attack at gun point, such as the case was with the IRA's use of proxy bombers, which fall outside the scope of the definition (M. Bloom and Horgan 2008). However, beyond such clear-cut cases, determining the threshold of voluntarism is difficult. Groups have been known to make use of children, drugs, and people with mental disabilities, where the voluntary nature of the act can rightly be questioned. The degree of pressure applied to prospective perpetrators also varies across time and depending on the situation in which a group finds itself (Whiteside and Mironova 2017, 83). However, even if we could establish criteria for distinguishing voluntary from involuntary suicide attackers, determining whether these are present is often impossible as the key witness is dead. Consequently, suicide attacks are assumed voluntary, except, as was the case with the IRA, there is clear evidence to the contrary.

3.1.2 Actors of interest

The study tries to understand why revolutionary organizations decide act in particular ways. But what does it mean to be 'revolutionary' in this context? The phrase revolutionary organization is deliberately selected in recognition of the heterogenous set of non-state actors using suicide attacks. It is intended to describe all armed non-state actors with a political agenda, but is agnostic about the substance of their aims, character of the conflict, and characteristics of the organization. In other words, it captures secessionist revolutionaries engaged in civil wars as well as terrorist groups seeking to establish a global Islamic order. It is aimed to capture the nature of their aim, not reflect its substantive content.

Studying revolutionaries in a broad sense is a way of keeping an open mind and a wide scope for theorizing. An alternative is to select a sub-set of actors based on the conflicts they operate in, such as insurgencies (insurgents), underground campaigns (terrorists), guerilla warfare

(guerrillas). However, these categories contain variation along dimensions that might be relevant for an explanation of suicide attack adoption and abstention, such as territorial status, conflict type, aims, resources, and so on. Narrowing the focus to a subset of groups based on variation (or constancy) along dimensions of interest is a matter of case selection, not terminology. So, rather than having to continuously define different actor types, the term revolutionary is used for simplicity and theoretical agnosticism. So, can fashion theory help us understand the why the appeal of suicide attacks has been so narrow?

3.2 Fashion theory

3.2.1 Herd behaviour and fashion

The study of herd dynamics has featured in the fields of economics as well as fashion. The basic premise is that there are innumerable social and economic situations where our choices are influenced by the decisions of those around us. This can be true for relatively trivial decisions, such as the type of clothes we elect to wear or the types of restaurants we go to, to more consequential ones, such as voting behavior (Banerjee 1992; Strang and Meyer 1993; Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1998). A herd dynamic tends to occur when we believe that paying heed to what other people are doing is rational because we think they base their decision on information that we do not possess (Banerjee 1992, 797). When people disregard their private information based on the assumption that others know more, it often results in what we call herd behavior (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1998, 1000). This comes to expression in multiple ways, among others in the form of fads and fashions.

However, the basic model provided by Banerjee assumes that all members of "the herd" have the same information, which is often not the case. This led some to the idea of fashion leaders, whose defining trait is being recognized as having more information than those around them (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1998; Rogers 2003). This was based on the experimental

evidence in psychology, which long suggested that the more uncertain an individual is about the veracity of his own judgement in some field, the more open he is to external informational influences in it (Deutsch and Gerard 1955; Festinger 1954; J. M. Suls and Miller 1977; Henrich and Gil-White 2001). Because the assumption that others know more is often incorrect, however, this can lead to the spread of fashions and fads that in retrospect are revealed to be quite off mark (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1998, 1000). As was touched on above, this has sometimes been the case in the medical sciences as well as in a variety of other fields where practitioners interact (R. L. Taylor 1979; Burnum 1987).

The type of 'acknowledged expertise' that renders someone a fashion leader is often referred to as prestige, defined as a non-coercive currency earned by possessing socially valued attributes that elicits admiration in other people (Henrich and Gil-White 2001). The attraction to prestige has been examined by theorists like Thorstein Veblen (1899), Gabriel Tarde (1903), George Simmel (1957), and Herbert Blumer (1969), who all sought to understand why some fashions spread and others do not. In Gabriel Tarde's *The Laws of Imitation,* he sought to understand why, "given one hundred different innovations conceived of at the same time – innovations in the forms of words, in mythological ideas, in industrial processes, etc. – ten will spread abroad, while ninety will be forgotten" (Tarde 1903, 140). On the one hand, he argues that people might choose to imitate if an innovation meets practical needs, such as outperforming competing options or aiding previous inventions (Tarde 1903, 158, 173). More importantly to later fashion theorists, he contended that such practical deliberations are often superseded by a 'non-logical' force. Drawing on Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), he identified this as an attraction to the prestige, or the admiration of the one circulating the idea (Tarde 1903, 213-214). Around a century later, Barabara Carnivali describes prestige as "the power to seduce and make an impression on the imagination of others with a remarkable act or a brilliant situation or one that is judged to be such" (Carnevali and Hanafi 2020, 196). It is a form of magnetism which

"shows itself and is knowable by virtue of its effects: its ability to attract" (Carnevali and Hanafi 2020, 199). In anthropology, people's ability to recognize prestige has been tied to cultural evolution, the idea that cultures are driven forward by members who recognize the best models for imitation that maximize their chance of surviving (Henrich 2016, 116).

The power of prestige to elicit admiration is noteworthy because, while far from the only emotional response documented in reaction to exemplary others, admiration is the positive emotion most closely associated with reports of energization to imitate others (Schindler et al. 2013, 87; Algoe and Haidt 2009, 108; R. H. Smith 2000, 186; Thrash and Elliot 2004). Admiration is a positive emotion, experienced in either voluntary or imposed upward social comparisons, typically elicited by someone exhibiting superior skill, ability, or expertise in some domain relevant for self-enhancement (Thrash and Elliot 2003).[72] "Of all the affective attitudes of one man towards another," wrote McDougall (1921, 228), "admiration is that which renders him most susceptible to the other's influence." He defined the emotion as a compound of wonder and negative self-feeling, where wonder keeps the attention directed at the admired model and negative self-feeling gives him a suggestible attitude towards it (McDougall 1921, 132). More contemporary formulations echo his thought, describing it as observers that project their inadequacies towards a model that appears superior in terms of skill, ability, or talent (Algoe and Haidt 2009; Onu, Smith, and Kessler 2015; Onu et al. 2016; van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters 2011).

[72] It stand in contrast to similar positive emotions like elevation, found to be elicited by moral excellence, gratitude, elicited by being a beneficiary of another's moral excellence, awe, elicited by abilities too excellent to grasp, and adoration, elicited by unattainable excellence (Schindler et al. 2013; Algoe and Haidt 2009). It also stands in contrast to negative emotions, such as envy and deflation, typically associated with unattainable excellence(van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters 2011).

Prestige is not necessarily associated with a person but can also be tied to a time, place, or community. As noted by Tarde, "It is often enough for a woman who is a newcomer to a provincial town to be a Parisian, to set the style in the place" (Tarde 1903, 236). Both Veblen and Simmel placed prestige in the hands of the upper classes and saw fashion as a process where elite symbols diffused down the social hierarchy.[73] This is commonly referred to as the 'trickle down model' and has since been adopted by both by Rene König in *The Restless Image* (1973) and Pierre Bourdieu in his *Distinction* (1986). It was challenged by Blumer (1969) who argued that the class link lost its currency outside the context of 17th – 19th century social structure.[74] Blumer flipped Simmel's logic, arguing "It is not the prestige of the elite which makes the design fashionable but, instead, is the suitability or potential fashionableness of the design which allows the prestige of the elite to be attached to it" (Blumer 1969, 280). Those working in the fashion vanguard have to respond to the direction of fashion, they do not occupy a privileged position in setting it, but have to pick designs that correspond to the direction of incipient tastes: "those which 'click'" (Blumer 1969, 282).[75]

Even more esoterically, Barabara Vinken (2005) argued that fashion is the art of capturing the *zeitgeist*, the spirit of the age: "Fashion is defined as the art of the perfect moment, of the sudden surprising an yet obscurely expected harmonious apparition – the now at the threshold of an immediate future" (Vinken 2005, 42). Like Blumer, she critiques Simmel and Veblen, as well as König and Bourdieu, for conceiving of fashion as an instrument that captures division (Vinken 2005, 7). Fashion to Vinken is like a code that pretends to represent reality by setting

[73] Simmel described fashion as a form of class differentiation where insignia adopted by elite groups to demarcate their status become signifiers of prestige and are copied by those seeking to become more like them. Because of the imitation by lower classes, the insignia quickly lose their original significance, leading elites to adopt new ones, thereby restarting a cycle of imitation and differentiation. Simmel coined this the fashion cycle, one of innovation, imitation, and differentiation, a reoccurring process fueled by the desire and aspiration to gain social status.
[74] His best argument to that effect might be that the fact that upper classes themselves are concerned with following fashion indicates that it is not synonymous with what they choose to wear (Blumer 1969, 281).
[75] Blumer situated prestige in 'collective selection', and saw the fashion as a force driven forward by "need to be in fashion, to be abreast of what has good standing" (Blumer 1969, 282).

standards for how to clothe oneself appropriately as a representative of a gender, profession, or social position (Vinken 2005, 52). Prestige, she argues, is not found in Blumer's collective selection, but in multiple places depending on what subcultures different segments of the population most identify with (Vinken 2005, 62).[76]

3.2.2 When do people discard their own information?

People are more likely to discard their own information when they are confronted by someone they see as a veteran in a field of interest. This is called a 'fashion leader model', and comes into play when a veteran preforms a task before a novice, eliciting admiration in the latter (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1998, 1000). In a scenario where information is scare or the belief in one's own information or judgement is low, mimicking seemingly superior others can be an optimal strategy (Strang and Meyer 1993). Understanding diffusion of an act based on herd behavior in conditions of information asymmetry requires us to explore three things in more depth: the superiority of the fashion leader, perceived relevance of the situation and activity, and chronology of decision-making (Fiske et al. 2002; Algoe and Haidt 2009; Sweetman et al. 2013; Mcadam and Rucht 1993). I will return to the importance of chronology in the case selection section and focus on the other two points here.

3.2.2.1 Superiority of the fashion leader

Admiration is elicited in situations of positive social comparisons, which are typically, although not exclusively, motivated by individuals tendency for self-evaluation and validation in the face of uncertainty about their standing (Festinger 1954; J. M. Suls and Miller 1977; Henrich and

[76] Vinken's account posits that fashion no longer descends from the upper to the lower classes but that the speed and level of production now facilitates "enough choice between equally fashionable styles to meet the demand of different tastes" (Barnard 2014, 331). By this account fashion spreads within social strata in contrast to between them, as in trickle-down model, and across all, as in the collective choice model. Moreover, prestige is not the only force of imitation, but also solidarity, meaning that imitation is seen as both aspirational and as something used to express belonging. In Simmel's trickle-down model, fashion was largely a way for the upper classes to express belonging and lower classes to express aspiration. In the mass market reality, the class distinction is largely collapsed.

Gil-White 2001). Uncertainty can arise from internal or external factors, whether a low self-perception grounding in feedback indicating poor performance or from external events making one aware that one's performance could improve. In other words, comparisons can be either sought or imposed. In the former, a person is motivated to search for better possibilities, in the latter, the comparison is imposed by an outside actor's achievement that suggests they are better informed.

An observer will not be influenced to discard their own beliefs by the decision of an actor they believe themselves superior to (Schindler et al. 2013). If a revolutionary group targets a military outpost and kill three soldiers with a suicide attack, something which is done routinely by other groups in the same area with IEDs and machine guns, the attack is unlikely to produce the negative self-feeling that renders them receptive to be influenced by the suicide attack dispatchers. If, on the other hand, the revolutionary group that employed suicide attacks was recently responsible from expelling the army from their region, onlookers might nonetheless wonder if they are onto something because these prior achievements suggest they have better information. An unremarkable act can elicit admiration if conducted by an actor regarded as remarkable, just as a remarkable act can go unrecognized when executed by someone held in disregard (Thrash and Elliot 2004, 959).[77]

[77] Studies have indicated that people who feel admiration tend to also feel like they have a high sense of control of their abilities and efforts, and exist in contexts where it is possible to improve (R. H. Smith 2000, 179; Lockwood and Kunda 1997; Onu, Smith, and Kessler 2015). If an achievement appears so fantastic as to be entirely unattainable, it is more likely to elicit other positive emotions, like awe or adoration, or negative emotions such as envy, resentment, or deflation, all of which are more closely associated with inactivity or a motivation to excel in alternative domains (Lockwood and Kunda 1997; van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters 2011; Wood 1989). Relatedly, the achievement of the prestigious model also ought to be perceived as earnt through effort rather than through favorable circumstances, innate talent, or luck – all of which would render the achievability criteria, and thereby admiration, less likely (Hareli and Weiner 2000; Schindler et al. 2013, 96; Onu, Smith, and Kessler 2015).

3.2.2.2 Relevance of the situation and activity

For an actor to discard his own information to the benefit of the fashion leader, he must see himself as engaged in a similar set of activities in a similar type of situation. If he does not, then no comparison is likely to be drawn, removing the basis for the actor to defer to the fashion leader's expertise by imitating. As noted by Strang and Meyer (1993, 491) in their study on institutional conditions for diffusion: "The individual or organization's cognitive map identifies reference groups that bound social comparison processes. Rational mimicking requires prior and potential adopters be understood as fundamentally similar, at least with respect to the practice at issue." Studies in psychology draw on research on analogies to understand who people are likely to compare themselves to, "because social comparison may be viewed as drawing an analogy between the self and the other" (Lockwood and Kunda 1997). Findings indicate that people are most likely to point out similarities between entities that share attributes (Tversky 1977), structure, and purpose (Markman and Gentner 1993; Gould 1995).[78]

Early research on attribute similarity indicated that people most often compare themselves to others who are similar attributes predictive of performance in a particular field, such as age, schooling, and so on (J. M. Suls and Miller 1977; Fiske et al. 2002). However, later studies demonstrated that performance relevance is not necessary for attribute salience, as people also compare themselves to others based on attributes that are quite unrelated (Feldman and Ruble 1981; J. Suls, Gaes, and Gastorf 1979). In a study by C. T. Miller, for example, results indicated that given a choice, study participants who took an analogous reasoning test preferred to compare their results with people similar in physical attractiveness (C. T. Miller 1982). These and similar findings are typically explained by suggesting that people are 'self-schematic' and

[78] In a picture of two men and a woman, the two men are more likely to be grouped together as similar due to gender attributes. However, if a picture shows a woman giving a man a gift or a man giving a gift to a woman, the pair of 'givers' and 'receivers' are more likely to be grouped together based on structural similarity.

will compare themselves to others based on the attributes that are important to their identity at the time (sex, attractiveness, country of origin…) (C. T. Miller 1982; Fields, Copp, and Kleinman 2006).

Research on purpose and structural similarity looks at how people judge similarity between entities based on their aims and position in social network structures (Markman and Gentner 1993). Robert Gould defined structural equivalence as "a relation among pairs of individuals that obtains if they are tied in equivalent ways to equivalent others" (Gould 1995, 16).[79] An example of structural equivalence in a context of attribute differences is the global anti-colonial struggle. Here, revolutionary movements in different countries identified with each other and compared each other's efforts based on their position in the colonized-colonizer relationship despite not sharing a single identity attribute. Such cross-cutting participation identities have manifested several times in history, but have only really gained traction when they correspond to the social relations as felt by the people (Gould 1995, 16).

Regardless of which aspects of one's identity is important to self-definition, one is most likely to compare oneself with those one considers of the same ilk, what the psychology literature typically refers to as an in-group (Fiske et al. 2002, 881; Lockwood and Kunda 1997; Wood 1989; König 1973; Veblen 1899; R. H. Smith 2000).[80] An implication of this is that people are more likely to take as role models those they consider similar to themselves at any given time. However, the perceived superiority of a model has also been found to elicit admiration in actors that would normally consider it an out-groups in cases where the model can be seen as 'ideal-

[79] In his exploration of French insurgent identities, Gould used the model to explore the shifting identity boundaries that characterized social conflict in France in the 19th century.
[80] What attributes are considered salient features of one's identity will vary, leaving the 'in-group', 'out-group' distinction somewhat unstable. As an example, a person might for a period of her life primarily identify as a French revolutionary, then as an accountant, then as a mother. In the end the person might see herself as all of those things, but their order of importance will influence the boundaries of her in-group.

prototypical' for a superordinate identity category that the observer *can* consider himself a part of (Algoe and Haidt 2009; Onu et al. 2016, 722–23).

Prototype is a heuristic used to indicate the imagined typical, representative, individual in a given group (Niedenthal, Cantor, and Kihlstrom 1985; Setterlund and Niedenthal 1993; Escalas and Bettman 2003). Being ideal-prototypical simply means one is perceived as an exemplary specimen of a particular prototype. For examples, while most people have friends they might consider prototypical environmentalist, someone like Greta Thunberg would be closer to the definition of ideal prototypical. Looking at cross-country and cross-cultural admiration, superordinate identity categories such as 'European', 'modern', and 'environmentally friendly' can trump more nativist categories and become a salient basis for comparison when a community is confronted by a superior out-group (Bond and King 1985; Onu et al. 2016).

This happened in the mid-19th century Qing dynasty, when a series of military defeats led to a domestic reform movement. Among other things, members of this movement argued the military ought to look to the U.K. to modernize, despite the fact that the English were considered barbarians and held in great distain following the Opium Wars. Chinese writing and scholarship from that time contained both misunderstandings and misinformation, with a well-known scholar named Fang Dongshu quoting rumors that Englishmen "cannot see into the distance and therefore cannot hit any mark with bow and arrow, and have legs so weak they are unable to walk on land upon coming ashore" (Geng 2014, 30). The fact that Englishmen were considered peculiar beings did not stop Qing reformers' desire to imitate based on the belief that their dynasty belonged in the same superordinate great powers category as England and that imitating modes of military production could help get them there. One of the key proponents of this movement, Feng Guifen, captured the spirit when he wrote that Qing should

"Learn the superior techniques of the barbarians in order to control the barbarians" (Aervitz 2016). In other words, while admiration might be more easily elicited by members of in-groups, even barbarians can trigger admiration when they embody a domain specific aspiration.

3.2.2.2.1 Superiority and relevance exemplified: the academic Volvo

In the Qing reformers case, the shared superordinate identity category was aspirational; the dynasty was far from a great power at the time. In other cases, the shared identity category pre-dates the event or achievement that triggers comparison, it is the model's excellence that makes it a salient basis of identification. This distinction has been extensively explored in consumer psychology. As brands conceive of products as symbols people can use to construct their identities, they have an interest in associating their merchandises with actors they believe their ctarget-costumer base either admires, identifies with, or both. In recent years, the insight has been increasingly instrumentalized by brands and companies in well-known marketing strategies such as product placement and influencers (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Bearden and Etzel 1982; Escalas and Bettman 2003; 2005; Carnevali and Hanafi 2020).

The person or group associated with a particular behavior or product are called 'reference groups', defined as "social groups that are important to a consumer and against which he or she compares himself or herself" (Escalas and Bettman 2003, 341). [81] The influence exerted by reference groups is generally held to take three forms: informational, value expressive, and utilitarian (Bearden and Etzel 1982; Escalas and Bettman 2005).[82] All of these can lead to a

[81]

[82] The impact of reference groups does not feature equally in all items. From Torstein Veblen onwards, most theorists emphasized that for referents to have an influence, the item or act must be conspicuous, something other people will notice. If a product is used outside of the public eye, or by most of the population it loses its specific associations (Bearden and Etzel 1982, 185).

herd dynamic, but the force exerted by the fashion leaders (or reference groups) is different in each case.

Informational influence is exerted by reference groups seen as particularly well informed on a given subject. Value-expressive influence is exerted by individuals that are portrayed as either prototypical of a person's membership group or exemplary in some way that the onlooker aspires to be. Utilitarian influence works by taking advantage of the normative boundaries in a given community, where individuals act in certain ways to either gain reward or avoid punishment (Escalas and Bettman 2005; Kelman 1961; Bearden and Etzel 1982).

If I believe professors are on average more knowledgeable about cars than the rest of the population, and all professors drive Volvos, I might buy a Volvo as well because I believe they have information that I do not. That would be informational influence. However, it could also be that Volvos become popular among professors and I as a grad student aspire to be one. While I believe professors are no more knowledgeable about car than average, I might still want to buy the Volvo brand to imbue myself with scholarly associations. The link between the brand and the intellectual elite is artificial, but by becoming emblematic of this profession it has set a standard for how one can appear as a representative of it (Vinken 2005, 52). In this scenario, academics are an aspiration group and the influence it exerts is value expressive (Bearden and Etzel 1982, 184). However, this close association can also have a contrasting effect. Say I consider myself a part of the blue-collar working class and find being called an intellectual rather insulting. I might then avoid the Volvo because the high proportion of professors who drive it gives associations to the car that I would rather not have transferred to myself. It could also be that I already am a professor and own a Ford Mustang, which I believe is superior to the Volvo. Even if I were to buy a new car, I might stick with the Mustang because I believe the university Volvo craze is a meaningless fad created by junior faculty with less car experience.

Utilitarian influence is based on people's desire to comply with the wishes of others in a community to either achieve a reward or avoid punishment (Bearden and Etzel 1982, 184). Returning to the Volvo, I – as a blue-collar worker – might be quite fond of Volvo because, among other things, the car is highly reliable. I might even be favorably disposed towards academics. However, I might still opt to buy a different car because I expect that driving around in a Volvo will result in my friends' ridiculing me. I also do not feel like spending time justifying my decision. The social cost might simply be too high, so I discard a good option for the sake of convenience and to conform to the standards of the community I consider myself a part of. Again, one can also imagine a grad student who secretly believes a Ford Mustang is superior to a Volvo, but who nevertheless picks the latter because he expects driving a Mustang will have negative social consequences while a Volvo will enhance his social standing.

The influence of reference group behavior on people's consumption patterns has been exploited by marketers for some time. Staying in the realm of cars, think about the link forged between Aston Martin and James Bond, Doc Brown, Marty McFly and DeLorean, or – leaving cars – Wilson the volleyball and Tom Hanks. These are iconic; simply by seeing them they remind you of the movies and characters associated with them. If you are a 40-something man looking for a car and you think James Bond is mediocre entertainment made for the masses, you might avoid the Aston Martin brand because you think its kitsch. Even if you like both Bond and the car, you might avoid it because all your car-loving friends bought Teslas and you believe they are better informed. Put simply, the car has a different appeal depending on how you see yourself, the people around you, and James Bond.

Once an act or product becomes associated with an actor in the way described above, it becomes like a signature. Signatures of this type – whether tactics, car brands, or volleyballs –

are something that make particular actors simply 'come to mind', not something most people spend a lot of energy deconstructing. They are intuitive connections and often the result of what social psychologists call the availability heuristic (Ross 1977, 198).[83] Much like tonsillectomy doctors, those that recognize the prestige of the reference group might imitate despite having little information about the act or product they are buying. In other words, the spread of some trend is not necessarily based on the documented benefits of the content of the trend itself, but on the reputation of actor associated with it.

3.3 Suicide attack adoption in conditions of information scarcity

Herd behavior arises when actors believe others faced with a similar choice to themselves have more information that they do. This leads them to discard their private information for what they assume is the superior information of actors that preceded them in making the same choice. The decision to imitate is relational, driven by an aspiration to obtain or take part in the prestige of the reference group associated with that behavior. While we are more likely to recognize the prestige of those who are both excellent and similar to ourselves, people outside our membership group can also trigger admiration and make us wish we were more like them.

3.3.1 What does it mean to be a suicide attack reference group?

To be a suicide attack reference group implies two things. First that the actor has achieved something widely recognized as extraordinary. Secondly this extraordinary achievement is or becomes perceived as tied to the use of suicide attacks. Whether prestige was gained by using suicide attacks or pre-dated the use of the tactic is of secondary importance. For consumer goods

[83] This phenomenon was identified by Kahneman and Tversky in a series of papers in the early 1970's, where they demonstrated that people judge the frequency or likelihood of events by the ease with which they can imagine them. As cognitive availability tends to be poorly correlated with frequency, this results in a systematic bias, and can explain why people tend to be more scared of flying than driving a car, despite statistics showing there is a higher likelihood of having an accident in the latter (Carroll 1978).

to confer or accumulate status they must be consumed conspicuously, the same is the case for gaining fame through violence (Trigg 2001). Revolutionaries have different ways of standing out when fighting by creating unique combinations of target, force, and mode of implementation. Political violence is a rare phenomenon in general, but if guns and bombs are the bread and butter of rebel tactics, suicide bombing is more akin to Russian caviar – it has historically stood out in the majority of contexts. While this is no longer the case in conflict contexts with Salafi-jihadi actors, it has been the case historically, hence the theory of suicide attacks as a particularly strong signal of resolve.

To be a suicide attack reference group, the actor has to pass the availability heuristic test: does a suicide attack bring the actor to mind as easily as the sight of an Aston Martin triggers the association to James Bond? Globally, Iran arguably achieved this in the early 1980's, Hezbollah in 1983, al-Qaeda in 2001, and the Islamic State in 2015.[84]

3.3.2 Who will join the heard?

Whether an onlooker will recognize the prestige of the reference group and be liable to discard their own private information depends on variation along two dimensions as outlined in the theory: reference group relevance and self-perception of competence. This can be illustrated in the below matrix.

[84] Of course, people who are intimately familiar with James Bond might point out that although Aston Martin is most well-known, the franchise has used a multitude of different brands, ranging from Toyota to Rolls-Royce. Similarly, people familiar with suicide attacks could point out that while Hezbollah was the most famous user in the 1980's, their use was numerically dwarfed by other actors inside Lebanon (Pape 2003). People familiar with Aston Martin could point out that the brand has been driven by actors in other film franchises as well, such as the *Fast and the Furious* and *Transformers.* People familiar with Hezbollah could point out that suicide attacks was only a small component in their violent repertoire. Yet it is precisely the ability of the association to prevail in the face of 'inconvenient' facts that suggests we are dealing with a reference group.

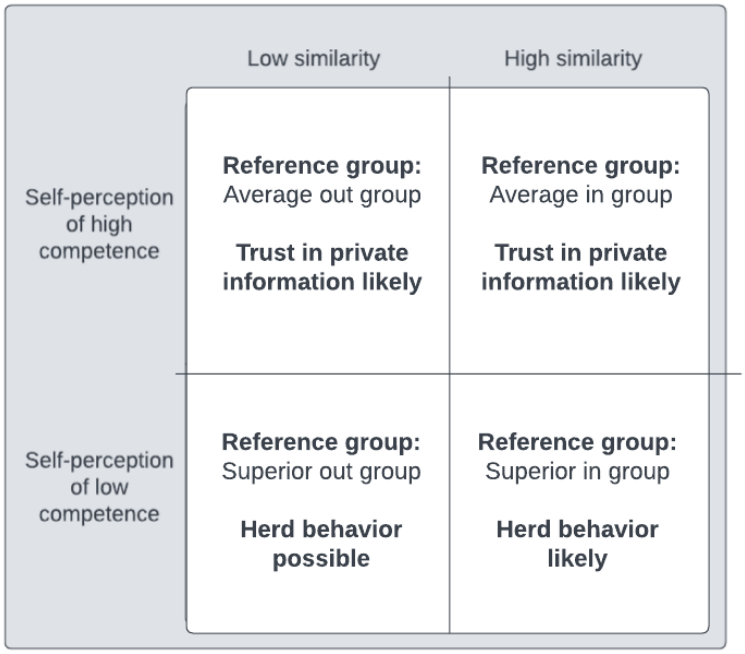


Figure 4 Matrix with likely behavioral manifestation depending on variation along similarity and superiority dimensions

The vertical axis ranks self-perception of competence. In cases where groups view themselves as highly competent some field – like fighting, or bomb making – the threshold for considering some other actor superior is high. Put differently, the higher one rates one's own abilities in a particular field, the less likely one is to consider other actors superior to oneself and defer to their decision when facing uncertain returns. This renders the pool of potential fashion leaders shallow because groups with a high sense of competence are more likely to see themselves as already capable of obtaining or surpassing other groups' achievements. These groups will not see the need to seek guidance or imitating and are more likely to trust their own information than to defer to the herd.

The second dimension captures reference-group relevance. As discussed, people generally judge relevance by looking at similarity of structure, attributes, and aim. In terms of structural similarity, conflict type, mobilization identity, and enemy type are all useful indicators. Overlap in conflict and enemy type makes it more likely that the group will be able to map the reference

group's activities onto its own conflict context. Mobilization identity makes it more likely that the reference-group is considered an in-group. Attributes of revolutionary groups, such as identity- and organizational characteristics, are likely to matter. Because a shared identity makes it more likely the reference group is considered an in-group. The latter because shared organizational characteristics, such as organizational type, expertise, and resource availability, makes it more likely the achievement is seen as realistic and achievable. In terms of aim, the best indicator is the ultimate purpose of the organization, whether that is national liberation, global revolution, or some smaller, clearly defined aim. Together, these indictors contribute to the ease with which the onlooker can see the reference group as an idealized self-image.

However, as discussed in the Volvo example, there are three different forms of influence – all of which can inspire heard behavior. While the above matrix captures when informational influence is likely to come into play, the below adds normative and value expressive forms of influence. All three are related and work by catering to the onlooker's aspiration, but whereas informational influence plays on a desire to be right, value expressive plays on a desire to gain status, and utilitarian influence on the desire to be in good communal standing.

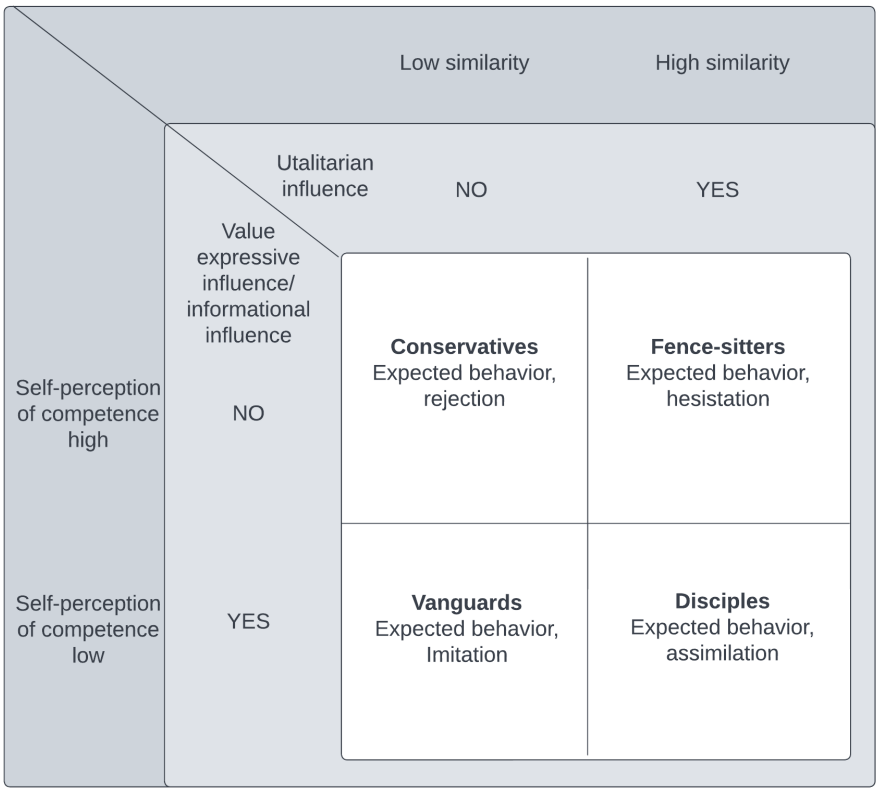


Figure 5 A typology based on the likely behavioral manifestations of three different types of influence

This results in a typology of four actors described in more detail below. The prestige of fashion leaders is unlikely to influence groups in the top two categories to adopt a behaviour because they are unlikely to recognize it. They will rely on their own information and only adopt a practice if it receives information that suggests it will be more beneficial than its current mode of operations. However, conservatives are unlikely to adopt at all because their difference from the reference group makes it unlikely information generated by it will be seen as relevant. Groups on the fence might adopt if suicide attack use by the reference group yields information on audience costs suggesting imitation would boost their local standing.

Due to their low perception of competence, the two bottom categories are likely to recognize the suicide attack reference group as a veteran and possible fashion leader. While vanguards might adopt with informational or aspirational motives, disciples, due to the similarity with the reference group, are more likely to receive information about audience costs generated by the

fashion leader's use of the tactic. Vanguards, by virtue their low similarity with the reference group, is most likely to bring the tactic into new social and ideological contexts. Disciples might bring the tactic into new social contexts, but if they do, they are similar to the model in other ways, like ideology. Given that that suicide attacks travelled so rarely after 1983, we must assume that most revolutionaries in the 80's and 90's were conservative.

3.3.2.1 Conservative revolutionaries

Revolutionaries that are likely to be unmoved by a group successfully using suicide attacks are labeled conservatives. If admiration is directed at those that represent the idealized self-image, conservatives are defined by seeing the reference group as neither an ideal nor a self-image. In other words, not a fashion leader. We expect revolutionaries that share a low degree of similarity with a reference group and a has a high self-perception of competence to fall in this category.

The low similarity with the reference group indicates that the group will have a reasonable belief that the tactic will violate local norms, hence utilitarian influence works against adoption. It also means that use by the reference group is unlikely to yield relevant information on how the tactic would be received in the prospective adaptor's environment. As a consequence, repeated use by the reference group is unlikely to give conservatives a basis for updating their beliefs about audience costs or status gains. Moreover, their high self-perception of competence means they are likely to trust their private information and consider themselves capable of achieving the reference group's feat by alternative means. While the use of suicide attacks might elicit wonder or perplexion, it will not trigger the feeling of inferiority that would motivate becoming part of the herd and imitating. More likely they would see the innovation as misguided, odd, and unnecessary.

3.3.2.2 Revolutionaries on the fence

Groups that are unlikely to be moved by value expressive and informational influence but liable to be moved by utilitarian influence are labeled revolutionaries on the fence. We expect revolutionaries that share a high degree of similarity with the reference group but have a high self-perception of competence to hesitate when faced with an innovation such as suicide attacks. They will not recognize the group as a fashion leader. That said, their similarity to the reference group means there will be a greater variation in the outcome. On the one hand, the high self-perception of competence might lead the prospective adopter to try to actively differentiate itself from the reference group, which it perceives as inferior. However, their similarity with the reference group means they might receive relevant information about audience costs and status gains through the reference group's use of the tactic, which could speak in favor of adoption. As such, the influence exerted by the reference group is predominantly utilitarian, not value expressive, and works by generating information about the normative environment.

Revolutionaries on the fence do not necessarily feel a desire to be more like the reference group, but they might over time feel the need to conform to its behavior to 'keep up with the times'. Depending on how the tactic is received by both supporters and adversaries, it might simply prove to be more costly to differentiate than to imitate. The initial uncertainty about how the tactic will be received means the prospective adopter will sit on the fence and gauge which way the wind is blowing before deciding.[85] The direction of the behavioral outcome (differentiation or imitation) likely depends on two things. First, whether the onlooker group claims to represent the same demographic as the reference group, and second, whether the demographic responded

[85] One could say that both the conservatives and the groups on the fence hesitate pending more information. However, while those sitting on the fence can gain information about audience costs in their constituency by virtue of being in the same in-group as the reference group, the conservatives only gain information about audience costs in someone else's community. The greater the social and ideological distance, the more likely the experience of other groups will be regarded as irrelevant. In other words, traditionalists will reject the tactic regardless of new information unless the tactic is adopted by a group seen as either superior or more relevant, which would move traditionalists into one of the other categories.

positively to the model attack. If the answer to both is yes, then hesitation might be followed by imitation or assimilation. Depending on the context, this can be a sign of competitive escalation or cooperative status-seeking (M. Bloom 2005; Acosta 2016). If the answer to either question is no, then hesitation might instead be followed by rejection, manifesting in no behavioral change or active condemnation.

Groups on the fence will not typically be responsible for introducing suicide attacks to new contexts but will be part of cascading adoption in a context where suicide attacks have generated positive momentum in the population. In cases where an ideologically divers actors compete for the support of the same population, groups on the fence might introduce the tactic into novel ideologies.

3.3.2.3 Vanguard revolutionaries

Groups that are likely to be moved by informational and value expressive influence but not by utilitarian influence are labeled vanguards. These share a low degree of similarity with the reference group and have a low self-perception of competence. Revolutionaries of this kind might experience admiration and consider the suicide attack user a fashion leader if they see it as an ideal prototypical out-group. Essentially the revolutionary equivalents to Qing dynasty reformers, they seeking to selectively adopt the means of outsiders who have demonstrated that they are better informed by exceling in a particular domain. Vanguards are moved to imitate because they believe – based on the example of the referent – that the benefit of adoption outweighs the risk of violating local norms. Unlike the groups on the fence, the vanguard will receive less useful information about audience costs from reference group's use of the tactic. This is because the low similarity with the reference group makes it unlikely that they share a constituency overlap.

While groups on the fence adopt the tactic because they are convinced by local information on audience costs or status gains, the vanguard is willing to adopt under a condition of uncertainty because they consider themselves inferior. In this scenario, learning from outsiders might seem optimal because the alternative is to fail or fade into obscurity. The observable implications can be imitation, but the low similarity with the reference group means that is likely to be selective. Imitation will likely be preceded by a local justification process where they draw on local myths and histories to try to legitimize the practice in a way that anchors it in the local social context. The need for a justification means there is likely to be a time-lag between reference-group use and vanguard adoption.

3.3.2.4 Revolutionary disciples

Groups that can be moved to imitate by informational, value expressive, and utilitarian influence are labeled disciples. Revolutionaries that share a high degree of similarity with the reference group and have a low self-perception of competence are most likely to feel admiration and to discard their own knowledge for that of the referent. Herd behavior is highly likely to occur among groups in this category, but the multiple pathways to imitation means this is the space with the highest degree of causal indeterminacy. The lower self-perception of competence and higher similarity with the referent, the more we expect groups to assimilate both acts and beliefs associated with the model wholesale. That said, like with group on the fence, the high attribute similarity can also result in a contrasting effect, especially if a particular practice is poorly received by a constituency shared by both the reference group and the disciple (Strang and Meyer 1993). In cases where it is well received, however, they too are likely to risk more by abstaining from using the tactic than from adopting it.

3.3.3 Hypotheses

Much like the doctors described at the beginning of this chapter, revolutionaries experiencing self-doubt are liable to band wagon based on the reputation of the source of an innovation. Admiration of the referent makes organizations more positively disposed towards the potential of the tactic in the face of uncertainty about audience costs and status gains. Conversely, the absence of admiration makes organizations more apt to be negatively disposed in the face of uncertainty about audience costs and status gains. Groups that admire the referent are therefore liable to overestimate the merit of the tactic, while groups who do not might be liable to pre-emotively dismiss the tactic's potential. Based on theories of admiration and reference group influence, we can derive the following hypothesis: An organization's willingness to adopt suicide attacks under conditions of uncertain tactical and strategic returns is mediated by their view of the tactic's reference group.

This leads to two expectations.

3. Revolutionaries that do not admire the reference group associated with suicide attacks are unwilling to imitate in the face of uncertain tactical and strategic returns.
4. Revolutionaries that admire the reference group associated with suicide attacks are willing to imitate despite uncertain tactical and strategic returns.

The first expectation suggests that the revolutionaries who do not experience admiration are less likely to imitate based on uncertain returns. This can lead to adoption or non-adoption depending on whether the tactic has already been introduced and favorably received in their conflict context. If the latter is the case, a group can be moved to adopt by utilitarian influence, the need to conform to the standards of the community. The second expectation posits that revolutionaries that admire the reference group will be more likely to adopt suicide attacks

despite uncertain returns. These are theorized to be moved by informational or value expressive influence; a belief that becoming more like the referent can help them perform better or realize some aim. These groups will be more willing to attempt shaping local norms to imitate the means they believe made the reference group successful.

How admiration manifests in behavior will likely be a function of similarity between the onlooker and the reference group. Taking the discussion of imitation and internalization together with the literature on the importance of rebel group legitimacy, we expect that groups with low identity overlap will imitate more selectively than those with high identity overlap. This could entail adopting only the technology and trying to justify it within whatever framework is salient for revolutionaries locally. If we have both admiration and identical high similarity, wholesale assimilation of the symbolic complex might be both possible and desirable. Between the two there are more pragmatic outcomes where certain aspects of the reference group's symbolic complex are more 'in sync' with the admirer's than others.

The above implies that suicide attacks have not spread to a wider variety of actors in the 1980's and 1990's, not because of insurmountable cultural or normative barriers, but because most groups considered themselves better informed on fighting their struggles than the groups that were associated with the tactic. In other words, most revolutionaries at the time were conservative, with a high confidence in their own abilities, discarding the experience of groups dissimilar to themselves as irrelevant. The rest of the thesis is dedicated to tracing whether the above hypothesis has any merit, and if so, how reference groups have shaped the decision and process of adoption.

3.3.4 Difficulties with recognizing and measuring admiration

What kind of behavior do we expect to find among groups that are prone to herd behavior? As already mentioned, recognizing someone else as superior in a domain that is important to self-realization is often associated with admiration. Emotions get much of their explanatory power from associated action tendencies (Elster 2015, 146). Prestigious others that trigger admiration either by design or incidentally are associated with provoking four action patterns in observers: praise, affiliation, internalization, and imitation (Schindler et al. 2013).

While, as we will see below, it is possible to use these action patterns as indicators of admiration in revolutionary groups, measuring and interpreting them is associated with some difficulty. One reason for this is that the action patterns associated with admiration are also associated with other emotions, like elevation, gratitude, awe, and adoration, as well as negative ones, like envy (Schindler et al. 2013; Algoe and Haidt 2009). However, as most of these emotions involve recognizing the other as superior, which is the crucial point for herd behavior to come into effect, the exact emotional gradient is not a point of great importance.

A more problematic issue is that groups might display these behaviors for reason unrelated to a recognition of the 'excellent other' as superior. A revolutionary group might for example praise or affiliate with another group because it hopes to gain favor or enter into some kind of relationship motivated by material gains. What one might interpret as admiration and status seeking might in-fact be calculated rent seeking. There is no easy way to control for this except to look for information in each case to find out whether material benefits were the primary motivating factor for exhibiting behaviors that would otherwise indicate admiration. This can be difficult, especially as it is quite possible for a group to express admiration and attempt to affiliate with other groups for material gains at the same time.

Moreover, admiration is not a binary variable, but something that can be felt with different degrees of strength. Getting an impression of the degree of admiration towards a reference group based on publicly available sources is difficult. One way of doing it is looking at the frequency with which a particular actor is mentioned in a group's publicly available material and the wording of the praise. Another is to look at their actions, the concrete efforts made to affiliate with the reference group or the extent to which it tries to internalize its values. However, as we only have access to a limited sample of any revolutionary groups written material, much less its internal histories, it is difficult to gain an accurate impression of the intensity of a sentiment. Beyond internal documents, autobiographies and ideological publications might be the best avenues to gain insight into this. Although these are often used instrumentally by groups to portray a particular image, they are useful as reflections of how they wish to be perceived.

This poses another challenge, however, because if group publications are used instrumentally to portray a particular image, it is possible groups might hide sources of influence they believe are controversial. If this is the case, a group might admire suicide attack reference group without exhibiting the associated behavioral patterns because they have an interest in hiding it. The absence of indicators of admiration could also simply be due to it not being captured in available sources. In either case, this would result in lending admiration too much explanatory weight by generating a hidden pool of negative cases – groups that admire the reference group associated with suicide attacks but that did not adopt. While this is a theoretical possibility, it seems unlikely that none of the behavioral patterns would manifest if admiration is in fact present. It is not an unfair assumption to believe that the number of cases where groups had an interest in hiding their admiration and the organizational coherence and stealth to hide any attempt at affiliation is small.

With these difficulties in mind, let us take a look at how we might measure the behavioral manifestations of admiration in the context of revolutionary groups. The first action pattern, praise, can be understood as a way of drawing attention to a remarkable feat of the exemplary other and as a way of communicating one's own ideals by crediting people who actualize them (Schindler et al. 2013, 100-101). In the realm of revolutionaries, praise is often communicated through public statements and encompasses everything from approval of specific attacks to more broad expressions of admiration and solidarity. As such, we might use statements of support and solidarity published by either the group, its leaders, or ideologues as an indicator of admiration.

Ideological solidarity has been expressed in several ways. For a time in Northern Ireland, IRA support to other groups was expressed in wall paintings. The first appeared on West Belfast's Beechmount Avenue in 1982, showing an IRA militant together with a militant from the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) jointly gripping an RPG (Judah 2019).[86] In West Germany, the RAF published several supportive communiques, one particularly exhaustive example being addressed to Black September after its 1972 operation in Munich (Smith, Moncourt, Dunne 2009, 326-369).[87]

Conversely, organizations also distance themselves from actors they disagree with through condemnations and other types of differentiation. Targets of condemnation can be direct

[86] This solidarity was not only a feature of organizational policy, but also expressed by members of these groups. As IRA member Eamon Collins (1998, 82), noted: "I believed that the IRA could be turned into an organization which could take on the capitalist state and the agents of that state, as the Red Brigades had done in Italy. I saw the struggle in internationalist terms: I believed Irish republicans should forge links with their brothers and sisters in Lebanon, in Germany, Italy, or Palestine, to help overthrow the forces who were retrenching capitalism in all the western democracies."

[87] Although amidst the praise of the operation, the RAF also highlighted areas with room for improvement: "The fact is that it would have been better to exchange the Israeli athletes for people who make up the facade of the Social-Liberal Coalition [the RAF suggests Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the German foreign Minister], as this would have destroyed the complicity between Israeli and West German imperialism and isolated Israel" (Smith et. al. 2009, 338).

adversaries, like the state forces or paramilitaries, but also competing organizations with similar ideologies, or groups in other contexts seen as immoral in some way. In its position papers, the RAF largely established its organizational identity in contradistinction to the non-violent political left (Colvin 2009, 117). Similarly, Muslim Brotherhood groups in Egypt between 2015-2017 would draw a clear line between themselves and contemporary Salafi-jihadist groups. In one instance, Harakat Sawa'd Misr (Hasam) published a statemen explicitly condemning ISIS for its targeting following attacks on Coptic churches during Easter in 2017 (Hasam 2017).

These action tendencies do not only exist on paper, praise and condemnation are also found in the attitudes of members as expressed in internal conversations. Returning to Northern Ireland, the OIRA saw themselves as the 'authentic' IRA, referring to the PIRA as "'armed Celtic [football Club] supporters' most of whom would never have been recruited into the IRA before August 1969" (Hanley and Millar 2010, 153). After the OIRA ceased to exist in the early 70's, the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) seized the Marxist banner in Ireland. Describing views of INLA held by the members of the PIRA, Collins (1998, 85-86) wrote:

> "Newry did not have its own INLA unit, but we suspected that this situation would not last for long. We saw ourselves as the republican New Left. We were expecting a dividend from the H-Block campaign:[88] we did not want a rival group to emerge as the voice of left-wing republicanism. Iceman [IRA intelligence official] suspected that the next development would be the setting up of an INLA unit in the town. He had a special hostility towards INLA and regarded many of their members as little more than criminals or political fantasists (later events would show he wasn't far wrong)."

[88] A hunger strike conducted by the IRA and INLA in 1981 in an attempt to get political prisoner status. Ten people starved themselves to death, seven from the IRA and three from the INLA.

That said, the above has to be seen in light of research showing that many members of armed groups have only the most cursory understanding of a group's vision and ideology (Abrahms 2008).

Affiliation is similar to praise, but entails more concrete steps of attaching oneself to the prestigious model, such as forming a kind of apprenticeship. Even where learning potential is limited, "seeking closeness to admired others may help establish a co-operative relationship in which one benefits from the other's excellence" (Schindler et al. 2013, 102; Fields, Copp, and Kleinman 2006, 158). Among revolutionary groups, this is often communicated through pledges of allegiance. However, it can also have manifestations that are identical to praise, such as wall paintings and statements that are used to indicate closeness and signal friendship and solidarity.

The third behavioral pattern associated with admiration is internalization. This refers to adopting ideals and values transmitted by the prestigious model. As already discussed, a behavior tends to be rejected if it stands at odds with prevailing norms and values. However, norms can be challenged when confronted with a perceived superior model, higher moral authority, or charismatic figure (Weber 1965; M. Spencer 1970; Conger, Kanungo, and Menon 2000) (McDougall 1921, 217). Admiration usually occurs in response to models that represent specific ideals or domain specific aspiration, as when one admires someone's achievement, athletic ability, faith, perseverance, or skill. Internalization associated with admiration is therefore best thought of as selective, as the accommodation of particular ideals and values, not necessarily incorporate whole belief systems (Schindler et al. 2013, 85).

One can imagine that ideals about self-sacrifice can move from one context or group to another without entailing the adoption of the entire symbolic complex. This was the case inside Lebanon

in the 1980's, where Christians in socialist groups embraced the general ideal of self-sacrifice without converting to Shi'a Islam or drawing on the religious symbolism so central to Hezbollah (Pape 2003). It was also the case for the different individuals that decided to adopt suicide by fire in the 1960's and 1970's. They internalized ideals about self-sacrifice and self-immolation, but not the entire Buddhist belief complex underlying Thich Quang Duc's act in 1963.

Although this kind of idea-transfer does occur, it is difficult to measure unless a group makes explicit reference to the source of their inspiration for a particular symbol or act. Although groups do sometimes make this kind of reference as we will see in chapter four, the fact that they do not do it systematically likely leads to an underestimation of how often ideals are adopted from outsiders. Depending on the source of the idea and the ideology of the group, one can easily imagine that groups would attempt to hide the original source of an idea to make it seem organic to the context and society where it is operating. As with the other behavioral manifestations of admiration, one has to be familiar with the group, its history, ideology, and social context in order to discern whether a symbol, idea, or act is internalized from an outside source or has developed internally. Even with this knowledge, it is not always possible.

The final behavioral pattern associated with admiration is imitation and emulation. These are both social learning mechanisms, with the difference between them typically described as the degree to which an action is result or process oriented. When emulating, one copies the consequential result, when imitating, one copies the action (Acerbi, Tennie, and Nunn 2010; Horner and Whiten 2005). Just like internalization can be selective, imitation does not necessitate a wholesale embrace of the repertoire or belief system of the prestigious model, which can more accurately be coined assimilation. Rather, successful features can be selectively learnt and incorporated (Schindler et al. 2013; Onu, Smith, and Kessler 2015, 221).

In their investigation of westernization in Hong Kong, for example, Bond and King found that most people saw modernization as "…a "creative transformation" of tradition and a selective adaptation of Western institutions and values" (Bond and King 1985, 355). Interview subjects tended to distinguish between modernization, as involving technology, behavior, or material progress, while westernization was seen as involving values, thinking, or traditions from the West. The adoption of the former was not seen as necessitating assimilation into the latter. It is rare that revolutionary groups are as articulate about imitation as the interview respondents in Hong Kong. Moreover, as with internalization, groups might have an interest in portraying the tactic as native to the environment where it is operating.

Based on the above it is safe to say that measuring admiration and discerning whether it is in fact admiration and not some other emotion or factor motivating adoption has several challenges. As already stated, whether one is capturing admiration or some other emotion triggered by the perception of someone else as superior is not of great consequence. However, if the observed action is motivated by material gains, the theory proposed in this chapter has little value. To control for this, in-depth knowledge of each case is necessary. It is not a perfect approach, there might be information unavailable to the public that disprove the interpretations presented in the empirical chapters of this thesis. As this is not open to the public, the most proactive thing to do is to write with the awareness that this is possibile, as well as treating publicly available primary sources as partial, biased, and imperfectly sampled. The same goes for the process of discerning whether the indicators of admiration are present, especially in contexts where groups might have an interest in hiding them.

3.4 Research design

As noted in Miles and Huberman, research design decisions are decisions because they constrain later analysis as well as the breadth of the conclusions that can be drawn (Huberman and Miles 2002). The thesis employs a case study design to explore why suicide attacks have not been adopted by a wider variety of actors. It is structured as theory testing, investigating the potential influences linked to admiration and competing explanations offered in the existing literature. Although the generalizability of findings derived from case studies has been described as limited, case studies in general and process tracing in particular have several benefits for both the testing and development of theory (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; George and Bennett 2004; Laitin 1995).

The expectation is that the first group to employ suicide attacks in a new conflict context is moved by admiration, while followers make the decision based on information generated from their compatriot's attack. Determining the relative weight of the admiration hypothesis vis a vis the theory of normative restraint will require an in-depth look at the discussions inside revolutionary groups and their social environments. As this entails a focus on the process of adoption rather than adoption patterns, a case study design particularly suitable. In contrast to statistical studies, which primarily address questions of propensity, narratives are better suited to approach questions of process. As such, this design facilitates for the reconstruction and analysis of considerations made inside groups, as far as sources allow. It enables exploration of questions such as whether actors admire reference groups and therefore engage in risky behavior to become more like them, or whether actors are like the reference group in several ways, which gives them more information about consequences of using the tactic. These detailed narratives can then be situated and contextualized in the literature that takes a broader approach.

3.4.1 Case selection

Cases were selected based on conformity on key independent variables identified as important predictors in the existing literature on suicide attack adoption and variation in whether suicide attacks were used. This selection strategy seeks to avoid bias associated with selecting on the dependent variable and to decrease the number of confounders to a manageable amount (Geddes 1990). The independent variables that serve as inclusion criteria were outlined in the literature review, and are the following: awareness, expertise, opportunity, desire, and martyrdom culture. As mentioned earlier, awareness is arguably the most important one because it allows us to consider the non-occurrence of suicide attacks as a decision-making event, rather than a non-occurrence (Elster 2015, 6).

The timeframe in focus is 1980 to 2000, chosen to capture the inspirational effect exerted by Hezbollah's attack in 1983. As noted by Bikhchandani et al. "... to understand the "cause" of a social change, it is crucial to pay careful attention to the early leaders" (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1998). This timeframe also has the benefit of being a period when information available to groups on the potential returns on suicide attack use were scarce. While some information would suggest that suicide attacks could yield tactical and strategic benefits, information relevant for assessing risk, such as data on audience costs and status gains, becomes increasingly available the more organizations employ the tactic. By minimizing information on future gains by selecting actors early in the adoption chronology, we are better able to understand the forces that shape decisions to imitate under conditions of uncertainty. Isolating cases in in this manner helps maximize the likelihood that admiration is not simply epiphenomenal on cost benefit analysis.

Four conflict contexts that are particularly interesting with the above selection criteria in mind are: (1) Palestine, (2) Afghanistan, (3) Northern Ireland, and (4) Sri Lanka. Of these four, the first three are included in this thesis. Sri Lanka is excluded because the first suicide attacks in that context appear to have been more of a coincidence than a deliberate decision.[89] The possible coincidental nature of LTTE's first attack and subsequent proliferation of the tactic is interesting but makes it less relevant for exploring external influences on the *decision* to adopt.

	Suicide attacks systematically employed			
Conflict context	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000 - 2010	2010 - 2020
Palestine	No	Yes	Yes	No
Afghanistan	No	No	Yes	Yes
Northern Ireland	No	No	-	-
Sri Lanka	No	Yes	Yes	No

Figure 6 Case selection table

As my examination aims to understand what moved some groups to become first movers. The study therefore focuses on groups that either were first movers or that were likely to take on that role based on existing theories of suicide attack adoption. In Palestine it looks at Hamas,

[89] On July 5, 1987, a soldier known as Captain Miller detonated a truck packed with explosives in a Sri Lankan Army (SLA) camp near Point Pedro in the Jaffna Peninsula. The bomb was a component of a larger guerrilla operation which resulted in forty deaths and more than one hundred casualties (Hopgood 2005, 50). As it stands, it is not entirely clear that Captain Miller was supposed to die at Point Pedro. A TamilNet article from 1997 leaves room for doubt: "Cpt. Miller drove a truck full of explosives into a Sri Lankan army base in July 1987. At least 120 soldiers were killed in the explosion and the ensuing ground assault. Miller was unable to get clear and was also killed in the blast" (TamilNet 1997). Whether or not it was intended that Captain Miller should perish in the attack, he became a LTTE legend and the inspiration for a branch specialized in suicide attacks called "the Black Tigers". From the early 1990's, the Black Tigers employed suicide attacks with bravado, using vehicles, boats, and other concealed devices, assassinating both the Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa along the way (William Lewis 2012). Estimates of how many suicide attacks the black tigers carried out vary, but tend to lie between one hundred and two hundred, with 191 being frequently quoted (Hopgood 2005, 44; M. Horowitz 2010b, 54). Move to case selection

Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Islamic Jihad Brigade, in Northern Ireland on the PIRA, and in Afghanistan on the Mujahedeen factions led by Arab-friendly warlords.

3.4.2 Unit of analysis

While it is not uncommon to ascribe mental properties to groups, organizations, and institutions – the government wants, the organization decided, etc. – it tends to place decision-making in a black box (Zahle 2021, 6437). This study therefore takes a methodologically individualist approach, privileging individuals' behavior over environmental factors to understand macro-level results (Schaefer 2021, 1214). The nature and configuration of the power in revolutionary organizations vary, but leaders generally hold significant sway over strategic decision making and are therefore a natural focus point. However, while it is analytically appealing it has empirical and theoretical shortcomings.

Leaders long inhabited a central place for understanding the course of history. As historian Thomas Carlyle's famous dictum goes, "Universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked here" (Carlyle et al. 2013, 21). Leaders held similar sway in the international relations scholarship of Morgenthau and Kissinger, who affording state leaders great weight in explanatory models. However, these 'great men' explanations were soon criticized for being too particularistic and poorly suited for theorizing. An increased focus on international systems and structures heralded by Kenneth Waltz led leaders to be treated as interchangeable black boxes that responded to constraints and opportunities in largely similar ways (Krcmaric, Nelson, and Roberts 2020, 134). A similar approach is reflected in work on revolutionary groups that focuses on macro- and meso-level factors in explaining organizations' behavior (Collier and Hoeffler 2000). While

this has co-existed with historical and biographical scholarship of revolutionary leaders and other prominent members, there has been little cross-pollination.

Recently, elite studies has sought to find whether personal attributes and life experiences of leaders affect political outcomes in systematic ways (Krcmaric, Nelson, and Roberts 2020). They do not discard the importance of external constraints and opportunities but explore whether unpacking the "black box" of the leadership can help us understand why organizations that face similar constraints and opportunities often react differently. Transferring this idea into the realm of rebels: while leaders of revolutionary organizations are subject to constraints and opportunities endogenous and exogenous to the organization, the experiences and beliefs of leaders influence how they react to these externalities. As leaders hold significant sway over the path an organization takes, it is not unreasonable to assume that their beliefs and ideas are reflected in how the organization acts in the face of uncertainty. They are therefore particularly interesting to explore my hypothesis.

Leadership can be vested in one individual or in a group of individuals. There are many variations, with the configuration, function, and power of the leadership depending on the social and conflict context and the degree of organizational centralization and hierarchy. It can also be subject to changes over time, as conflicts evolve, leaders die or are killed, or organizations succumb to infighting. In some cases, organizations revolve around one influential leader, as was the case with the LTTE under Velupillai Prabhakaran and the PKK under Abdullah Öcalan. In other cases, organizations might have leadership groups, as was the case of the IRA's Army Council. In cases where organizations are transnational, the importance of the overall leader will depend on the degrees of accountability local leaders have to the center. Such leadership groups are not necessarily homogenous, but can be populated with individuals with

different personal and organizational resources that pursue conflicting interests within the organizational hierarchy (Best et al. 2018, 56).

In addition to variation in leadership configurations, the degree of leadership accountability is different from case to case. Leaders can try to mobilize its members around different causes and tactics, but they are not necessarily successful at doing so (Best et al. 2018, 9). As was explored in the literature review, in-house norms and checks and balances on power can inhibit individual leaders from pursuing particular actions. Leaders in revolutionary organizations are constrained by the beliefs of the organization's members as well as those of the constituency they claim to represent. To what extent audiences constitute a constraint will often depend on the extent to which the group is reliant on the active and passive support of the population. This is mediated by external state support, but while this might free groups from dependence on locals, it introduces a new actor that the organization might be accountable to. Both the nature of the leadership and the constraints they face in steering the organization need to be considered.

3.4.3 Methodology

The study uses a process-tracing methodology, which is particularly suited in "attempts to identify the intervening causal process - the causal chain and causal mechanism - between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable" (George and Bennett 2004, 77). Because it accommodates for intense scrutiny of intervening variables, process tracing allows scholars to explore whether the causal process suggested or implied by a theory is in fact present (George and Bennett 2004, 20). In other words, it is a good approach for testing theories in situations where there are multiple variables, possible interaction effects, and potential equifinality, as is the case here. It is also well suited for obtaining explanations for

deviant cases, those that are not predicted by existing theories, and thereby enrich general theories.

The below chapters seek to provide analytical explanations, exploring the chain of events within the groups in focus with existing theories in mind. There are some potential pitfalls with doing this. The most important is confirmation bias, where the researcher's focus is so heavily vested in the theory, he seeks to explore that he disregards evidence that diminishes its explanatory value. More broadly, process tracing requires the researcher to establish an uninterrupted causal path, linking causes and effects as specified by the theory in question (George and Bennett 2004, 222). In many cases, process tracing can only reach provisional conclusions. This poses a particular challenge in this study given the opaque nature of revolutionary groups but is somewhat alleviated by the historical focus of this thesis.

Another challenge is that there might be several causal mechanisms consistent with the evidence uncovered in the research process. When this is the case, it might be difficult to discern which factor (or factors) are causal, which ones are spurious, and which ones have causal priority and depth.[90] As put by Njølstad, competing explanations equally consistent with the available evidence makes it difficult to discern if the outcome is overdetermined, whether the different variables have a cumulative effect, or whether one has causal power, and the rest are spurious. However, when this is the case, close scrutiny of the process might be exactly what is necessary to gauge the relative weight of different factors (George and Bennett 2004).

[90] A variable might lack causal priority if it is necessary for the outcome, but dependent on the occurrence of a third variable. In this case both the variable under scrutiny and the third variable are necessary for the outcome to occur, but the variable under scrutiny lacks independent explanatory value. If a variable lacks causal depth, it is simply one intervening variable among a series that can bring about the outcome. In other words, the variable under scrutiny is neither sufficient to bring about the outcome of interest nor is it a necessary intervening variable. For more on this, see chapter nine in George and Bennett (2004).

3.5 Data Collection

How do we gain access into the thoughts and beliefs of the leadership of revolutionary groups? Studies on political and business elites have tackled the same question and tend to use research on general forms of cognitive processes, consult personal biographies, and study interpersonal networks. This thesis took a similar approach, while also consulting people involved in the group when possible and material written by leaders and key ideologues when available.

Data was collected from a range of sources, online, in archives, and fieldwork between January 2020 and January 2022. Collection was both restricted and complicated by travel restrictions and access limitations relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the types of sources used in each chapter varies and the thesis had to rely more on secondary sources than was planned. While this was initially seen as a drawback, the negative ramification on the research were limited by two factors. While I was not able to go to Palestine or Lebanon, work based on interviews with members of the PIJ and translations of key works by the leadership were published while I was working on the thesis. Some of these were also available in Arabic online. This, in addition to the fact that Palestine is a thoroughly researched context with a plethora of secondary sources and interviews openly available on the period of interest, reduced the drawback of limited access.

Afghanistan was a more difficult case as the subject of suicide bombings has received less attention. To understand the Soviet invasion-period the chapter primarily relies on secondary sources, diplomatic cables, newspapers, and biographies. Online and physical archives have been less used for this chapter as they held little material written by mujahideen between 1980

and 1990, which was the primary period of interest.[91] As a proxy, the study used work building on a more extensive library of primary sources in this period, such as David B. Edward's *Caravan of Martyrs*. As the chapter moves closer to the present and al-Qaeda becomes central to the narrative, it makes greater use of primary sources from the Harmony Program, Abbottabad files, and ideologues as well as declassified intelligence documents and interviews relayed in newspapers and other secondary sources.

The implications of COVID-19 on the Northern Ireland chapter were less pronounced as restrictions lifted and interviews were possible in 2021. That said, the pandemic did pose some unique challenges which I will detail as they pertain to the different categories of sources mentioned below.

3.5.1 Secondary sources

As mentioned, secondary literature gained relative importance during the COVID-19 pandemic with its associated restrictions on meeting people and accessing archives. Two categories of literature that were frequently consulted were area studies and history, in particular biographies of leaders and ideologues in the movements studied. Initially, the survey extended far beyond the specific case studies, which is perhaps best reflected in the introductory and literature review chapters. Consulting a broad range of historical accounts was helpful to gain a sense of the scope of the suicide attack phenomenon and to bound theorization. Another category of secondary sources was work on fashion, marketing, and social psychology. As is evident in this chapter, these sources have provided much of the theoretical framework informing the analysis of this work. A final, and perhaps most important, category of secondary

[91] In the University of Oslo Taliban Sources Project (TSP), for example, there are eight documents available from before 1994, the year Palestinian groups and Egyptian Islamic began employing the tactic, compared with several hundred after. The Harmony Program at the Combatting Terrorism Center (CTC) have some documents from the 1980's, but like the TSP most are dated to the 1990s and 2000s.

literature belongs in the study of armed conflict and non-violent contention. This included specific works on suicide attacks and repertoires of violence, as well as more general works on social movement theory, terrorism, and different types of armed conflict. Together, these literatures helped frame the question, provided a basis for constructing the theoretical framework, and valuable provided contextual information for the case studies.

3.5.2 Newspaper archives

The opportunity to travel to and access physical archives was restricted during COVID-19 so archival work was largely limited to what was available online. Two exceptions were the archives of the British Library in London, which I was able to consult after it opened to the public in 2021, and the archive of the Tower Museum in Derry. The former was used to explore debates surrounding the use of dynamite in the IRA. The archive in Derry was used to source primary sources from the republican and civil rights movement. Besides these two, the rest of the archives consulted were online, and were: British Newspaper Archive, the Library of Congress, the Australian TROVE collection, and the New Zealand National Libra Some newspaper specific archives like those of the New York Times and Washington Post were also used. These were consulted to trace manifestations of suicide attacks and debates surrounding the phenomenon from the late 19th century until the 1980's.

3.5.3 Documentary sources

The access to primary sources varied from chapter to chapter but can broadly be divided into two categories: contextual and case specific. Both were comprised of sources in English and Arabic. In the contextual category were documents used to better understand the material and organizational requirements underpinning systematic use of suicide attacks. This included accessing different online repositories containing primary sources related to suicide attack users,

including the ISIS-files hosted at George Washington University, the Harmony documents, and the Abbottabad files. The latter were available online, while the ISIS-files were shared with the author by the ISIS-files project. Case-specific primary sources include publications by leaders and ideologues in the groups in focus, as well as members of groups and group sponsors. It also includes court documents and de-classified intelligence files, predominantly from the US. When available, I also use interviews with failed suicide attack perpetrators available in media sources as well as martyr eulogies.

3.5.4 Fieldwork

The possibility for fieldwork was severely limited by the COVID-19 pandemic, but I managed to carry out some interviews in Iraq and Northern Ireland. In the spring of 2021, I carried out thirteen interviews in Mosul and Baghdad with the help of a research assistant due to travel restrictions. This resulted in an article on learning and innovation in the Islamic State's suicide vehicle industry (Tveteraas 2022). These interviews have been used contextually together with the documents described above to gain a better understanding of the organizational pre-requisites for carrying out a suicide attack campaign. During a five-month period in the fall of 2021, I conducted another thirteen interviews with republicans in Derry and Belfast, Northern Ireland. The list of participants included former members and leadership figures of republican organizations, hunger strikers, as well as community activists. All fieldwork activity was reviewed and approved by the Oxford ethics committee in 2020 and 2021 and was carried out in accordance with the university's COVID-19 policy.

The questions posed in Iraq was of a technical nature aimed at better understanding the expertise and organizational basis required to innovate in the realm of suicide attacks. In Northern Ireland, the questions centered around international influences on the Republican

cause. These were intended to get an idea of activists' attitudes towards other groups and their openness to consider outsiders' experiences as applicable to their own situation. Out of these two categories of interviews, only the ones in Northern Ireland are quoted directly. However, those interviews would not have been less interesting if not for the groundwork laid in Iraq.

The chronology of the interviews conducted was important because it enabled the interviews in Northern Ireland to be more targeted. The interviews in Iraq (as well as the primary documents described as contextual above) concerned the organizational requirements for innovation and informed a separate article. With the technical and organizational knowledge gained from that work, I was better able to focus the questions in Northern Ireland on abstract influences. It also enabled me to have a more critical attitude towards arguments about ability and opportunity made by the participants, which made many reflect more thoroughly on the process of rejecting suicide attacks.

Participants in all contexts were recruited using a snowballing method, relying on locals and participants sharing the names of other potential participants. While some participants did not mind including their identity in this research, all interviews have anonymized to ensure the security of the participants. The reason is the sensitive nature of the questions and the fact that the British government is still actively prosecuting people who were involved in Republican groups during the Troubles. As a consequence, all participants are referred to in general terms such as 'republican activists', 'former prisoners', and 'participants'. That said, contextual information is sometimes included in statements by participants who did not mind being identified because they had already served time in prison. This was particularly relevant for former hunger strikers.

The sensitive topic of the research had a few implications for the fieldwork in Northern Ireland. First, it was important to develop procedures for handling incriminating information, and consent procedures that informed participants about the limitations of security procedures if confronted with government interest. The effort proved largely redundant, as the participants were already keenly aware of the potential risks of participating in this kind of research due to the arrests made after the Boston College Tapes confessions. This incident seriously damaged the credibility of researchers and repeatedly acted as an obstacle for recruitment. Beyond informing about the risks, the most effective countermeasure against oversharing was to not pose questions that would elicit incriminating information.

A second measure was protecting the participants' identities from potential government interest by developing good data handling procedures. This was important in both Northern Ireland and Iraq. These procedures were developed in cooperation with the University to secure the information gathered during the interviews and as well as the personal information of the participants. However, as the data could easily be sequestered by a government with interest it was important not to give participants any illusion about the protective effect of these measures.[92] As a consequence, personal information was only collected in a minority of cases where people had already served time in prison.

3.5.5 Datasets

Event data and statistical analysis are part of the unseen foundation of this thesis, the MPhil completed at Oxford in 2018. It examined the correlation between territorial control and suicide attack adoption based on a dataset constructed from the Global Terrorism Database

[92] For more extensive information on the procedures and ethical considerations underlying the interviews conducted in Iraq and Northern Ireland, you can contact the Oxford University ethics committee with the application reference number R68407.

(GTD), other conflict and state-capacity datasets, and secondary sources (Global Terrorism Database 2018; Haschke, n.d.; Marshall and Jaggers 2017; Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013). However, that work is important to this thesis only in so far as it enabled me to critically examine some potentially interesting theories at the early stage of my research and questions that arose during the literature review. As it is peripheral to the arguments presented here, I will not spend time outlining the methodological and statistical specifications underlying those findings. However, if it is of interest, the modalities of the dataset and general approach is outlined in Appendix II, with the data and code attached for exploration.

3.6 Data analysis

Each of the source categories above were used to develop the theory, establish context, or critically examine the course of events in each case study. However, they came with important limitations and implication for data analysis. Firstly, there is a potential bias tied to the type of material that was available. For example, primary sources from revolutionary groups, especially in conflict environments, are imperfectly sampled, selectively preserved, and in an imperfect state. Internal documents are a nonrandom collection of papers that have undergone several rounds of selection before reaching the public domain.

The issue of source availability being a function of multiple rounds of selection was also an issue for the use of historical newspaper archives. The use of online archives has the drawback associated with selective digitization, meaning there might be material physically available that is not reflected in this research. Whether this material would have significantly altered the conclusions in this thesis is difficult to know, but unlikely as they seldom capture the inner workings of revolutionary groups beyond statements from the leadership. More likely there are

historical instantiations of suicide attacks which the first chapter has failed to capture, but this leaves more work to be done in the future.

One can also ask how representative the interviews in Northern Ireland are for the views of republican movement as a whole and the leadership in particular. The participants themselves were careful to state that they could only share their own experiences and that their thoughts were not necessarily reflective of the movement. While this is the case, I believe there is sufficient variation in the type of participant in terms of rank, geography, and age to give a representative range of opinions. In order not to give any participant too much weight, I tried to emphasize themes that recurred in several interviews and selecting quotes that were representative for the views expressed. As for whether this reflects the considerations made in the leadership in the 1980's, this is uncertain. Three of the participants interviewed inhabited central roles in the republican movement in the 1980's and 1990's and their views on leadership policy have been given more weight.

Another challenge for data analysis was bias related to the substantive content in the available sources. Some of the documents used are best thought of as propaganda, and reflect how groups seek to portray themselves more than empirical reality. However, as the question of how a group wants to appear is interesting for the question of this thesis, this was a great source of information. It is nevertheless important to situate such documents in the conflict context, something secondary literature is well suited to do.

An extension of the propaganda issue is the possible desire of people interviewed to frame their involvement in the revolutionary group in a good light. Or, more broadly, to shape the narrative they provide to make them appear like good people. To avoid this, the interview questions were formulated in a way that made it possible to speak about the subject without going into specific

acts carried out by the participant him or herself. This was partially to avoid eliciting incriminating information, it was also done to avoid a defensive atmosphere that would make misrepresentation more attractive. A bigger challenge was less deliberate in nature, namely the tendency to misremember or only partially remember events that took place. In most cases, this could be counteracted by consulting secondary literature or asking about more details from the participant him/herself if something appeared off. Although some inconsistencies in narratives emerged in this way, they were often about details and inconsequential.

A final issue that runs through all the source categories and systematically affects the analysis is the fact that the sources available in each location was not uniform. There are interviews in the chapter on Northern Ireland, but not in Afghanistan, and only through secondary sources in Palestine. Ideally, I would have asked the same questions to former members of the movements in question in all three contexts. However, COVID-19 prevented this in the case of Palestine and Afghanistan might have been unrealistic in any case due to the security situation. Like with the above, it is hard to know whether a more uniform base of sources across the different cases would have altered the findings of this thesis, but the limitation is important to have in mind as we move into the empirical chapters.

4 Vanguards in Palestine

In April 1993, a Hamas operative detonated a VW transporter carrying 150 kilograms of explosives, parked between two buses near the Mehola Inn (Hassan 2001; Litvak 2010, 724; Shay 2004, 52). A few months later a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operative named Ala'a al-Kahlout shaved his beard, dressed as an Mizrachi Jew,[93] and detonated a bomb he was carrying on a bus in Ashdod (Hassan 2001).[94] In December 1992, 415 Palestinian Islamist leaders had been expelled from Gaza and the West Bank to Southern Lebanon (Haberman 1992). Some found their way to Hezbollah-controlled territory, where they spent time training with the group. The decision to mass-deport came under heavy criticism and the deportees were allowed to return towards the end of 1993. People in the 1992-cohort described their time in exile as spent re-imagining the Palestinian struggle with the influence of both Hezbollah and Iran (Lybarger 2018, 80). Statements by attendees and the close temporal proximity to the suicide attacks in 1993 have made most scholars point to the expulsion as the point when Palestinian Islamists learned the full potential of the tactic.

In fact, Hezbollah is almost unequivocally cited as the source of inspiration for subsequent adaptors. In explaining the first Palestinian suicide attack, Shay writes, "The Islamic Palestinian terror organizations learned the modus operandi of suicide attacks from the Hizballah in Lebanon. Terrorists from the Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad organizations underwent terrorist training under the tutelage of the Hizballah and implemented everything they had learned in their struggle against Israel" (Shay 2004, 52). Quoting Atran (2003), Acosta (2016)

[93] A person from a Jewish community originating in the Middle East or North Africa.
[94] PIJ arguably conducted one attack in 1989 which could be characterized as a suicide attack, but where the perpetrator coincidentally "failed" to die. On the 6th of July a PIJ operator named Abd al-Hadi Ghanim boarded the 405 Egged bus between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. *En route* he grabbed the steering wheel and ran the bus over a steep cliff, where it rolled for 100 meters before it exploded, killing 16 and wounding 17 (Zieve 2012).

sees the tactic traveling from Hezbollah to the LTTE, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, who in turn influenced al-Qaeda. Hoffman and McCormick observe a similar chronology, suggesting that "Hamas's employment of this tactic has in turn inspired other Palestinian groups, most notably the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and some of the Palestinian Popular Front organizations to adopt suicide tactics as well" (Hoffman and McCormick 2004).

Shared ideology and cultural resonance are often highlighted as factors that facilitated for the smooth integration of suicide attacks' into Palestinian Islamist's repertoire of violence (Abufarha 2009; M. Bloom 2005; Shay 2004). It is not difficult to find support for this in explanations provided by Palestinians themselves. Consider the statement by suicide bomb trainer Munir al-Makdah from the second intifada: "Jihad and the resistance begin with the word, then with the sword, then with the stone, then with the gun, then with planting bombs, and then transforming bodies into human bombs" (J. Davis 2003).

The tactic is portrayed as an integral form of jihadi escalation, but as we have seen in the preceding chapters, this was not always the case. The issue with explanations provided by individuals already encultured to see suicide attacks as an integral part of their struggle is that it downplays the novelty of violent escalation manifesting in that way. While there are examples of area studies literature on martyrdom addressing this issue, it has not made its way into the study of suicide attacks diffusion (Hatina 2005; Acosta 2010; Hatina 2014). Therefore, the literature tends to take for granted a feature which needs to be explained, namely the emergence of suicide attacks as a desirable – not merely available – method of escalation in the Palestinian context.

Based on the theory of reference group influence and her dynamics, I expect suicide attacks to have become a desirable addition to the repertoire of Palestinian Islamists, not due to information about its tactical or strategic promise but based on the reputation of its source. In other words, it was not a decision made based on utilitarian influence, which plays on actor's desire to conform and be in good communal standing. Rather, it was value expressive and informational, playing on the Palestinians aspirations to become more like a prototypical out-group. But who was this inspirational fashion leader? Looking at texts justifying the integration of suicide attacks into Palestinian martyrdom culture shows that Hezbollah was only secondary to the example set by Iran and its political and religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini.

Indeed, Hezbollah's attack on the Marine barracks might have been of little consequence to Palestinian Islamists if the Iranian revolution had not first triggered admiration and initiated a process of legitimizing suicide attacks in a Sunni Islamic framework. For some members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza and some Maoists and Marxists in Lebanon, the Iranian revolution was seen as embodying their own aspirations to such an extent that it triggered a shift in mobilization identity. Contrary to what most diffusion chronologies imply, this shift did not primarily occur among the cadre that would form Hamas, but among those that formed the PIJ and the Islamic Jihad Brigade (Saraya al-Jihad al-Islam). Their admiration for Khomeini and the pan-Islamic ideology he championed created a bridge across the Sunni-Shi'a divide. What followed was a selective acculturation of Khomeini's pan-Islamic ideology, wherein pre-existing ideas on martyrdom and heroism were adapted to accommodate the use of suicide attacks by drawing on a Shi'a symbolic complex. This occurred in the 1980's, the fact that the tactic proliferated in the 1990's was partially coincidental and partially owing to organizational capacity.

This chapter has three main sections. The first provides a background of the Palestinian national liberation struggle between 1948 and 1993, outlining the context of the liberation movement generally and the emergence of Islamism as a vehicle for revolutionary struggle specifically. The second considers whether key independent variables used to predict suicide attack adoption outlined in the literature review were in-fact present in Palestine in the 1980's and 1990's. While awareness of the tactic was present from the 1970's onwards, ability only existed in the Islamic Jihad Brigade (IJB) before 1990. Contrary to common perception, suicide attacks did not conform to social and cultural norms in Palestinian society in this period. Adoption was tied to significant uncertainty. To understand why they nonetheless opted to justify the tactic, the third section looks at the Iranian revolution and its reception among Palestinian brotherhood members in Gaza and Maoists in Lebanon. Based on Iran-Palestinian Islamist relations, I argue that the PIJ and IJB should be considered vanguards. They were moved to justify what was essentially a foreign tactic based on seeing Iran as an ideal prototypical outgroup. Hamas, on the other hand, was a group on the fence. Although it was first to successfully use the tactic, it was reacting to currents set in motion during the previous decade by the PIJ and IJB.

4.1 The Palestinian national liberation struggle

Why was Iran seen as a relevant example to factions in the left-leaning Palestinian national liberation movement as well as traditionally pacifist members of the Muslim Brotherhood? To understand this, we need to look at how Islamism became a central mobilization identity for the Palestinian national liberation and anti-colonial movement in the 1970's and 80's. This was a time when belief in the ability of secular actors to deliver on the original ambition of liberating Palestine was low, both among the members of these groups and among Muslim quietists. The Iranian revolution illustrated that Islam could be a basis for revolutionary activism and mobilization.

The Palestinian national liberation movement arose in the decades following the Israeli declaration of independence and subsequent Arab Israeli War in 1948. This is known as the *Nakba* among Palestinians because it led hundreds of thousands to be expelled from their homes and stranded as refugees in neighboring Arab states. For the next thirty years, the struggle to retake the lost homeland went through several phases, from state led efforts, to efforts led by left-wing and anti-colonial revolutionaries, to one dominated by actors primarily defined by their religious beliefs.

The first decades after the *Nakba* however, were characterized by an Arab state-led effort centering on principles of Pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism. The idea that Palestine could be reclaimed through a joint Arab effort was ignited with the ascent of Gamal Abdel Nasser and his pan-Arabist ideals which underpinned the Egyptian revolution of 1952 (R. Sayigh 1979, 149). This hope survived the Suez Crisis of 1953, when Israel, England, and France invaded Egypt to stop Nasser from nationalizing the Suez Canal, but gradually faded over the next decade. During 1950's and early 60's, Palestinian initiatives were scattered in different refugee communities, often under the patronage of their host states. In 1964, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in an Arab Summit meeting to bring these isolated factions together. The organization was not very active until the defeat of Jordan, Syria, and Egypt in the six-day war of 1967, which left Palestinian refugees increasingly disillusioned with Arab states' capacity to deliver their homeland (R. Sayigh 1979, 144).

The Palestinian hope that the lost territory could be liberated through direct intervention of neighboring states was looking less and less realistic in the late 1960's. At the same time, the situations for Palestinian refugees grew increasingly miserable (Quenzer 2019). It was in this context that a number of Palestinian liberation groups began operations, with the most notable

being the Movement for the Liberation of Palestine (Fatah) (Baumgarten 2005, 31). Fatah advocated armed action by Palestinian refugees taking matters into their own hand, as in the days of the Great Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 and the war of 1948. This period also saw several Palestinians embraced Marxism as a basis for mobilization, leading to the establishment of PFLP, (P)DFLP, and PFLP-GC (Sing 2011, 8). In Syria, a Palestinian Ba'athist faction known as the Vanguard for the Popular Liberation War - Lightning Forces (As-Sa'iqa), began operating in 1965.

Ideological differences notwithstanding, Fatah and the groups further left 'came of age' in the 1960's, a time where wars of national liberation were waged in different parts of the world to end colonial rule. Palestinian groups followed these other struggles with close interest, publishing pamphlets on their experiences and distributing the ideas of leading figures, including Frantz Fanon of Algeria, Mao Zedong of China, Vo Nguyen Giap of Vietnam, and Che Guevara of Cuba (Chamberlin 2011, 27).

In the early 60's, Fatah paid particular attention to the events unfolding in Algeria with the National Liberation Army (ALN) which achieved independence from France in 1962. An editorial in the Fatah magazine "Filastinuna" from July 1960 described how the fighters in Algeria provided a model for Palestinians "called to carry the flag of freedom for their Fatherland," with the November issue proclaiming that:

> "The revolution in Algeria lights our way like a bright torch of hope. When the Algerians took up their revolution in 1954, they were only some hundred Arabs facing 20,000 French troops and well-armed settlers .... The revolution in Algeria proved to us that a people can organize itself and build its military strength in the very process of fighting" (in Baumgarten 2005, 32-33).

For members of Fatah, Frantz Fanon and Algeria provided an example of militant Third Worldism which success could be replicated by emulating their heroic resistance and ideological commitment (Ajami 1981, 68). This was not unique to Fatah, in the late 1960's and early 70's, PFLP used the example of Vietnamese peasants' fight against a great Cold War power as a frame of reference for their own military strategy:

> "The Popular Front does not consider the battle as an exclusively Palestinian one. Rather, it sees it as an Arab one. (…) If it is made to be an Arab one in which the masses participate and which the entire Arab region pushes itself into, with the Arab people putting into it all its potentialities — human, psychological, economic and the capacity for guerrilla warfare, if there was a Hanoi in a state adjacent to occupied Palestine which would permit an Arab Viet Cong to arise and engage in daily clashes with the enemy in the entire Arab area — at that point, it would be possible to enter a war of long duration" (PFLP 1970, 64).

Observing these as well as other struggles was crucial for reshaping the Palestinian identity from refugees to resistance fighters, or *Fedayeen* as they were known in Arabic. It was a way of accruing symbolic capital as "a heroic resistance movement striking against the forces of global imperialism" (Chamberlin 2011, 32). These symbolic associations also provided access to international networks of support emanating from Third World revolutionary centers like Beijing, Algiers, Hanoi, and Havana (Chamberlin 2011, 26).

In the late 60's and early 70's, Palestinian revolutionaries hoped that Jordan could be the locus for their "Palestinian Hanoi". For a while this seemed to be working, with Jordanian authorities allowing Palestinians to use their territory as a base for launching attacks against Israel. Their

welcome came to an abrupt end in 1970, however, when it came to light that the PLO had a 'side-plot' to overthrow the country's rulers – the Hashemite monarchy (Makara 2016). The PLO, now comprised of Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP, lost the battle against the Jordanian military in the conflict known as Black September and were left to regroup elsewhere in 1971. They migrated to Southern Lebanon, which became the new base for Palestinian revolutionary activity.

Subsequent events in the 1970's would push the *fedayeen* further out in the margins. In 1973, Syria and Egypt invaded Israel, launching the fourth Arab Israeli War. The militaries made great strides in the first few days but soon found themselves in a precarious situation with the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) only 100 kilometers from Cairo. In the end, Egypt, with prime minister Anwar Sadat at the helm, negotiated a disengagement agreement with Israel and reproachment with the United States. The 1973-defeat dealt yet another blow to the PLO's ambition of claiming Israel as a whole. This spurred the formulation of an alternative strategic program for the organization, published as "The Ten Point Program" in June 1974 (PLO 1974). The document was against the recognition of Israel as implied in UN Resolution 242 from 1967, but it opened for establishing PLO-control over areas currently considered Palestinian territory and made the PLO a more attractive negotiation partner (Y. Sayigh 1999, 322). The ten-point plan created strife within the PLO, resulting in the PFLP breaking with Fatah, the DFLP, and the Sa'iqa front and uniting with smaller parties under a political banner known as the Rejectionist Front with the backing of Iraq and Libya. They looked with concern at the diplomatic development, which they saw as leading to major concession on Palestinian patrimony (Sayigh 1999, 339).

The ceasefire between Egypt and Israel in October 1973 had put a strain in the relationship between Egypt and Libya, where Muhammar Qadhafi had led a successful coup d'état in 1969

(Daigle 2019). He accused Sadat of undermining their shared pan-Arab vision and considered him a traitor to the Arab cause. As an American official in Tripoli in the spring of 1974:

> "While he [Qadhafi] and his regime do not have a reputation among Libyans for spilling blood, we suspect this zealot is capable of justifying in his own mind any attempt to assassinate Sadat. Otherwise we expect he will be trying to undermine the Egyptian leader by any other means money can buy" (Telegram, Tripoli 1974).

There is quite a lot that 7 billion US dollars of yearly oil revenues can buy, so with that money Qadhafi set out to more aggressively assert Libyan influence in both the Middle East and Africa (Daigle 2019, 299). Beyond supporting the ostensibly anti-Egyptian Rejectionist Front, another of his early initiatives was to attempt a communist coup against the Egypt-friendly leader of Sudan, Gaffar Nimeiry in 1975. Sadat perceived this as an indirect attack on Egypt by both Libya and the Soviet Union (Telegram, Cairo 1976). The sub-par outcome of the 1973 war, combined with the increased feeling of encirclement on its southern and western borders, incentivized Sadat to engage in peace talks with the neighbor to the east, Israel (Daigle 2019). This manifested in the Camp David accords of 1978 and Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979, which normalized bilateral relations between Egypt and Israel and posited UN resolution 242 as the basis for a political settlement between Israelis and Palestinians (Bassiouni 1980).[95] The accords outlined the principle of Palestinians' right to self-determination within the West Bank and Gaza strip, with the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. However, neither the U.S. nor Israel would deal with the PLO before it recognized Israel's right to exist and

[95] The principles in UN resolution 242 can be summarized in five principles: "The first calls for complete Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since the 1967 war, subject to effective reciprocal security guarantees. The second recognizes the Palestinians' right to self-determination, including the establishment of a Palestinian State on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The third principle designates the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.) as the representative of the Palestinian people. The fourth mandates the recognition of Israel. The fifth requires the conclusion of a permanent peace treaty between all parties concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict" (Bassiouni 1980, 3).

accepted UN security resolution 242 and 338 (Y. Sayigh 1999, 321). This, the PLO was not willing to do.

By this time, Palestinian revolutionaries found themselves in the Lebanese Civil War, which had begun in 1975. This did not stop the different groups from launching attacks into Israel, but now, these were aimed just as much at challenging the status of other Palestinian factions as at damaging Israel (Sayigh 1999, 339-345). By the late 1970's, parts of the Palestinian community felt like the PLO and the left-leaning groups under the Rejectionist Front had stagnated. They were either supressed, as was the case for the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) in Gaza from 1971/72 onward, fighting each other, or looking at the prospect of a political settlement. It was against a backdrop of betrayal, perceived failure, and infighting among those fighting on their behalf that Islamism emerged as a viable alternative mobilization identity. During the 1980's the groups that had the most success were the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Islamic Jihad Brigades, and Hamas. All of these would either attempt or successfully carry out suicide attacks by 1993.

4.2 Why were suicide attacks adopted by Palestinian jihadis in the 1980's?

While Palestinian Islamists had tactical incentives to employ the suicide attacks and gradually developed the expertise and organizational capital necessary to carry them out, there were normative and cultural obstacles to adoption. Not only was suicide considered a sin, but the idea of deliberately dying to kill went contrary to mainstream ideas of heroism developed during the era of the fedayeen.

4.2.1 Tactical incentives

If we look to the tactical incentives commonly pointed out in the literature, Palestinians had many of the those highlighted as unique to suicide attacks. Most importantly, they were engaged in a conflict with a militarily superior adversary and while many of their attacks were aimed at civilians they also targeted government, police, and military targets (Gilli and Gilli 2014; Piazza 2018). In the Palestinian context, one might even consider civilian targets hard to reach, due to the security regime separating Gaza and the West Bank from Israel (Moghadam 2003). However, the incentives identified in the literature are in part derived based on later Palestinian use, so employing them to explain adoption quickly becomes circular. As has already been pointed out in the literature review, the data available to actors at the time was limited and varied from one conflict context to the next. In the case of Palestine, accounts by militants active at the time indicates that they were aware of Hezbollah's attack in Beirut and likely failed attempts by 'kamikaze' Palestinians in the 1970's (Overton 2019). But due to the limited information on suicide attack merits, it was largely up to the imagination of the groups themselves to come up with use-cases where it might provide a marginal advantage.

4.2.2 Availability of information, expertise, and material

We do not know when the idea of suicide attacks was first introduced to Palestinian revolutionaries, but the tactic came to Palestinian left-wing groups through the network of Third World revolutionaries in the 1970's (*The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959-1973)* 1972). The tactic was reintroduced with an Islamic framing in the next decade. First in the Iran-Iraq war in 1982 and then in Lebanon, by Hezbollah in 1983. The first Palestinian groups to use the tactic following Hezbollah's 1983 attack were not the Islamists, but leftist groups inside Lebanon that had already incorporated it in their repertoire during the 1970's. They employed it in the war of the camps, which lasted between 1985 and 1988, and in smaller attacks against Israeli

forces by groups based in Lebanon (Acosta 2016; Hijazi 1985; *New York Times* 1989). While Palestinian groups that operated outside of Israel had the ability and opportunity to carry out suicide attacks from the early 1970 onwards, this was not so much the case for groups on Israeli territory. Here, no organization but the IJB had the necessary material, expertise, or organizational infrastructure to carry out that type of attack before the 1990's.

In the late 1970's, Palestinian students in in Cairo with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza were exposed to the burgeoning militant trend which manifested in groups such as al-Takfir wal-Hijra and Tandhim al-Jihad (Abū ʿAmr 1994, 91). These students were expelled from Egypt in 1981 following the assassination of the Sadat and returned to Gaza carrying the idea that the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood should take up arms against the occupation (Skare 2020). The suggestion of a militant turn sparked significant opposition and harassment, but the students were undeterred, formed the PIJ, and began their military operations in 1984. The group's first years was characterized by inexperience and repression, and it is unlikely that it had the resources or organization needed to carry out suicide attacks before 1990.

From around 1984 until 1992, armed activities were organized within loose cell-structures, where the members of the cell had to buy weapons with their own money, store them in their own apartments, and carry out reconnaissance on their own initiative (Skare 2021a, 115-116). Whether these cells had the necessary explosives expertise or the ability to organize complex attacks in this period is uncertain, but unlikely due to the repressive security regime which manifested in frequent arrests (Tamimi 2007). This changed in 1992, with the establishment of the Islamic Mujahid Forces (*al-Qiwa al-Islamiyya al-Mujahida*) within the PIJ – Qassam, for short. Qassam was structured in four departments intended to compartmentalize military activities. These were (1) the monitoring and reconnaissance department, (2) the training department, (3) the purchase department, and (4) the storage department (Skare 2021a, 116). The wing's

operational structure was also transformed from a loose network where cells exercised a large degree of independence to one with a clear leadership and hierarchical decision-making structure (Skare 2021a, 116). The compartmentalization of operational functions and decision-making is reminiscent of that underpinning the Islamic State's suicide vehicle industry in Mosul 25 years later.

An equally important enabling factor in the early 1990's was PIJ's Mahmud Saqr al-Zatma's return to the Palestinian territories. Al-Zatma would become Qassam's first main engineer and bomb maker and, according to one of his martyrdom biographies, was the engineer behind the bomb used by Ala'a al-Kahlout in 1993 and several subsequent suicide attacks (Palestinian Islamic Jihad 2018). Born to Palestinian refugees in Gaza in 1950, al-Zatma became involved in PIJ in 1980 and soon after attended Ayn Shams University to study electrical engineering, a decision in which the leader of the PIJ played a role (Qassam, n.d.). After graduating, he received training in explosives making in Algeria, Syria, and Lebanon before traveling to Palestine in the early 1990's.[96]

Another early armed Islamist group in the burgeoning Palestinian jihadi movement emerged in the Lebanese civil war, called the Islamic Jihad Brigades. It became active in the West Bank and possibly conducted operations together with the PIJ from the early 1980's onwards (Menashri 1990, 191). The group was formed by Abu Hassan al-Bahays and Hamadi al-Tamimi, who gained their revolutionary credentials as Maoist activists in Fatah during the Lebanese civil war (Sing 2011, 3). In 1976 they broke from the group and established their own organization, called The Jarmaq Squad (*Katïbat al-Ǯarmaq*), to fight Israel and counter the South

[96] It is not clear who trained Zatma in Algeria and Syria, but according to Anwar Abu Taha, senior member of the PIJ politburo, "there was some training in PLO camps, which were present in Algeria, Libya, and Yemen, after the PLO left Lebanon. There were miliary leaders everywhere, so we invested in anyone who could train anywhere" (Skare 2021a, 108).

Lebanese Army.[97] By 1982, however, the Squad had largely ceased to exist and its members were scattered, but many continued their struggle against Israel, some by becoming academics, authors, and film makers, others by continuing fighting under different banners (Sing 2011, 22) Among those in the latter category, several converted to Islam, and the founders of the Islamic Jihad Brigades were two of them.

The IJB had a high level of operational freedom during the 1980's, in large part owing to international networks. In 1988, Abu Hassan al-Bahays and Hamadi al-Tamimi, were both killed when their car exploded in Cyprus. The two had been involved in planning what would have been the first suicide attack carried out in Israel. The attack never came to fruition, as Israeli authorities apprehended the prospective martyr, Itaf Ulyan, with a car packed with two hundred kilos of explosives before she could leave for the target in Jerusalem (Blanche 2002). Ulyan entered Lebanon in 1980 to train with Fatah. In a later interview with an Arabic newspaper, she describes her decision to embark on a suicide attack in the following way:

> "After the training in Lebanon I returned to the occupied territories [Palestine], and in 1984 I began asking the Islamic Jihad Brigades leadership about carrying out a martyrdom operation like the one that succeeded in Lebanon. That type of operation had a strong effect and they [the leadership] agreed to it. I then travelled to an Arab country and met with other people in the leadership of the Islamic Jihad Brigades who informed me that they agreed that I carry out a martyrdom operation [likely in 1985]. Then we began preparing the first [martyrdom] operation supposed to be executed on Israeli soil" (*Al Watan Voice* 2003).

[97] Originally known as the Student Squad (*al-Sarïya al-Tullàbïya* or *al-Katïba al-Tullâbiya*), but it changed names in 1977 (Sing 2011, 16).

The attack was averted by Israeli police who arrested Itaf Ulyan right before she was about to drive to Jerusalem. The attempt went largely unnoticed, and suicide attacks did not feature among Islamist groups again before the end of the First Intifada in 1993.

Hamas was in an equally difficult position to the PIJ when it came to its military organization in the 1980's. When Hamas was established at the beginning of the first intifada in 1987, it was not the first attempt by members of the Muslim Brotherhood to launch a military branch in Gaza (Y. Sayigh 1999, 632). Between 1979 and 1981, the younger members of the Muslim Brotherhood in both Gaza and the West Bank looked to the IJB operations and according to Tamimi asked one question: "Why are we not involved in the military resistance to occupation?" (Tamimi 2007, 44). A plan to that effect was soon being developed. Already in 1983, Ahmad Yassin, a quadriplegic preacher that would be central in founding Hamas, was arrested for stockpiling weapons and establishing Gaza Military Operations Planning and Monitoring Committee (Hussein 2021, 83). However, the Committee faced substantive problems with operating clandestinely, especially weapon procurement and stockpiling.

After Yasin was released early in 1986 in a deal negotiated by the PFLP, he spearheaded the effort to create Organization for Jihad and Mission or MAJD (Munaẓẓamat al-Jihād wa'l-Daʿwa), an organization made to identify collaborators and associates of the occupation authorities (Hussein 2021, 84). The subsequent purge of collaborators inside both Gaza and the West Bank gave organizations more room to operate. However, the organizers were not experienced in running clandestine operations and were soon arrested together with most of Hamas's leadership in 1989. The arrests incapacitated Hamas's structures of mass mobilization, military operations, security, organizational development, media and communications or political action (Hussein 2021, 87). It was not until 1992 that militants in both Gaza and the West Bank established a new military wing called Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. Like with the

PIJ, this new wing was characterized by a greater division of military and political functions within the organization, which rendered it more capable of carrying out clandestine operations inside Israel.

4.2.3 Suicide attacks and norms about violence and death

Contrary to common perception, Palestinians Islamists were no natural harbour for suicide attacks to find anchorage. The mere suggestion of violence – much less suicide attacks – was causing controversy in the Palestinian Muslim community in the 1970's and 80's (Moghadam 2008, 79). Both Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas have their roots in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Established in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949), the organization advocated reform through proselytization, or *dawah*, rather than armed struggle (Dunning 2015, 288). Gaining a foothold in Palestine in 1945, it focused on the moral rather than the physical deliverance of the country, and like in Egypt, sought to increase literacy, standards of living, and to construct a society in the spirit of Islam (Kedourie and Kedourie 1982, 104).[98] The Brotherhood provided both material and personnel support to the Palestinians in the 1948-War, but the ineptitude of its contribution underscored that militarism was not a priority (Kedourie and Kedourie 1982, 109). Following the defeat against Israel in 1948, most Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood members accepted defeat, laid down their arms, and resumed peaceful proselytization (Dunning 2015, 288).[99]

The religious prohibition against suicide and other theological obstacles to accepting suicide attacks has been outlined by others and will not be repeated in detail here.[100] While martyrdom

[98] The brotherhood first got involved in the Palestinian resistance movement in 1936, with the outbreak of the Arab revolt. The Ikhwan then formed a General Central Committee for the Aid of Palestine, but its presence in the territory remained negligible until it opened its first office in Jerusalem in 1945 (Kedourie and Kedourie 1982, 101–3).
[99] Those in the organization who did not agree to this long term pacifist approach for delivering Palestine founded Fatah in the late 1950's (Dunning 2015, 288).
[100] See, for example, Moghaddam 2008. For a brief outline in this thesis, see Chapter 5.

might be considered virtuous in Islam, suicide is prohibited. The tension between the two concepts is recognized in one of the earliest Palestinian jihadi texts justifying the tactic in the late 1980's, which addresses the nuances between self-immolation (*intihar*) and martyrdom (*istishad*) (Hatina 2005, 119). Whereas the former is seen as a cowardly escape from personal distress, the latter is seen as the epitome of courage. One condemns the perpetrator to hell, the other to heaven.

That said, given that the potential of suicide attacks was demonstrated by an Islamist group – Hezbollah, one could argue that shared religion facilitated for diffusion by creating a shared framework for justifying the tactic. The attack could be said to give other Muslim groups expectations about audience costs. However, if the spread of suicide attacks was primarily facilitated by Islam, we would have expected the appeal of suicide attacks to be much more uniform across the Middle East. The notions that the use of suicide attacks by Hezbollah gave Islamists elsewhere an idea about the strategic gains once could harvest by using the tactic is also problematic. It assumes that all Islamist revolutionaries and their audiences are largely the same, which is not the case.

Looking at debates at the time of Hezbollah's attack, suicide attacks spread despite sectarian differences, not because of religious similarity. The fact that both Hezbollah and Palestinians identified as Muslims ignores the difference in creed and their tumultuous history. The relationship between Sunni and Shi'as have only rarely been characterized by shared experiences that would lead anyone to expect that an action well-received in one community would be equalled in the other. Had norm congruence been a guiding principle for finding new tactics, the PIJ and the IJB would arguably have been better off looking to groups in Afghanistan

or Algeria rather than Hezbollah. The problem was only that they didn't present the same promise, nor were they engaged in the same type of struggle.[101]

The religious obstacle notwithstanding, it is possible to create a chronology of violence and sacrifice in Palestine from the Black Hand in the 1930's to Fatah in the 60's and Hamas in the 2000's and paint a picture of persistent culture of martyrdom (Hatina 2001, 120). However, "doing history backwards" in this way risks confusing analytical categories presently available with those that were available in the past, covering internal debates, and preventing us from considering paths not taken (Cooper 2005, 18).

In the 1960's and 70's suicide attacks were primarily a feature of third-world leftists in Asia, not Palestinians. It just so happened that many Palestinians were leftists. But while the act itself was an import, the veneration of people sacrificing their life for the cause was not. Palestinian fighters were known around the world as Fedayeen, which literally means those who sacrifice themselves (Edwards 2019, 94). But this sacrifice did not encompasse suicide attacks. Prior to 1980, Palestinian had "displayed restraint on this issue by emphasizing the goal of survival and victory over deliberate death, which was viewed as tantamount to self-immolation" (Hatina 2014, 99). If you recall the story of the Lod airport attack in chapter one, Palestinian militants were criticized for their conservative approach by the surviving Japanese Red Army member, Ozokomo.

[101] In Algeria, for example, the war of liberation was primarily associated with secular actors, although, according to Gellner, the "pilgrims of third worldism" that came to visit Algeria were always disappointed at the fundamentally Islamic nature of society (Gellner 1974). However, the religious figures that did inspire the locally lacked an international audience. Ben Badis is seen as the Islamic intellectual who gave rise to the nationalism underlying the Algerian liberation war in the 1960's. Algeria also had more contemporary figures in Iranian Ali Shari'ati (1933-77) and Malek Bennabi (1905–73) As a consequence, Palestinians would have looked at the Muslim community in Algeria as afflicted with the same problem as themselves, namely the disconnect between the Muslim masses and the armed liberation struggle.

A man who agreed with Ozokomo's assessment was Muhammar Gadhafi, who was evidently very impressed with the JRA's willingness to self-sacrifice. In a speech on the 7th of October in 1972, he said:

> "Indeed, feda'i action must be of the type of the operation carried out by Japanese feda'iyin. The Japanese feda'i who was tried said they had carried out the operation to stir the Arab world, which lacked spiritual zeal. This statement should have an impact upon the Arabs who are still slumbering.
>
> Feda'i action has not yet reached the level of the true spirit of the feda'iyin. We demand that feda'i action be able to carry out operations similar to the operation carried out by the Japanese. Why should a Palestinian not carry out such an operation? Go to the Popular Front, the Democratic Front, the Revolutionary Popular Front, the General Command, or the Special Command. You will see them all writing books and magazines full of theories, but otherwise unable to carry out one daring operation like that carried out by the Japanese" (in Posner 1987, 82–83).

Given this speech and the Libyan turn against Egypt and the U.S. a year later, it comes as no surprise that Libya kept reoccurring in suicide attack plots in the years that followed.

As already noted, this criticism did coincide with a shift to debates of more deliberate sacrificial attacks in the PFLP-GC. Another context where this shift took place was among some leftists inside Fatah. A Fatah off-shoot in Lebanon called The Jarmaq Squad became particularly well-known after "Battle of the Beaufort Castle" (*Ma'arakat Shaqïf*) in 1982, with local Shi'as calling them Husayniyun because of their radical tactics and willingness to self-sacrifice (Sing 2011, 27). This had also been characteristic of their fighting while operating as an integrated part of

Fatah, leading Marxist philosopher Sadiq Jalal al-Azm to criticise the faction for seeking death too keenly,

> "It is no wonder that the fedayeen are more often driven by their wish to die for their cause instead of fighting well and live - if possible - to see their cause win. The resistance movement does not differentiate clearly (in the consciousness and behaviour of the fedayeen) between human sacrifice, that is useless or a sacrifice for itself or not more than just martyrdom, and the price that the movement has to pay in order to realize progress so that it comes closer to achieve its liberating aims" (Sing 2011, 27).

The leaders of this squad are in fact the people would go on to establish the IJB, the group responsible for attempting the first known suicide on Israeli soil.

So, while ideas about sacrifice and martyrdom developed endogenously in Palestinian society, the idea of deliberately dying was an imported notion with limited appeal among a small sub-set of Palestinian leftists in the 1970's. It does not have the roots in Palestinian culture in a way that post-intifada discourse and widespread suicide attack use would suggest.

4.3 What is missing from the explanation?

The 1990's and early 2000's Palestine would not have been characterized by suicide bombings had it not been for two simultaneous developments in the preceding decades. First, the pervasive sense of disillusionment among Palestinian militants with the direction the struggle was taking the late 1970's. Second, the Iran revolution's dual appeal to both leftist revolutionaries in Lebanon and pan-Islamists in Egypt and Gaza.

Beyond a recognition that existing groups were doing a poor job, why was the Iranian revolution so appealing for these two communities of revolutionaries? Why not look elsewhere, to Algeria, or Afghanistan? The below indicates that for Palestinian Islamists, the revolution was appealing because it illustrated that Islam could be the basis for overthrowing an unjust regime. For leftists, its appeal lay in the fact that it embodied the successful revolution they were hoping to effect. Those Palestinians who identified as Muslim were inspired to take a more activist stance, while those who identified as leftists were inspired to ground their pre-existing activism in Islam. In other words, the Iranian revolution inspired the two communities in different ways but with the same outcome: jihadism.

But did this matter for the eventual embrace of suicide attacks, if so, how? The below suggests it mattered because admiration of the revolution provided the political conditions for temporary rapprochements between the Sunni-Shi'a communities which enabled the tactic to travel across the sectarian divide. Khomeini's ideology was selectively incorporated, shaping Palestinian Islamist's thoughts on martyrdom, and triggering a justification process for deliberately sacrificial attacks. This made Palestinians more disposed to view Hezbollah's attack as an act of sacrificial heroism rather than sinful self-immolation. It also brought leftists who had already displayed a more accepting attitude towards suicide attacks into the Islamist fold.

4.3.1 The Admiration of Ayatollah Khomeini

While the Iranian revolution was executed to widespread acclaim, the positive perception was quickly replaced in most Middle Eastern countries by condemnation and skepticism of the Shi'a character and aspirations of the regime. Two communities for whom the admiration of the revolution was more lasting was factions of Muslim Brothers in Egypt and Palestine, as well as

Palestinian leftists in Lebanon. These two communities would be the first to justify suicide attacks within a Sunni Islamic framework. The below outlines how the revolution was received and how it impacted ideas of the future leadership of Palestinian jihadi groups.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 saw a coalition of secular and religious ani-monarchical organizations united to replace the country's Western-backed monarchy (Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 17). The revolution was a success, and the first couple of years saw the leftist parties, with the Marxist Tudeh party at the helm, and the militant clerical power headed by Ayatollah Khomeini tolerate each other (Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 30). [102] The peaceful union ended around 1982, when internal conflict escalated to the point of some of the left-wing parties attempting to assassinate prominent ayatollahs and government leaders. The attempt enabled the clerics to consolidate their power through another series of mass arrests (Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 30). By early 1983, Ayatollah Khomeini had assumed control over the state (Calabrese 1994, 144).

Khomeini did not conceive of the revolution as a national project, but as an Islamic one to be exported to other parts of the world. In a New Year's speech in 1980, he famously declared:

> "We must strive to export our Revolution throughout the world, and must abandon all idea of not doing so, for not only does Islam refuse to recognize any difference between Muslim countries, it is the champion of all oppressed people" (Khomeini and Algar 2002).

[102] Other prominent leftists were Fedayen-e Khalq and the Islamic leftist Mujahidin-e Khalq.

The idea of 'exporting the revolution' became a central foreign policy tenant in Iran following the ascent of the clergy in 1983 (Calabrese 1994, 144). The ambition was based on a worldview that distinguished between Dar al-Islam (the house of Islam) and Dar al-Harb (the house of peace). Khomeini's vision of the house of Islam was a non-sectarian one where the contemporary gap between Sunni and Shi'a Muslim would be bridged (Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 31). This universalism was captured in the dictum "Neither eat nor West, but the Islamic Republic" and manifested, among other ways, in a propaganda campaign and support for other revolutionary groups (Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 71).

Propaganda was enacted in two complimentary ways: by creating a model Islamic society (*madinineye nemuneh*) and by sending information and emissaries abroad through media, embassies, and ulama (*tablighat*) (Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 53-54). The idea of creating a model Islamic society was to build a society as an example that would be emulated by others in due course (Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 73). This would be helped along by *tablighat*, which was a multi-pronged effort to inform the world of Iran's achievements. To this end, the government set up a number of loosely affiliated agencies that were intended to spread the message of the revolution (Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 75). Organizations such as the organization for the Propagation of Islam, the Andishe Foundation, and the Farabi Foundation published books, journals, and movies in multiple languages, from Arabic to German to Hindi. Some seminaries also opened up to foreigners, such as a school opened by Ayatollah Hujjat in Qum, which was made into an international religious school in jurisprudence. Iran also invited liberation movements to train in Iran. One particular famous recruit was Hamza Akl Hamie, a Lebanese Shi'a who later became a military commander of Hezbollah's predecessor organization and the driver who blew up the American marine compound in Beirut (Karsh 1989, 111).

This initial impression of the Iranian revolution in the Middle East was that it was Islamic, not a Shi'a or Iranian one. "Muslims around the world could revel in a heightened sense of Islamic identity", writes Esposito and Piscatori, "and enjoy the restoration of Muslim pride and power in a world long dominated by foreign superpowers"(Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 32).[103] The revolution also confirmed an argument fronted by Sunni Islamic intellectuals for some time, who believed the repeated defeats of liberation movements between 1950-1980 were the product of the Arab leaders and masses having lost touch with Islam (Quenzer 2019). For example, Egyptian Brotherhood intellectual Muhammad Jalal Kishk's book *Al-Naksa wa al-Ghazw al-Fikri* (The Naksa and the Intellectual Invasion)[104] construed of the conflicts in the Arab world as fundamentally a problem of western cultural penetration (Ajami 1981, 62).[105]

However, the pan-Islamic fervor was short lived, with both the revolution and the Iranian project increasingly seen as culturally Iranian and religiously Shi'a. For example, the 1980's saw several Iranian schools that opened for international Sunni students. Students arrived from different parts of the words, but once they began teaching Shi'a schools of jurisprudents, many left. In an interview with Rajaee, an African student stated "Had I been trained well in my own

[103] While the revolution was inspiring, it was not the sole force shaping the Islamist revival in politics in the 1980's. Islamist perspectives on struggle had coexisted along third world leftism all from the 1950's to the 1970's but had a less pronounced role in shaping intellectual life and an even smaller one in shaping revolutionary ideology. Its absence was partially a consequence of the type of figures that attracted international fame in this period. For example, while the fedayeen and the international community credited third world heroism as embodied in Frantz Fanon with bringing Algerian liberation, the local population and Islamic intellectuals saw the triumph as grounded in the anti-colonial Islamic thought of Muhammed Abdu and Algerian Ben Badis (Gellner 1974; Ajami 1981). Gelner's article on Algeria provides a particularly fascinating case by asking the question why the country never became a 'mecca' of revolutionary Marxism despite the fame and influence of Frantz Fanon. The answer, he argues, is that Algerian society was more influenced by the same type of revivalist Islamic currents that were taking place in Egypt, and that Fanon had much greater influence and fame abroad than domestically.

[104] *Al-Naksa* is an Arabic term meaning 'setback' or 'defeat'. It is used by Palestinians and other Arab communities to describe the defeat against Israel in the war of 1967, especially the loss of Palestinian territory during the war.

[105] A prominent critic of the leftist and secular basis of the anti-colonial struggle, he argued the ascendence of Marxism in the 60's as ironic because it meant the fedayeen were relying on intellectual tools for liberation from the same region [the West] which put them in the colonial predicament in the first place (Ajami 1981, 63–64).105 The fact that this book was published in 1969 meant that part of the structural understanding underlying Iran's revolutionary exportation had been present in Egypt for at least a decade.

Sunni school of jurisprudence in Qum, I would have been the best agent for the export of the revolution for you. But instead, I simply have to leave because I did not come here to train as a Shi'a" (in Esposito and Piscatori 1989, 77).

One reason the Sunni-Shi'a divide quickly re-gained salience was political developments. Importantly, the region saw an eight yearlong conflict between Iraq and Iran begin in 1980 described as "a political and territorial conflict between twos states, an Iranian-Arab conflict and a Shi'ite-Sunni one" (Karsh 1989, 101). For Iraq, the threat of Muslim zealotry has been described as one of the main catalysts for Saddam's decision to go to war. For the ruling Mullah's in Iran, the battle was in part defined along religious lines with themselves as protectors of Islamic justice (Karsh 1989, 110). While it was not that simple, with Arab parties aligning along both axis and the sectarian/religious divide being amplified by propaganda, it did damage Iran's image (Karsh 1989, 109). The Iranian hostage crisis in 1979 was another event that broke down the legitimacy of the Iranian model because it was seen as giving western enemies free ammunition to shoot down the viability of an Islamic state (Sivan 1990, 190). Teheran's alignment with the ostensibly Shi'a Syrian regime, which was responsible for repression of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, was yet another divisive factor (Sivan 1990, 190). This is not even mentioning the revolutionary activities it engaged in with the Shi'a minorities in the Gulf, which led Gulf powers to disown Iran as Muslim all together (Menashri 1990).

One member of the Lebanese Jama'a Islamyya described Iran's fall from grace in a way that seems to capture a broader mood among Sunnis communities:

> "In its early days the Iranian Revolution has broken down the divisions of the Islamic world into Eastern and Western zones of influence and has shown that Islam can stand between the two superpowers without being committed to either. All Muslims admire

> this aspect of the Iranian experience. Yet later developments in Iran… were grist to the mill of the enemies of Islam, enabling them to distort the image of the Islamic mode of government and of the significance of the establishment of such a regime nowadays" (Sivan 1990, 190).

Along this line, the official position of the Muslim Brotherhood was that while the Iranian revolution was a good thing, Iranians are still Shi'as and do not possess actual Islam (Dot-Pouillard and Rebillard 2013, 169). One Saudi writer named Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib, is credited with going so far as saying that Shi'as are not Muslim (Skare 2021b, 158).

Even in Egypt, arguably the country where the Iranian revolution found its longest-lasting resonance outside of Shi'a communities, the positive reception was far from uniform. According to Binder, it was met with particular hostility by the established religious elites, such as the Ulama with a base in al-Azhar, whose interests were too closely aligned with the parliamentary system (Binder 1988, 258). Moreover, most al-Azhar clerics could not see themselves in the role of Khomeini nor did they wish to see the emergence of a charismatic leader that would overthrow the institutions bestowing them religious power (Binder 1988, 258).

The Iranian revolution found particular resonance among Palestinians in Lebanon and Gaza. In Lebanon, it was well received among a group of Maoists inside Fatah, most notably al-Tamimi, Bahays and Munir Shafiq with the establishment of the IJB. In Gaza, the revolution had a lasting impact on Fathi Shaqiqi and 'Abd al-'Aziz al-'Awda, founding figures behind Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), established in 1981. Both of these organizations would be the first Palestinian Islamic organizations to take a military initiative against Israel, long before Hamas was announced on December 15, 1987, at the beginning of the first intifada (Y. Sayigh

1999, 630). The below outlines the reception of the revolution in the two respective communities.

4.3.1.1 The reception among the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza

The main founder of the PIJ, a man named Fathi Shaqiqi, was deeply inspired by the example of the Iranian revolution, which he saw as the first successful strikes against the Western colonial project (Skare 2021b, 154). The PIJ nucleus justified the need for violence within the framework of Islamist, nationalist and anti-colonial thought, arguing that violence, framed as *Jihad*, was necessary to decolonize Palestine and revive Islam both locally and globally.[106] As expressed by Fathi Shaqiqi in an interview in 1981:

> "Those who carried the flag of Islam [the Brothers] did not fight for Palestine, and those who fought for Palestine [the PLO] removed Islam from their ideological framework. However, we, as young Muslim Palestinians, have discovered that Palestine is found at the heart of the Qur'an. Accordingly, we understood...that the way of the jihad in Palestine is the way of salvation for ourselves as individuals, as a group and as a nation» (Hatina 2001, 26).

Shaqiqi used the example of Iran to combat the inactivity of conservative clerics on the issue of armed struggle in Palestine (Alavi 2020, 88). Like his contemporary jihadi brethren in Egyptian

[106] In some ways this mirrored the discussion held in Egypt a couple of decades earlier, but in contrast to Egyptian Islamic Jihads wholehearted acceptance of Quttubist thought, PIJ leaders venerated Qutb more as a martyr and symbol than a model (Skare 2020, 79). Three differences are particularly worth highlighting. One of the core concepts derived from Qutb is excommunication (takfir), the power to denounce other Muslims as apostates. The PIJ rejected takfir because they considered it destructive to the Muslim community. The PIJ also aspired for a future Palestine with a democratic political structure. This, according to Qutubist thought, violates the concept of the oneness of God (*tawhid*) in Islamic society. Finally, the PIJ did not ascribe to the concept of the pious predecessors (*al-salaf al-Salih*) and were against the idea that their lives and practices should be emulated. This ideal was promoted by Qutb and has later become a hallmark of Salafi-jihadi Islamist groups.

prisons, he saw no contradiction in using a Shi'a model.[107] In his 1979 book called Khomeini: The Islamic Solution and the Alternative (*al-Khomeini: al-Hall al-Islami wa al-Badil*), he praised the regime for its strike against Western colonialism and for showing the transformative power of the Islamic creed (Alavi 2020, 84). It also contains long sections extolling the personal virtues of Ayathollah Khomeini, reading:

> "…This leader, whose name began to be heard by the Muslims and the world since the early 1960's as a symbol, inspirer, and leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, which has become a great and unparalleled model in the history of human revolutions… Since the beginning of his life, the imam was an ambitious student of science, characterized by piety, devoutness, and asceticism…" (Skare 2021b, 143).

This particular piece was so poorly received by the Brotherhood establishment that he was expelled from the organization (Dot-Pouillard and Rebillard 2013, 169; Tamimi 2007, 43).[108]

However, the support for and inspiration drawn from the Iranian revolution in the PIJ was not primarily theological, it was the spirit of the revolution. There was no shortage in Middle Eastern history of governments being overthrown prior to 1979 (Haddad 1965). But this was

[107] Jihadis in Egypt were engaged in the same process. It is true that both TH and MTI mostly drew on Sunni intellectuals and were heavily influenced by brotherhood thinkers like Hassan al-Banna and Sayed Qutb. But militants in both TH and MTI brought up the writings of al-Banna and Qutb, the works of Abu al-A'la al-Mawdoudi in Pakistan and Ali Shariati in Iran. Ali Shariati was an Iranian intellectual considered one of the ideological fathers of the Iranian revolution. While pursuing his doctoral degree at the Sorbonne in the early 60's he was deeply engaged in anti-colonial thought. He came in contact with the Algerian FLN and Frantz Fanon and is credited with translating Fanon's work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, into Persian (Krais 2022, 217). The TH also drew on figures like the Kharijites, Ibn Taymia, Muhammad Abd al-Wahab and Jalal al-Din al-Afghani (Ibrahim 1980, 435). These intellectuals represent a plurality of understanding of different Islamic and ideological concepts, and it would not be difficult for these groups to situate Khomeini in the same tradition.

[108] His expulsion was possibly also related to his critique of the Muslim Brotherhood's lack of strategy for armed struggle (Tamimi 2007, 43).

the first times a revolution had been carried out by Islamic masses instead of the old refrain of military officers conducting a *coup de-etat* (Skare 2021b, 175).[109]

The controversial nature of Shaqiqi's argument is highlighted by the significant energies he exerted bridging the Sunni-Shi'a divide. In a 1982 essay titled "The Sunni and the Shiite: A Fabricated and Regrettable Pandemonium", Shaqiqi attributes increasing differences between Shi'a and Sunnis to witting and unwitting agents of western colonialism. "Some of them," he writes "have launched a suspicious and surprising campaign against the Islamic revolution, which they finally discovered was a "Shiite revolution"; that "the Shiites are a sect astray or infidel"; and that Ayatollah Khomeini, who they say shook the throne while sitting on his rug, has become a "misguided infidel," too" (Skare 2021a, 131).

The background for the article was the conflict between Shaqiqi and the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza. Not only did the Brotherhood disagree with his views, they accused Shaqiqi's crew of being Shi'a and – like the Saudi's – labelled the revolution non-Islamic (Skare 2021b, 154). Shaqiqi can be said to have left ideological contradictions unresolved and undiscussed, selectively picking events and points of convergence and playing down religious and ideological points of conflict. As noted by Rekhess, "Like other Palestinian fundamentalists they preferer to adopt selectively such ideas which fitted into their broad framework of views and to ignore those that did not" (Menashri 1990, 198).

The controversy of Shaqiqi's stand is somewhat surprising as neither his thoughts nor Khomeini's division of the world into Dar al-Harb and Dar al-Islam were unique, nor foreign to the Muslim Brotherhood. To the contrary, the Muslim Brotherhood partially grew out of a

[109] Another example is arguably Mustafa Kemals revolution in Turkey in 1919, but it was conducted with the military as a vanguard and in the context of a civil war (Haddad 1965, 18).

longstanding pan-Islamic intellectual current (Landau 1994, 305). Pan-Islamic ideas have emerged in the Middle East at different times in response to a feeling of western encroachment. Jalal al-Din al-Afghani, a famous Islamic intellectual, traveler, and prolific writer, borne in either Iranian or Afghan territories in 1838, had the bridging of Sunni and Shi'a differences as a pet ambition (Landau 1994, 15–16; Hourani 1983, 108). This was reflected in his periodical *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa*, devoted to analyze great power politics in the Muslim word and his vision of Shi'a-Sunni reconciliation (Hourani 1983, 110). The most notable example is perhaps the article titled Islamic unity (*al-Wahda al-Islamiyya*), where he spoke out against regional particularism, argued for Islamic union, and issues a revolutionary call against local rulers that would prevent it (Landau 1994, 16).[110] He was not alone in this ambition, but shared it with certain circles of Ottoman elites, among them Sultan Abdülhamid II, who arguably came to see al-Afghani as a way to extend political power into Shi'a communities (Hourani 1983, 116).

The pan-Islamic idea had always been controversial. It is perhaps telling that al-Afghani was called a Persian by his enemies, derogatorily implying that he was a Shi'a (Hourani 1983). During the Ottoman empire the concept came in increasing conflict with both nationalism and cultural exceptionalism, currents that would fuel the Young Turk Revolution (Shaw and Shaw 1976, 273). It did not help that it was a losing ideology during the First World War, which to some confirmed it was a mere utopia (Landau 1994, 216). However, in the interwar period, it gradually gained currency through the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and was kept alive through intermittent conference activity. Among those that kept the idea alive was Hassan al-Banna, who argued that pan-Islamism and nationalism were not mutually exclusive and was part of making Egypt the hub for pan-Islamism in the inter war years (Landau 1994, 226). In contrast to the Turks, his vision of Pan-Islam was more religious than political

[110] It is possible that this was written by one of his intellectual disciples, Muhammad Abdu

and in 1938 he established the society of Islamic Brotherhood built on the idea that "Islam does not recognize geographical boundaries, nor does it acknowledge racial and blood differences, considering all Muslims one *umma*" (Landau 1994, 224).

Shaqiqi's efforts to bridge the Sunni-Shi'a divide gradually paid off, and the religious framing of the anti-colonial struggle promoted by Iran gradually gained traction in Gaza. The PIJ was also helped by the fact that members of the PLO and different leftist groups inside and outside of prison had begun to convert or become more self-consciously Muslim. Members from Fatah, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the Palestinian Liberation Army and others spent their prison sentences in Israel becoming increasingly captured by Islamic literature and the writings of Qutb (Skare 2020, 95-97).[111] Some were Muslims who had joined secular organizations in the 60's due to a lack of Islamist alternatives while others converted because of prison.[112] The shift in emphasis to the religious element of their identity enabled the PIJ to recruit members of the Palestinian Liberation Front, the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, Fatah, the PLA, and the PFLP (Abū 'Amr 1994, 95). The PIJ had plenty of time to discover this because, as mentioned in a previous section, its leadership spent much of the 1980's in jail to the detriment of developing the military and organizational aspect of the organization.

4.3.1.2 The reception among Fatah in Lebanon

While the founders of the Islamic Jihad Brigades were the former Jarmaq Squad member Abu Hassan al-Bahays and Hamadi al-Tamimi, the leading ideological figure was a Christian

[111] The PIJ became aware of the potential after one of their leaders, Fathi Shaqiqi, was arrested for eleven months along with twenty-five others in the early 1980's. Realizing the room for growth, they started a targeted and organized recruitment campaign (Skare 2020, 97). An illustrative example is the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA), from which the PIJ was able to recruit rather heavily. Many of these members were Muslim individuals participating in a secular organization. In prison, however, their beliefs were attacked and ridiculed by unbelieving revolutionaries from Fatah, the PLFP, and the DFLP. In some cases, this pushed believing revolutionaries into forming groups to preserve religious practice and educate themselves.
[112] Among leaders with secular backgrounds mentioned by Abu Amr were: Ramadan Shallah, Suleiman 'Auda, Fayez Abu-MiPammar, Nayef \Azzam, Fayez al- Aswad, and Ahmad Mahanna (Abū 'Amr 1994, 95)

Palestinian named Munir Shafiq. Shafiq was part of the Jordanian communist party until 1965, joined Fatah in 1968, and eventually became a high ranking member in the PLO (Sing 2011, 5). Like many others, he came to doubt the PLO's ability to achieve national liberalization towards the late 1970's. In 1979, he converted to Islam and published the paper "Islam in the battle of civilizations" (*al-Islam fi al-ma'rakat al-hadara)* (Sing 2011, 5). In it, Shafiq argued that the triumph of the Iranian revolution illustrated that Islam could provide the symbols and language for reigniting the Palestinian struggle on a much wider level than leftist ideologies (Alavi 2020, 92–93).

In contrast to the PIJ, which saw the Iranian revolution as a model for Islamic activism, the founders and ideologues of IJB found it appealing due to its success in mobilizing the population. In his work *Shuhada wa al-Masira*, Mounir Shafiq proclaimed:

> "For years we have searched for the mass line, while it directly lay before our eyes, but we did not see it. Do you not see that Islam is the line of the masses in our countries? (…) because in the Arab countries the revolution will not be born with blonde hair and blue eyes or with a yellow face and slitted eyes. Whoever bears in his mind the Marxist option, has to go to Sweden, China or Vietnam" (in Sing 2011, 25)

This turn did not contradict Maoists teachings, but emphasized the recommendation that the basis of the revolution needs to be grounded in local conditions and culture, it cannot be effected by importing a ready-made doctrine from Moscow or Beijing (Sing 2011, 25). In his reflection on shifting identities in the Middle East, in particular the pivot from leftism to religious movements in the region, Lebanese thinker Amin Maalof suggests that it was no coincidence that Khomeini had a strong appeal to Arab leftist revolutionaries:

> "Watching Ayatollah Khomeini, surrounded by his Revolutionary Guards, asking his people to rely on their own strength, denouncing the "Great Satan" and vowing to remove all traces of Western culture, I couldn't help thinking of the elderly Mao Tse.-tung of the Cultural Revolution, surrounded by his Red Guards, denouncing the "great paper tiger" and vowing to remove all traces of capitalist culture. I wouldn't say the two cases were identical, but I do see many similarities between them, whereas I don't see anybody in the history of Islam who reminds me of Khomeini" (Maalouf 2001, 65)

The Iranian revolution convinced Shafiq and other secularists that the Palestinian struggle had imported a foreign basis for their revolution and were bound to fail.

This view did not only reside in elite level discussions. In an interview with Iain Overton, Itaf Ulyan, the girl who moved to Lebanon in 1980 and later attempted a suicide attack, gives insight into the mood among the people following the revolution. «Of course there was an impact on the Palestinian revolution from the Iranians," she said "The Iranian revolution was in 1979, I arrived there [to a Fatah training camp in Lebanon] in 1980 and though it was well known then that the Palestinian revolution was a secular revolution, when I arrive there I saw some of the guys praying" (Overton 2019, 139). When asked whether she believed the Iranian revolution had an impact and how, she replied "Absolutely yes. The impact of the Iranian revolution on the Palestinian cause was direct – through ideology. Through our discussions in the camp, we came to the conclusion the critical success of the Iranian revolution was the adoption of a religious ideology. At the time there was no Hamas or Islamic Jihad, but there, in Lebanon, we tried to create the Islamic Jihad militia" (Overton 2019, 140).

4.3.2 The Shi'afication of Palestinian martyrdom

Culture and identity are forces that consciously or unconsciously create tendencies towards favouring certain means over others (Araj and Brym 2010, 846). However, neither culture nor identities are unitary and immutable. Both the hierarchy and the content of a particular identity can change with time and, in so doing, bring about changes in behaviour (Maalouf 2001, 13). In the case of Palestinian national liberation groups between 1960's and 1990's, the Islamist identity came to displace the left-wing secular identity as primary vehicle for struggle. Or perhaps more accurately, the former did not replace the latter, it came to accommodate an aggregate of symbolic values accumulated during the preceding period – among them, aggressive martyrdom.

While the potential of the tactic was illustrated by Hezbollah, the ethos of sacrifice used to justify it penetrated Sunni discourse from Iran, via figures like Shaqiqi and Shafiq. Martyrdom is an integral part of Shi'a Islam, cultivated through traditions such as the *Ta'ziyah*, the re-enactment of the death of Hussain Ibn Ali in the battle of Karbala, the penultimate victim injustice. However, it was not promoted as an aggressive doctrine before Khomeini's ascendance in the 1979 Iranian revolution. His doctrine was largely developed in the Iraq-Iran war, where he exalted intentional acts of self-sacrifice by fusing Persian mysticism, nationalism, and Koranic ideas of martyrdom (Cook 2007, 140; Loon 2016, 250–54).[113] Khomeini also drew heavily on the myth of Hussain and Shi'a historical feelings of oppression, framing martyrdom as an avenue of achieving redemption (Loon 2016, 262). Re-casting Hussain as a proactive hero and willing martyr instead of a tragic figure fated to die, he changed the Shi'a discourse from quietist

[113] The most famous icon from this period was 12-year-old Muḥammad Ḥusayn Fahmīda who threw himself under a tank with a grenade and about whom Khomeini remarked: "Our leader is this twelve-year-old boy, who attached a grenade to his waist and threw himself under the enemy's tank, destroying it and killing himself, and thus drank the elixir of martyrdom. He is worth more than a hundred pens and a hundred tongues" (Loon 2016, 261).

to revolutionary (Cook 2007, 140). Together with Sufi mysticism and its idea of *fana',* the Sufi concept of becoming one with God, Khomeini made death meaningful on a personal, spiritual, and political level. Sacrificing one's life became the epitome of virtue, with soldiers in the frontlines chanting slogans like 'to go to Karbalā', one needs blood; to go to Mecca, one needs money.' (Loon 2016, 268).

The most important manifestation of the integration of Khomeini's martyrdom ideology in Palestine lies in the framing of one of the local heroes of the Islamic Jihad movement, namely Sheikh Izz-al-Din al-Qassam (1885-1935). With the slogan "God's book in one hand, and the rifle in the other" Qassam advocated revolution as a path to defeat British colonialism, came to be considered the father of the Palestinian revolution, revered as a symbol and elevated to near saintly status (Abū 'Amr 1994, 98). In Shaqiqi's writings, we see the influence of Iran in his comparison between Qassam and Hussein, the tragic hero in Shi'a Islam, used by Khomeini to legitimize suicide bombings domestically,

> "Confronting the foul Britain and its Zionist affiliate, Al-Qassam fell as a Husseinian martyr on the mountains of Palestine. The earth drank his pure blood and the trees absorbed his blazing spirit. He entered the funnels of the poor and into the water mugs with a holy fire—a holy fire and an endless joy entered our blood. What is impressive about this encounter between al-Qassam and al-Hussein… a few believers confronting large armies, yet with the triumph of the sacred duty in the essential and possible conflict. A responsible and conscious spirit amid a sea of indifference and inaction. Al-Qassam was a symbol of faith, awareness, and revolution in the 1920's and 1930's—a symbol of determination not to compromise, as he rejected the bribe of an insured future, just as al-Hussein was at the dawn of the first movement"(Skare 2021b, 75–76).

The references to Khomeini's sacrificial symbolic complex abound. In 1986, members of the PIJ described themselves as "sons of the disinherited (mustad'afun) Islamic nation, seeking martyrdom in the name of Allah [and struggling against] arrogance, in the world. (…) We attach much more importance to death than to life. Either we liberate our land or we die" (Menashri 1990, 192).

In 1988, the PIJ issued the manifesto *Qira'a fi Fiqh al-Shahada* (Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom), laying down the ideological foundation of martyrdom in Palestine. The author of the document is unknown, he is believed to be a man by the name Misbah al-Suri, a former leftist who became a Muslim and joined the military branch of the PIJ in Gaza (Hatina 2005, 243). It provides justifications for self-sacrifice through a 'cost-benefit' doctrine that places public welfare over personal sacrifice. Martyrdom in the name of God not only constitutes a personal guarantee of rewards in paradise it also provides collective insurance for the emancipation of the political community. The pamphlet also provides operatives with advice and posits the martyr as a cultural agent, as a symbol of both revolution and liberation (Hatina 2005, 248).

By 1988, four years before the mass-shipment of prisoners to Lebanon, both the PIJ and IJB had justified suicide attacks within a Sunni Islamic framework and demonstrated intent to use it (Tamimi 2007, 44).[114] Taken together, the above indicates that Iran laid the groundwork for Hezbollah's appeal, but this is not necessarily the case for Hamas. Hamas is arguably an

[114] While there are no indications of the PIJ having made plans to conduct suicide attacks at this point, they were in an alliance with theIJB, who had. Tamimi (Tamimi 2007)writes: "Al-Shiqaqi succeeded in forging an alliance with Saraya al-jihad (PIB), whose leader had extensive contacts with other Palestinian groups within Palestine and abroad. These included Abdullah Azzam, a member of the Ikhwan, who led the Arab contingent in the Afghan jihad from his base in in the Pakistani city of Peshawar"

exception because, as argued by Hatina, the group was created outside of Iran's ideological influence:

> «The Hamas covenant does not mention the notion of self-sacrifice for Allah. It also contains no reflection of the impact of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, a vital source of inspiration for the Islamic Jihad, especially on the issue of martyrdom. Apparently, the historic animosity between the Sunna and Shi'a, exacerbated by Khomeini's deviation from his ecumenical and pan-Islamic attitude in the early 1980's, kept Hamas out of the Iranian fold" (Hatina 2005, 253).

Whereas Iran was seen as a prototypical out-group by the PIJ and IJB, this was not the case for Hamas. However, once these two groups began justifying militarism, and this became a staple of legitimacy, it created a pressure for the Muslim Brotherhood to take up arms. The lead up to the intifada saw the PIJ capturing the imagination of Palestinians with daring operations (Tamimi 2007, 50).[115] But even as Hamas's military wing became involved in the conflict, their concept of resistance did not encompass suicide attacks: "Hamas' political rhetoric spoke of the 'revolution of the stones', i.e. using stones, knives and guns to target mainly soldiers and settlers. 'Suicide attacks' were introduced into the movement only in 1993, impelled by the political context—the Oslo Accords" (Hatina 2005, 253).[116]

Hamas is better thought of as a group on the fence, a group operating in an environment where rivals have already legitimized the practice, but still uncertain about how adoption will be received. As we know, Hamas was pushed off the fence by 1993. In addition to the stay in

[115] At this point, the IJB was largely dismantled with the assassination of its leaders in 1988 although their key ideologue, Mounir Shafiq, was still alive.
[116] Hamass military wing was known as the "Palestinian Mujahidin" and led by Mohammed Yusuf al-Sharatha (Hussein 2021, 86)

Lebanon in 1992, another possible contributing factor to explain why it risked using the tactic is its re-evaluation of Iran and Iran's turn to Palestine. In December 1990, Tehran convened and Islamic conference to reach out to the Sunni Palestinian groups involved in the intifada. According to Burr and Collins (2003, 79), one outcome was that "Iran would provide military assistance to Hamas and signed a secret agreement for cooperation between the Sudanese and Iranian intelligence services." Representatives of Sudan, Hamas, and the PIJ returned for a second conference the following year (M. Burr and Collins 2003, 80).[117]

Although the chronology of suicide attack use suggest that Hamas was the first mover, it was the PIJ and the IJB that made the tactic a legitimate form of escalation. The fact that Hamas was first to carry it out appears entirely coincidental, it was reacting to domestic forces, it was not an independently creative force as was the case with the PIJ and IJB.

4.4 Discussion

Palestinian Islamists adopted suicide attacks into their repertoire of violence during the 1980's. While one group, the IJB had tactical incentives, ability, and opportunity during that decade, both the PIJ and Hamas arguably lacked ability due to harsh government repression. However, the decision to adopt was not supported by a pre-existing cultural and normative basis in the Palestinian community. The Islamist community was skeptical of the use of violence in general and suicide as a form of self-immolation was considered a sin. In the Palestinian national liberation movement more broadly, the concept of heroism was predominantly tied to the survival of the perpetrator although this had changed in some far-left circles during the 1970's.

[117] There is no mention that the PIJ received offers of similar assistance at that conference, but the PIJ began receiving financial aid from Iran in 1997 (Shay 2005, 72–77).

According to fashion theory, we expect Palestinian Islamists to have challenged local norms in the face of uncertain returns due to their admiration for the actor proposing the idea. Based on an analysis of the reception of the Iranian revolution and Hezbollah's attack among Palestinians, this does indeed seem to be the case. While Khomeini's pan-Islamism has often been depicted as failing to resonate in the Middle East due to theological disputes and historical animosity, it found space to grow in activist factions of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood (Hatina 2014, 99). Suicide attacks are symptomatic of this resonance. While Iran appealed to the two separate factions for different reasons, both arguably spurred imitation. The first were young Palestinians studying in Egypt, influenced by the radical ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo (Skare 2021a). The second were leftists in Lebanon and inside Israeli prisons (re)turning to religion (Sing 2011). The revolution inspired Islamists to become revolutionary, but it also inspired revolutionaries to either re-emphasize their Muslim identity or convert to Islam.

Looking at the typology of actors provided in the theory chapter, the PIJ in Gaza fall in the vanguard category and imitated Iran based on value expressive influence. It considered Iran an ideal-prototypical out group and idealized self-image. What we have also seen is defection in the rank of more conservative left-wing groups to the new vanguards. This manifested in two ways, in leftists establishing the IJB and in members of secular groups becoming more self-consciously Muslim, leaving their organizations, and joining the ones mobilizing based on Islam. A possible ironic side effect is that some secular groups in Palestine had difficulties mobilizing suicide bombers in the 90's and 2000's because the individuals who sought to carry out that type of operation had already switched allegiance to the jihadis (Pedahzur 2006, 50; Victor 2004).

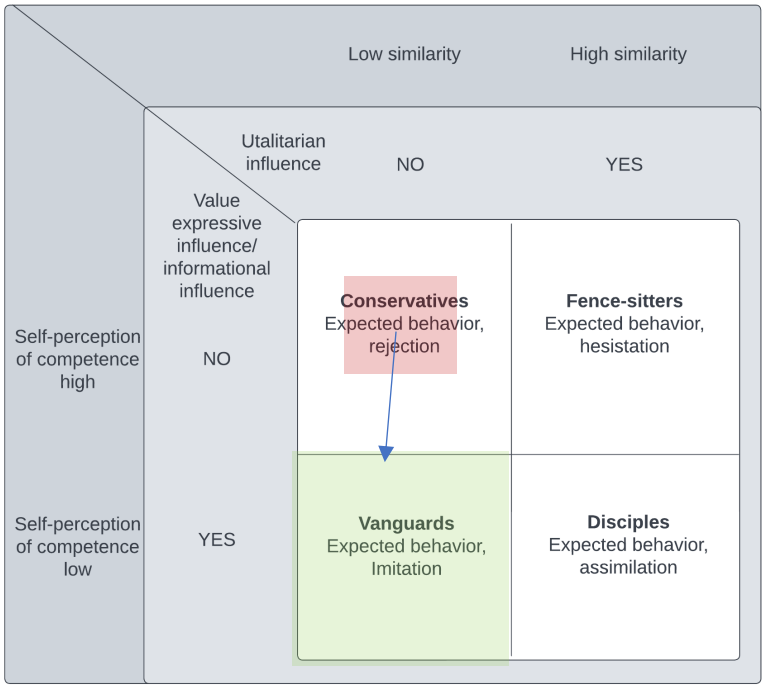


Figure 7 Palestinian Islamists (green) and leftists(red) in the influence typology

The success of the revolution and prestige of Khomeini led the leaders of the burgeoning jihadi movement to accentuate the similarities between Sunni and Shi'a Islam. This created an "ideological bridge" on which suicide attacks could travel. Iran arguably became a model for Palestinian leftists and Muslims alike for the same reason Vietnam appealed to the PLFP and Algeria appealed to Fatah. They looked to Iran despite what has the potential to be highly salient religious differences because it constituted an example of a successful domestic revolutionary movement.

By not examining the 1980's, one gets the impression that there was a pre-existing culture of martyrdom that led Palestinians to expect that suicide attacks would be well received once they obtained the know-how of suicide operations from Hezbollah. This is re-enforced by the fact that Hamas was the first group to carry out a suicide attack and did so right after having had several of its cadres in Hezbollah camps in southern Lebanon. The chronology notwithstanding,

the series of events and discussion in the Palestinian Islamist community outlined in this chapter strongly indicates that Hamas was reacting to domestic dynamics, it was not an independently creative force. The first movers were the PIJ and IJB, Hamas' attack at the Mehola Inn was just coincidentally not thwarted in the way the IJB's attack had been in the mid-1980's.

The above has put great emphasis on the role of Iran. That is not to say that Hezbollah's attack was not important as a demonstration of the tactic's potential. However, if the revolution had not already triggered a Shi'afication of martyrdom among the PIJ and IJB, that demonstration would likely have been received similarly in Palestine as it was by Arabs and Afghan mujahideen during the Soviet Invasion. As we will see in the next chapter, it might well have been ignored.

5 An inside job in Afghanistan

In August 2004, the Taliban launched an attack on the headquarters of DynCorp Inc. This was a security company in Kabul working to protect both foreign and Afghan officials, including President Hamid Karzai (Edwards 2019, 14-15). Waiting for employees to exit at the end of the day, a Taliban operative detonated a car bomb parked near the office. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, it was unclear whether the operative had survived the explosion. The Afghan interior ministry claimed the driver was killed in the blast. A Taliban spokesman, on the other hand, announced that the operative had used a remote-control device and escaped safely. Neither the Taliban nor any other Afghani organization had so far condoned suicide attacks in the country. Such attacks were seen as going against the Pashtunwali code of fighting and the Taliban-Deobandi school of Islam, which considered suicide to be cowardly and those who engaged in it to be cursed (R. Johnson 2011). Only a year later, however, the Taliban spokesman would have extolled the courage of the driver detonating himself and praised the virtuosity of his sacrifice, perhaps even if the attacker had managed to escape.

The first suicide attack in Afghanistan was carried out by two Arab al-Qaeda operatives three years earlier, on September 9, 2001. It was an assassination attempt against Ahmed Shah Masood, the famous Afghan Mujahedin commander known as the Lion of Panjshir (Rome 2013, 822). Posing as journalists, the two bombers were able to get an interview with Masood, a man known as having an insatiable appetite for media exposure, inside his headquarters in Dalan Sang, (Blanche 2002). What Masood did not know was that the camera the men brought with them was packed with explosives, ready to detonate. The attack was successful, fatally wounding one of Americas key Afghan allies two days before the attack on 9/11. Between 2002

and 2004, four more suicide attacks were carried out in the country, all of them by Al Qaeda operatives (Rome 2013, 822).[118]

In the early 2000, both analysts and scholars believed it was unlikely that suicide attacks would ever "catch on" in Afghanistan because it ran contrary to society's cultural sensibilities (Williams 2007; 2008; Johnson 2013; Rome 2013). It met stark opposition in the Taliban leadership. Mullah Mohammed Omar, who founded the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan in 1996, was opposed to what he considered both a sinful and foreign tactic that had a high risk of killing civilians (Giustozzi 2007, 117; Williams 2008, 28)). Yet, following operations carried out by al-Qaeda foreign fighters and the potential mishap outside DynCorp Inc. in August 2004, the Taliban gradually began using it prolifically. They launched around twenty-one attacks in 2005, 139 in 2006, 160 in 2007, and between 96 and 180 every year until 2011 (Johnson 2013, 11).

How did a group operating in a society with both normative and cultural reservations come to embrace suicide attacks? The first answer that comes to mind is that the acceptance of the tactic might be connected to the rise of Islam as a mobilization identity (Edwards 2019).[119] However, if this is the case, why did it not proliferate among mujahideen in the Afghan-Soviet conflict during the 1980's? Afghan mujahideen found themselves fighting a highly mechanized enemy that was both technologically and numerically superior. As explored by Edwards and others, Islam was the basis of mobilization in the 1980's as well, enabling groups to mobilize across communal and ethnic divides (Edwards 2019). The conflict also saw the involvement of religiously motivated Arab foreign fighters, one of whom, Abdallah Azzam, developed the

[118] It is not unlikely that they received logistical support from Afghans.
[119] Edwards and others suggest that Afghanis and al-Qaeda were more ideologically proximate in the early 2000's, and that this was significant as suicide attacks had been justified in the Salafi-jihadi framework in the preceding decade (Moghadam 2008; Acosta 2016). However, while the justification of the act was arguably necessary for adoption inside Afghanistan, it is not sufficient to explain why anyone took the risk of being a first mover. Why did it take nearly eight years for the religious justification to kick in?

Islamic Martyrdom ethos while involved in the conflict. Yet, while Sunni jihadi Palestinian groups in both Lebanon and Palestine were legitimizing the idea in the 1980's, Sunni jihadi foreign fighters and mujahideen in Afghanistan did not. Equally curious, while Shi'a fighters training in Iran used the tactic to repel U.S. forces in Lebanon, Shi'a Hazara fighters with training in Iran did not use it against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. In other words, suicide attacks simply did not make it into Afghanistan, regardless of the religious and ethnic make-up of the group in question.

So, the question posed this chapter is the following: why did suicide attacks not catch on in the 1980's and what changed by the 2000's? Afghan mujahideen went from being conservative in the 1980's, regarding Iran as neither superior nor a relevant example, to being put on the fence by old Afghan Arabs in al-Qaeda in the 2000's. The majority of Afghan Arabs were perceived as incompetent by Afghani mujahideen in the 1980's, but this perception changed by the late 1990's early 2000's. At that point, the Arabs that had founded or joined al-Qaeda were far from the disorganized, rookie band of foreign fighters who had entered Afghanistan more than a decade earlier. Suicide attacks entered the repertoire of groups in Afghanistan because al-Qaeda's successes rendered some in the Taliban more open to their influence and advice. While the Taliban's view of al-Qaeda was more positive than how the majority of mujahideen had regarded foreigners in the 1980's, it was far from the admiration characteristic of the PIJ and IJB's leadership of Iran. As such, the Taliban was more akin to Hamas, it required information and active convincing to adopt. The influence exerted by the reference group was primarily informational, not value expressive or utilitarian.

The chapter is divided into three sections. It begins by giving a background for the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Like the previous chapter, it then looks at key indicators for suicide attack adoption in this period and considers whether these were present. Like with

Palestinians, the Afghanis had incentives, ability, and a martyrdom culture, but not a hospitable cultural and normative environment for suicide attacks. In contrast to Palestine, Iran was not regarded as a relevant model to Afghan and Arab mujahideen. Therefore, the martyrdom ethos developed in Afghanistan was not aggressive. The third section addresses what changed between 1980 and the 2000's to explain the change in attitude. While existing explanations emphasize the change in identity of the reference group, from Iran to al-Qaeda, as the determinant factor, I suggest that al-Qaeda's increased fighting credential and generational shift heralded by the Taliban was just as important.

5.1 The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

In April 1978 a Marxist group called the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) overthrew Afghani President Mohammad Daoud to instate a communist regime in what became known as the Saur revolution. Daoud came to power only a few years earlier, in 1973, when he overthrew the monarchy and proclaimed himself president based on a platform of progressive reforms (Sinno 2015, 126). It quickly became clear that Daoud was unable to deliver on his promises, which prompted the PDPA to seize power. Daoud had been supported by the Soviet Union, but with the April 1978 insurrection bringing another avowedly pro-Soviet party to power, they decided to recognize the new regime (Galeotti 1995, 6). The PDPA was headed by two figures, Hafizullah Amin and Nur Mohammed Taraki, the former seen as more erratic and uncompromising by soviet leaders than the latter (Galeotti 1995, 6-9).

The start of the PDPA-era saw a series of heavy-handed reforms, including land redistribution, secularization of education, and emancipation of women (Galeotti 1995, 6). This created dissatisfaction in Muslim communities and manifested in a series of local uprisings that by October 1978 became a full-fledged insurrection. Within one year, the PDPA was losing its

armed forces to desertions and began requesting military and material assistance from Moscow to fight the unrest (Galeotti 1995, 7). In October 1979 Taraki was assassinated by Amin, and with him, Soviet leaders' hope for moderation within the PDPA. A few months later, on December 25, the Soviet Union dispatched mechanized forces across the Soviet-Afghan border and assassinated Amin (Galeotti 1995, 7-13). This initiated the 10-yearlong Soviet Afghan war.

Resistance against the Soviets formed around ethnic, tribal, and religious lines, following the contours that had characterized the resistance against Daoud's regime, as well as the PDPA, in the preceding year. Given the heterogenous nature of Afghan society, this created a fragmented conflict environment characterized by a wide variety of actors. In the Pashtu areas, organizations mobilized around varieties of Sunni Islam. Outside of Afghanistan, a transnational jihadi movement gradually formed, built on the idea that protecting Muslim lands was an individual duty for every Muslim.

Afghanistan has three main ethnic groups that identify as Sunni, the Pashtun, the Tajik, and the Uzbek.[120] The Pashtun is the largest of the three, constituting half of the Afghani population, with an equally large number living in Pakistan. As illustrated in the map below, they predominately resided in the southern parts of the country, bordering Pakistan (Harpviken 1996, 22).

[120] From the Afghani declaration of independence in 1919 by Shah Amanullah, Afghan rulers sought to transform Afghanistan from a society based around tribal-entities to one centered on the idea of the nation (Mousavi 1998, 156). In reality, however, Amanullah and his two successors ruling from 1929 to 1978 implemented ethno-centric policies based on Pashtu culture in a discriminatory manner (Mousavi 1998, 156).

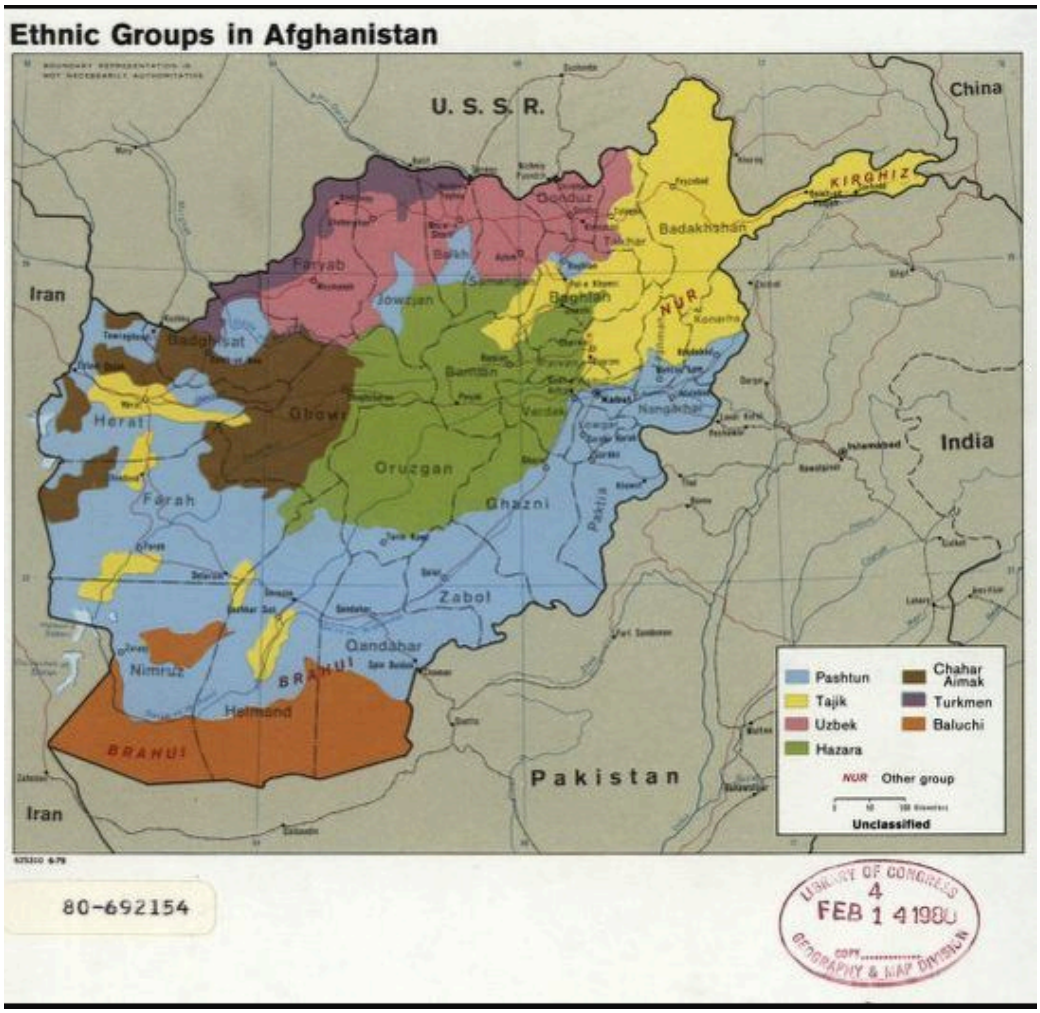


Figure 8 Map of ethnic identities in Afghanistan from 1979 (Central Intelligence Agency 1979)

Pashtu Sunni communities were among those that began organizing into small armed nuclei when Mohammed Daoud proclaimed himself president in 1973 (Sinno 2015, 126). While many who took up arms were killed either by Daoud or in the Saur revolution of 1978, those who survived would later mobilize against the Soviet invasion. Two prominent early survivors were Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jalal al-Din Haqqani, who independently of one another declared jihad in the summer of 1973 (Brown and Rassler 2013, 44-45). Haqqani had pursued advanced religious studies at the Dar al-'Ulum Haqqaniyya madrassa in Pakistan from 1964, graduating in 1970 with the equivalent of a doctoral degree (Brown and Rassler 2013, 38). He was working as a teacher when Daoud announced his coup and – according to a Pashto historical account –

immediately raised the flag of jihad (Brown and Rassler 2013, 45). Hekmatyar had been in a group of around one thousand Islamists who received training by Pakistan to wage jihad against Daoud in the 70's. Hekmatyar established Jamiat-I Islami Afghanistan, modelled by a Pakistani group by the same name.[121] These efforts culminated in a failed insurrection in 1975, after which many Islamists were executed and Pakistan's interest waned (Brown and Rassler 2013, 49).

The Soviet invasion triggered yet another a popular uprising, with hundreds of bands taking up arms, typically led by village chiefs, prominent elders, and tribal leaders. Provisions and shelter were granted by their local communities, who also contributed by providing intelligence about Soviet and Afghan communist troop movements. The local support was, however, gradually eradicated by a Soviet bombing campaign, causing millions to flee across the border to neighboring Pakistan between 1980 and 1985 (Grau and Jalali 2001).

While the tribal nature of Pashtun society ordinarily hindered broad mobilization against a common enemy, Islam and the concept of jihad functioned to overcome fragmentation (Harpviken 1997, 276). Fighters called themselves mujahideen, meaning those that wage jihad, or holy warriors. Different groups and coalitions had come and gone between 1973 and 1978, but with the invasion in 1979 the Sunni mujahideen gradually coalesced into seven parties. These were, simply put, those that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) decided to fund, train, and give weapons to (Sinno 2015, 126). These groups were allowed to set up exile organizations in Peshawar, a border province in north-west Pakistan (Harpviken 1996, 54). Feeling threatened by Pashtun separatist tendencies in Kabul, which posed a theoretical threat

[121] The Pakistani group was led by Burhanuddin Rabbani.

to Pakistan's territorial integrity, Pakistani funds to Islamists was largely intended as a counter weight to Pashtu nationalism (Brown and Rassler 2013, 57).

Table 5 List of key Sunni mujahideen groups active during the Soviet Invasion

Group name[122]	***Est.***	***Leader***	***Ethnic group***
Hizb-I Islami Gulbudin	1975	Gulbudin Hekmatyar	Majority Pashtun, ethnically diverse
Hizb-I Islami Khalis	1975	Yunis Khalis	Pashtun
Ittihad	1980	Abdul Rasul Sayyaf	Pashtun
Jamiat-I Islami	1977	Bruhamuddin Rabbani	Tajik, Uzbek, Sunni Hazara and Pashtun
Ahl al-kitab wal-sunna	?	Jamil al-Rahman	Kunar and Nuristan Pashtun and Nuri
Harakat-I Inqilab-I Islami	1970	Muhammad Nabi	Pashtun
Jabha-I Nejat-I Milli Afghanistan	1980	Sibghatullah Mujaddedi	Pashtun
Mahaz-i Milli Islami	1979	Pir Sayyed Ahmad Gailani	Pashtun

The first three organizations in the above table are of particular interest due to their role during and after the Soviet invasion and their ties to other actors in the region. Hekmatyar and Rabbani split over ideological and strategic differences following the failed insurrection of 1975, leading Hakmatyar to form Hizb-I Islami together with a man named Mawlawi Yunis Khalis and Rabbani to found Jamiat-I Islami (Hamid and Farrall 2015, 28). Khalis and Hekmatyar soon had a falling out, leading to Hizb I-Islami splitting into two factions: Hizb I-Islami Hekmatyar and Hizb I-Islami Khalis (Brown and Rassler 2013, 50). Hekmatyar's Hizb-I Islami became known for having the most fundamentalist and radical religious outlook, hostile to local

[122] The table is based on Sinno 2015, Brown and Rassler 2013

traditions grounded in ethnic identities (Harpviken 1997, 276; Brown and Rassler 2013, 50). [123] Khalis, on the other hand, was known for being quite flexible in accommodating different tribal practices among his fighters. Among those who joined him was Jalaluddin Haqqani, who would become a particularly central figure in the 2000's when the U.S. invaded Afghanistan (Hegghammer 2020, 169; Brown and Rassler 2013, 52).

Another important figure was a man named Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. He was imprisoned in the late 70's but established the group called Ittihad when he was released in 1980 as an attempt to unite the main Afghan groups in a union with himself as president (Hamid and Farrall 2015, 27). The attempt at unity failed, but the group persisted. Sayyaf, who was fluent in Arabic, was a competent fundraiser from Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia. Having attended al-Azhar in 1969, he gradually developed an affinity for Wahabi Islam and became a focal point for Arab volunteers who sought to join the jihad.

While Sayyaf developed amicable relations with Arab countries and welcomed Arab foreign fighters to take on battle roles, other factions were less hospitable. Rubin points to Hekmatyar and Sayyaf as particularly open, while Hamid as well as Brown and Rassler point to Khalis and Haqqani as the main hosts of incoming Arabs (Rubin 2013, 83–84; Brown and Rassler 2013, 61; Hamid and Farrall 2015, 38). Neither are untrue, because whereas a Palestinian named Abdallah Azzam primarily funneled people to Sayyad, who you will recall had an excellent grasp of Arabic, Haqqani in Khalis's group appealed to them independently.[124] Over time, the Sayyaf and Haqqani factions became complimentary: the former used as an entry point to get

[123] An example is a ritual described by Edwards, wherein fighters who returning to the battlefield in the spring (known as the fighting season) would pass under a Qur'an held by his mother or father. They ritual marked the passing from the realm of peace to the realm of war (Edwards 2019, 54). As this custom did not have a grounding in Islamic texts, Hekmatyar's group forbade its fighters from engaging in it (Brown and Rassler 2013, 52).
[124] Mustafa Hamid claims that Haqqani tried to convince Sayyaf to call for Arab volunteers as early as 1980, but he did not oblige (Hamid and Farrall 2015, 30).

basic training and "battle experience for beginners" and the latter allowing for more advanced participation in the front lines (Hegghammer 2020, 168). In both cases, however, they appear to have been more overbearing of Arab participation for the sake of securing funds than actively seeking it out to bolster their fighting capability.

Foreign fighters from Arab countries began arriving in Afghanistan from 1979 onwards, but were rare before 1986 (Brown and Rassler 2013, 60). Some volunteers would come for long periods, while others would go for two to three weeks during their summer holidays. One of the first to arrive, Mustafa Hamid, described that the decision of many early joiners was shaped by the repeated defeats of Arab regimes and repression:

> "The defeat of 1967 shocked a generation of Arabs. Israel's siege of an Arab capital (Beirut) in 1982, while other Arab countries looked the other way, in particular Egypt and Syria, had a huge impact. It caused a very big wound in the dignity of the Arab youth, who were left with a sense there were no real states, only oppressive regimes weak in the face of foreign interference (…) it was in this environment the Afghan jihad took people back to Islam, and absorbed the negative feelings in Arab countries; because of this, Islamic ideas and movements began to rise again" (Hamid and Farrall 2015, 22–23).

Islamic movements already existed in several Arab countries, perhaps most prominently the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine. In Jordan, Palestinian Islamists had fought alongside PLO and leftists against Israel before September 1972 (Hegghammer 2013). In Egypt, al-Gama' al-Islamiyya and Egyptian Islamic Jihad emerged in the late 1970's amidst a crisis of legitimacy of the political system (Cook 2005, 93–97; Kepel and Rothschild 1993, 11). In Syria, the Muslim Brotherhood led a failed insurrection against the Assad regime

in the late 70's and 80's. Inside Palestine, Syria, and Egypt the violent off-shoots from the brotherhood groups generally developed inside the prisons of their home countries.

The foreign volunteers going to Afghanistan in the early period between 1979 and 1984 were rarely actively fighting (Hamid and Farrall 2015, 23). The infrequency of Arabs in combat roles inside Afghanistan is noted by Hegghammer, who estimates that only around a hundred would have partaken in battle between mid-1978 and late 1984 (Hegghammer 2020, 161).[125] While some of those that volunteered had military experience, most did not, and, as noted by Hamid, there was minimal training resources for foreign volunteers (Hamid and Farrall 2015). Those who had prior training tended to have been part of conventional forces, and their experience had little applicability for the Afghan environment. As a consequence, Arabs were often not allowed on the battlefield but were given tasks behind the front lines (Hegghammer 2020, 205–214). Among those who were allowed to go to the front, Wright described their primary function as cannon fodder (L. Wright 2006, 111).

The most notable exception was the Palestinian Abdallah Azzam, mentioned above, who was part of a Muslim Brotherhood contingent and trained with Fatah in Jordan until Black September in 1971. Azzam first arrived in Afghanistan in 1981 and would be instrumental in making it *the* destination for aspiring Muslim fighters from around the world.[126] Volunteers were received on an ad hoc basis until in 1984 when Azzam and his Saudi friend and benefactor Osama bin Laden set up a bureau for organizing the volunteers in a more productive manner to avoid the trend that many who came simply turned back after a short period (L. Wright 2006,

[125] These estimations are based on assessments by informed observers on the size of the Arab contingent before 1985 and data collected on individuals documented as present in combat roles in the early years.
[126] Azzam was central in creating the ideological basis for broad Muslim mobilization in the Afghan war. He construed it as a compulsory duty for local Muslims to expel foreign invaders. If they were to fail, then it would be up to their neighbors to take up the banner. If they fail, the duty falls on the people behind them, and so on.

103). Azzam convinced bin Laden to visit Peshawar, and this became a turning point for bin Laden's involvement, moving him to fundraise between 5-10 million dollars for Sayyaf (Hegghammer 2020, 211).

In other words, by the mid-1980's you had a diverse set of Sunni actors involved in a fight against a highly mechanized adversary in Afghanistan. Yet, we do not see a desire to adopt suicide attacks in this environment like we do in Palestine. The below explores possible reasons for why none of the mujahideen factions thought to adopt suicide attacks to counter the Soviet challenge.

5.2 Why were suicide attacks not adopted in Afghanistan 1980's?

Sunni mujahideen in Afghanistan did not adopt suicide attacks during the Soviet invasion despite having tactical incentives. From 1980 to 1985, this can be attributed to limited awareness about the existence of the tactic and limited ability to carry out such attacks due to decentralized organizational structures, poor access to information, and limited arms availability. However, from 1985 onwards the mujahideen had more developed supply networks and were beginning to develop a more articulated martyrdom culture within an Islamic framework. Why did none of the mujahideen leaders channel the sacrificial zeal into more productive forms of dying as demonstrated by Hezbollah and Iran?

5.2.1 Tactical incentives

The Soviet Union's use of technologies that could kill from a distance, such helicopters and anti-personnel mines, forced the Afghans to adapt their traditional ways of guerrilla warfare, which were based on close combat weapons and guns (R. Johnson 2011, 219). Due to the asymmetry of power, mujahideen maintained the preference for covert guerilla type operations. As noted

by Soviet Military intelligence in 1980, "In a directive of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan …the rebels are instructed to continue to avoid direct armed confrontation with regular forces, and to camouflage themselves among the civilian population" (R. Johnson 2011, 220). Instead of the asymmetry leading to innovation or adoption of new tactics, the mujahideen obtained more advanced forms of weapons that enabled them to use existing tactics and prioritize the survival of the warrior (Edwards 2019). Acquisition of new technology by the mujahideen, like explosives and stinger surface to air missile pushed the Soviet military into changing their tactics, but they could not dramatically alter course of the war. Much like the Palestinian jihadis, the Afghan mujahideen had incentives theorized in the literature, but in both cases the communities would only have the examples of Iran and Hezbollah to look to for inspiration. Beyond that they would have to use their own imagination to come up with situations where suicide attacks might be advantageous. In the case of Palestine, the asymmetry led to new forms of armed action, in Afghanistan it resulted in slight adaptations of the existing tradition.

5.2.2 Availability of information, expertise, and material

The difference in outcome might could be grounded in the fact that the mujahideen did not have the necessary information, ability, or opportunity to carry out suicide attacks. While this might be true in the first half of the decade, it is less plausible from 1985 onward. It is not entirely clear when Afghani mujahideen became aware of suicide attacks. Most mujahideen commanders would be based deep in the Afghan countryside without access to international media, so it is unlikely they would have been made immediately aware of Hezbollah's use of the tactic in 1983. However, it is not unreasonable to assume that the leaders of organizations with international ties to Arab states described above, as well as foreign fighters, would have brought this knowledge with them during the conflict.

Awareness notwithstanding, there were practical constraints making suicide attacks difficult to carry out. The most important one was availability of weapons. In the beginning of the conflict, the Sunni mujahideen were poorly funded and worked with old weaponry, mostly firearms (Hamid and Farrall 2015, 38). As Pakistan began to supply more advanced weapons, the mujahideen faced logistics challenges related to getting them across the border and transporting them into other parts of the country. Following the Soviet's bombing campaign that sought to extinguish civilian support for the movement between 1980 and 1985, the mujahideen also had to transport food and medical supplies, increasing the difficulty and coordination involved in moving goods (Grau and Jalali 2001).

With the increasing demand on Pakistani imports, mujahideen established large supply depots along the border with Pakistan. There were six major supply routes into Afghanistan, with around one fifth of supplies coming through what was known as the Zhawar depot (Grau and Jalali 2001). This was situated the Paktia Province in the eastern part of Afghanistan, four kilometers from the Pakistani border (Grau and Jalali 2001, 70). While the commander of the Pakita Province was Jalaluddin Haqani from HIK, it was the joint responsibility of HIH, HIK and other groups such as the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan and Islamic Revolutionary Movement to defend it. These were attacked by Soviet and Afghani forces from the 1985 onwards, making transportation of arms and other goods more difficult (Grau and Jalali 2001). That said, it was far from impossible. The attacks on the supply routes did not prevent the Mujahedeen from smuggling weapons, nor from trying to acquire heavier and more advanced systems, including: "heavy machine guns, MBRLs (multi-barreled rocket launchers), and improvised single-barreled version, mortars, anti-tank recoil-less rifles, and even tanks and anti-aircraft guns" (R. Johnson 2011, 220).

Even if suicide attacks caught the attention of higher-level leaders with ties to the Arab world and the necessary explosives expertise, like Sayyaf and Khalis, the structure of their organizations would make ordering that kind of attack difficult. Most groups in Afghanistan had a horizontal structure where local commanders had a large degree of freedom in selecting how to fight. Organizations relied on local leader's ability to organize its clan members, who in turn relied on their members personal loyalty to family and tribe (R. Johnson 2011, 236). This was not a stable system, and it was not uncommon for local factions to switch between organizational loyalties (Grau 2004, 130). In other words, if you disagreed with the priorities of an organization or wanted to fight in a different manner, you could switch loyalties. The exception was Hekmatyar's group. As an organization with both international networks and a hierarchical structure, HIH, might have had the organizational capacity needed to order lower-level commanders to use the tactic (Brown and Rassler 2013, 50). However, as has already been mentioned, Hekmatyar was known as particularly orthodox approach to Islam at the time, resisting any praxis or innovation that did not have a firm grounding in Islamic texts.

There were several obstacles to suicide attack adoption in the early 1980's, most importantly a limited awareness and scarcity of weapons. However, while suicide attacks would have been impractical to carry out in the first few years of the war, they became a more realistic possibility for groups controlling supply lines from the mid-1980's. The fact that leaders exercised a low degree of central control over their organizations can be construed as both an obstacle and a factor conducive to adoption. On the one hand it made it harder for the leadership to order particular ways of fighting, on the other, it left more room for creativity among lower ranks. As we will see when we turn to the 2000's, the latter is arguably important to understand how the tactic eventually entered Afghanistan.

5.2.3 Suicide attacks and norms about violence and death

The Mujahedeen saw themselves as embedded in a deep-rooted Afghan warrior tradition. Even though they mobilized along Islamic lines, ethnic and tribal identity remained highly salient throughout the conflict. Central to this was the Pashtunwali, the core of Pashtu social behavior, including ways of warfare, typically described as an unwritten tribal code of honor (Ahmed 2011, 89). It is not a set of rules, but "a cultural conceptual space within which identity is negotiated" (Edwards 2019, 28). It is designed to ensure one's personal status and to address the challenge of maintaining relations in a society where there is no central authority to impose its will on wayward members.

Islam was another integral part of Pashtu society, with Ahmed writing that "Pukhtunness and Muslimness do not have to coalesce, they were within each other, the interiority of the former is assumed in the latter"(Ahmed 2011, 107). In other words, the status of Pashtu fighters as Muslims was more or less taken for granted. A much more tenuous feature was a man's ability to claim honor. "At this point in history [early 1980's]," writes Edwards, "honour still took precedence over Islam, heroism over martyrdom. For the individual warrior, the aim of combat was not to achieve a specific military objective or even to kill as many enemies as possible; rather, it was to gain renown and avoid shame" (Edwards 2019, 41). A similar trope is found in the writing of Mouhamad Yousaf, the head of the Afghan Bureau of ISI, in effect the mujahideen's official 'commander in chief'. He wrote that, for the Afghans, "to be without courage is abhorrent; such a person is despised"(Yousaf and Adkin 2001, 33). The point was always to survive and while physical courage was highly valued and idealized among the mujahideen and functioned to gain social prestige.

Sunni mujahideen sought to live and fight again, and preferred using hit and run tactics to maximize those odds (R. Johnson 2011, 218). Reckless and arguably downright suicidal tactics

could be seen on the battlefield, but they were associated with Arab foreign fighters and seen by Afghans as an oddity. Wright describes a visit by Rahimullah Yusufzai, a Peshawar bureau chief of a Pakistani daily, to a camp of Afghan Arabs under attack in Jalalabad, writing, "The Arabs had pitched the white tents on the front lines, where they were easy marks for Soviet bombers. "Why?" the reporter asked incredulously- "We want them to bomb us!" the men told him. "We want to die!" They believed that they were answering's God's call. If they were truly blessed, God would reward them with a martyr's death" (in L. Wright 2006, 108). Edward's similarly recalled visiting an Arab camp during one of his field visits to Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion and, while he was admittedly no military man, it did strike him that defensive measures were not on top of their list of priorities (Edwards 2019). This type of behavior drew critique from the Afghans whose understanding of heroism and bravery entailed fighting for survival, not launching into deliberate self-sacrifice (R. Johnson 2011, 218).

As this view was grounded in Afghan society, so violating these norms could be detrimental to the support network the mujahideen relied on for food, shelter, and medicine for the first five years of the conflict. As communities were driven to flee by the soviet bombing campaign, their support diminished in importance, in theory leaving them more free to deviate from local norms if they had wished (Grau and Jalali 2001). At the same time, however, their reliance on outside support from the Pakistani government increased. Mohammad Yousaf estimated that at least 80,000 mujahideen had received training inside Pakistan between 1983 and 1987. For him and his troops, suicide was not allowed even under the direst of circumstances. Describing the process of selecting team members that were to go into Afghan territory, he writes:

> "I would have to make it absolutely clear to each individual the risks he would be taking. Under no circumstances must he allow himself to be captured, as this would expose the Pakistan government's clandestine support for the jehad. Of course, we would deny

everything, disown them, but they would certainly be subjected to the most vile and prolonged torture. As every man has his breaking point, eventually some information detrimental to our operations would be extracted, with the likelihood of a show trial and much publicity and propaganda. Nobody was encouraged to kill himself to avoid capture, no suicide tablets were issued, as to take one's own life is forbidden to Muslims. It was repeatedly stressed that they were to escape from tight corners, or as a last resort to die fighting" (Yousaf and Adkin 2001, 114).

However, the activist notion of heroism evolved over the course of the war, together with the Islamic notion of Martyrdom. Edwards argues that as the AK-47s and other modern weaponry removed the individual from the killing, it fundamentally dissociated the warrior experience from the personal combat rooted in Afghani collective memory. As a result, traditional notions of heroism gradually changed to encompass acts of sacrifice, ´because, "the room for heroism was minimal in a war where the majority of deaths were coincidental" (Edwards 2019, 49-50). As Islam and the idea of martyrdom became increasingly central to the warrior ethos, sacrifice became an emblem of legitimacy, subject to veneration, and eventually, a way to restore honor (Edwards 2019, 145-148).[127]

[127] Perhaps the most visible manifestation of the shift from traditional tribal warriorhood to an increasingly Islamic framework is poetry. Poetry from 1978 exalted battle as an opportunity for young men to fulfil the expectations of their forefathers. An example highlighted by Edwards is Rafiq Jan. In the below example he addresses the Safi tribe, which was among the first to counter the Marxist regime in April 1978, but then quickly fell quiet: "Safis! Before you were heavy, why do you weigh so little now?// Don't be cautious, shoot all of the [Marxists] with your five-bullet guns.// Safis! Before you were heavy, but now you are as light as straw.// Find for yourselves good guns and ammunition" (Edwards 2019, 39). As the war increasingly deviated from expectations rooted in communal memory, Islam increasingly assumed the place of the tribe. In this verse by Gul Sha'er from the early years of the war, the focus has shifted to jihad: "Today, there is a battle against the infidels which is jihad. // Oh, I am going to the field, my father! // I am going on the path of God and His Prophets, // There is a battle against the infidels which is jihad" (Edwards 2019, 48). After the first phase of the war, poets stopped emphasizing the active deeds of the warrior, focusing instead on what is being done to him, as in this verse by a poet calling himself Gauhar: "You martyred yourself, but your widow and children stay in sorrow. // O Martyr—you sacrificed yourself to learn the grief of the oppressed. Your body became a sieve from the bullets. // O Martyr—your blood says "Allah Akbar" every moment" (Edwards 2019, 50).

Towards the mid-1980's several martyrdom magazines began popping up in Pakistan. Edwards collected a few of these, including *Ima-yi Shahid* (The Visage of the Martyr) produced by Hizb-I Islami in the spring of 1984. This and other magazines contained eulogies which gave meaning to the sacrifice of individuals who had passed while fighting and provided a platform for glorifying those that died in defense of Islam. Another category of documents provided a legal framework for martyrdom and burials, a power that had previously been held by tribes. One such document was a pamphlet titled *Mufti Sangar* (Legal Expert of the Trench) and describes the status of martyrs based on the Hanafi school of jurisprudence that dominates in Afghanistan. There are fifty categories of martyrs, including those who died to protect property, honor, women, land, and guns, those who die in robberies, and those who are injured in battle and die later. The most virtuous martyrs are those that get killed while affirming "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet" (Edwards 2019, 68).

Despite the increased prestige of the martyr, martyrdom developed into a defensive concept rather than an offensive one as it had done in Palestine. The two martyrdom frameworks developed in parallel but diverged completely on the notion of incorporating an aggressive pursuit of death. How did this happen? The below argues that in contrast to the view among Palestinian Islamist, neither Iran nor Hezbollah were seen as an ideal proto-typical out group by the Pashtun mujahideen. This meant that the martyrdom ethos in Afghanistan developed free of Shi'a influence.

5.3 What is missing from the explanation?

A missing factor in the above explanation is the fact that Iran and Hezbollah were disregarded as models of emulation by the Sunni mujahideen. This was both because they regarded

themselves as superior to outsiders offering advice, but also due to political developments in the 1980's re-constructing the Sunni-Shi'a divide that the Iranian revolution had briefly torn down.

5.3.1 Outsiders not regarded as superior models

The first point to be made is that the mujahideen were regarded as quite xenophobic and skeptical of outside advice (Williams 2007). Even when they were offered help by allies, they displayed a distinct uninterest in learning tactics or adopting ideas that did not conform with their ideas of heroism. Mouhamad Yousaf tells a story of a CIA expert who flew in to advise him on fuel contamination.

> "He [the expert] was of the opinion that mujahideen working at workshops or airports should be given this contaminant to mix with the fuel in vehicle or aircraft tanks. I explained that this would not kill many people or destroy equipment and that the mujahideen would never regard this way of fighting a jehad. They demanded immediate results, preferably visible and noisy ones. The idea of fighting involved much shooting, the inflicting of casualties, opportunity to show off their courage and the possibility of war booty.- It was hard enough for me to get them to blow up a pipeline covertly, let alone get them to pour a liquid into a fuel tank"(Yousaf and Adkin 2001, 90).[128]

Indeed, according to Johnson, the training offered by the ISI was often «politely ignored» by the mujahideen to the frustration of ISI officers who became critical of the mujahideen commanders' "rigidity, resistance to change and proud inflexibility,' which caused 'serious problems in the tactical field" (R. Johnson 2011, 223). Considering that the mujahideen had

[128] Yousaf was no admirer of the CIA, in particular the senior staff. He saw them as largely oblivious to the realities of war and the cultural characteristics of Afghan society, an ignorance he in part attributed to the Afghan fight having a low priority. He also critiqued the organization's system of two-year rotations, which meant he had to deal with incompetence on a bi-yearly basis (Yousaf and Adkin 2001, 84–91).

this attitude towards culturally and religiously proximate allies, it is perhaps no surprise that they were not open to advice from Iran. It is nonetheless interesting to explore why they were not inspired in the same way as the jihadis in Palestine.

5.3.2 Outsiders not regarded as relevant models

In the immediate aftermath of the Iranian revolution and Soviet invasion, both parties made some attempts at aligning their experiences to create – if not a common front – at least a front characterized by a common enemy. At this time, Iran's Afghanistan policy was decided by democratic nationalists such as Mehdi Bazafran, Abol-Hassan Bani-Sadr, and Sadeq Qutbzadeh, who did not to distinguish between Shi'a and Sunni but expressed solidarity with Afghans regardless of creed (Menashri 1990, 238; Maley 1998, 119). These men argued that the Soviets posed a threat to both Iran and the region, and wanted the Iranian regime to take an active role in fighting them (Maley 1998, 120). They allowed several Sunni mujahideen organizations to offices open in Teheran, and actors like Hekmatyar and Rabbani were said to be vying with each other, "seeking to play on pan-Islamic solidarity" to get support from the regime (Calabrese 1994, 131). However, this rent seeking did not extend to inspiration or a desire to learn from them.

As the clerics consolidated their power over the Iranian state apparatus, the strategy increasingly shifted to exclusively supporting those groups that accepted the principles of the Iranian Islamic republic (Menashri 1990). The preference for such groups led to the closing of the offices of a number of Sunni fundamentalist parties in Teheran (Menashri 1990, 239). By 1982, the rigid Iranian approach had alienated both Sunni mujahideen, as well as some traditionalist Shi'a in Afghanistan (Maley 1998, 120).

The Mujahedeen's negative attitudes were also affected by the Saudi-Iranian rivalry that had led some Saudi clerics to brand Khomeini as an apostate (Menashri 1990). Saudi Arabia had an interest in the Soviet invasion because it believed the Soviet's had aggressive intensions in the Persian Gulf and that their invasion in 1979 was a first step in gaining control of Persian Gulf Oil (Maley 1998, 118). Moreover, Saudi Arabia's support for the mujahideen was also meant as a direct counter-move to the influence exerted by the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which had offered an alternative pan-Islamic model (Maley 1998, 118).

Saudi Arabia had claimed the leadership in the Islamic world since the late 1950's, when Gamal Abd al-Nasser was seen to threaten the regime's legitimacy with his focus on Arab nationalism. The Saudi regime posited pan-Islamism as an ideological alternative to Nasr, one that gained increasing appeal after Egypt's 1967-defeat against Israel and Saudi Arabia's oil fueled economic boom. With its Islamic revolution, Iran challenged both Saudi Arabia's position as head of the Islamic world and its legitimacy, a sense that was re-enforced by the takeover of the Grand Mosque by Muslim zealots asserting the royal family's illegitimacy in 1979.

Teheran made attempts at improving relations with the mujahideen in the latter half of the 80's. At this point however, the relationship was strained and characterized by distrust, with Iran suspected of using the mujahideen to obtain U.S. manufactured weapons. Yunes Khales became particularly hostile towards Iran after his organization was accused of having "lost" some of its equipment to the country, and started to turn down invitations to visit Teheran (Menashri 1990). One such story was recounted by Mohammad Yousaf:

> " Whether by accident or design they [one of Khalis's officers] ended up being arrested in Iranian territory by the Pasadars (Iranian border scouts). They had with them four stinger launchers and sixteen missiles. Repeated efforts by Khalis and Rabbani, who had

> excellent contacts in Iran, failed to get them returned. The Iranian authorities never actually refused to give them back, they just kept delaying their release with one excuse or another" (Yousaf and Adkin 2001, 187).

Beyond these issues, the Iranian revolution provided a less relevant example for the mujahideen in Afghanistan who were fighting an invading power and waging global jihad, than for Arabs fighting their regimes at home. As noted by Hegghammer with reference to the oddity of the Arab foreign fighter phenomenon,

> "Most Islamist groups before the 1980's fought against their own regimes. Very little in the doctrines or activities of Islamists before 1980 logically predicted involvement in faraway wars of national liberation. The same problem arises with explanations that emphasize the role of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The substantive core of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's project was domestic revolution, not liberation of occupied Muslim territories. His success should logically have inspired more revolutionary activism - which it arguably did for a short while in early - 1980's Egypt and Syria" (Hegghammer 2010).

However, if relevance and admiration is the criteria through which the tactic travels, why did it not find more fertile grounds among the Shi'a mujahideen? After all, around 20% of Afghanistan's population are Shi'a, with the most important ethnic groups being the Hazaras, the Qizilbash and Farsiwan (Emadi 1995, 3) The Hazara constitute the largest Shi'a minority and possibly the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. While the Sunni mujahideen could take advantage of Pakistani refuge and support, the same was not extended to the Shi'ia community (Harpviken 1996). Perhaps as a consequence, the role of the Hazara in the national resistance between 1978 and 1992 is less recognized (Mousavi 1998, 175). In its place, the

Hazara mujahideen were supported by Iran and deeply inspired by the Iranian revolution, with some claiming it was the second most successful case of exporting the revolution following Hezbollah in Lebanon (Menashri 1990, 239).

The Hazara resided in the mountainous and resource scarce central region of Afghanistan, an area known as Hazarajat (Mousavi 1998, xiii).[129] They speak a dialect of Farsi known as Hazeagi, but as the map at the beginning of the chapter shows, the area is landlocked within Afghanistan and does touch on the border to Iran. During the pashtunization-period from 1919 to 1978, Hazara life was characterized by cultural, economic, and political underdevelopment. As described by Mousavi: "Humiliation and intimidation of Hazara were openly practiced, they were regarded as second class citizens and were in practice, even if not officially and constitutionally, denied virtually all legal rights and protection" (Mousavi 1998, 160).

Like the Sunni mujahideen the Shi'a were defiant of the PDPA-regime following the coup in 1978. While they initially had the support of the Iranian shah and then, following the 1979 revolution, of the new Iranian regime, they lacked both organization and strategies to coordinate and sustain their armed struggle (Emadi 1995, 4–5). Nonetheless, from 1978 to 1985, around fifty Hazara organizations were formed in Afghanistan and Iran, the most important ones being:

Table 6 List of key Hazara mujahideen gorups during the Soviet invasion

Group name[130]	***Year est.***[131]	***Leader***	***Ethnic group***
Shura-i Ittifaq Islami	1979	Ayatullah Sayyed Baheshti	Hazara and other shi'a

[129] The area is not called Hazarajat on any map but is generally considered to cover the three central provinces Bamiyan, Orozgan, and Ghur, as well as parts of Herat, Farah, Qandahar, Ghazni, Parwan, Baghlan, Balkh, and Baghdis.
[130] The table is based on Sinno 2015. For the full list, see Appendix three in Mousavi (1998).
[131] Years with an asterisk are approximate.

Sazman-i Nasr	1980*	Shaikh Karim Khalili	Hazara and other shi'a
Harakat-i Islami	1978	Shaikh Asif Muhsem	Hazara and shi'a in Kabul and Kandahar
Sepah-i Pasdaran	1983*	Akbari and Saddiqi	Hazara
Hizballah	1980	Shaikh Wusoqi	Hazara
Hizb-I Wahdat	1989	Adbul Ali Mazari	Hazari and Quizilbash

Several of these groups were followers of Ayatollah Khomeini and sought to establish wilayat-e faqih in Afghanistan. Initially, all Shi'a groups had bases either in Iran (Harpviken 1996, 54; Mousavi 1998, 181-182). However, those groups that did not want to conform to the Iranian political line, like Harakat-I Islami, were eventually asked to leave.

Whereas the Pashtu resistance remained focused on expelling the Soviet-Union, Hazara resistance is typically divided into two periods (Mousavi 1998, 179-180). The years between 1978 and 1983 were characterized by the territorial liberation of Hazarajat, while the period from 1983 to 1992 saw in-fighting and a degree of demobilization (Harpviken 1997, 279; Mousavi 1998, 182). Musavi describes the Hazara resistance prior to Iranian involvement as "one of the best examples of successful popular resistance movement anywhere in the developing world" (Mousavi 1998, 179). Indeed, between 1978 and 1983, all Hazara territory was liberated and brought under the control of the Shi'a mujahideen forces.

The Hazara had been excluded from the arrangements in support of Pashtu groups, so they were reliant on alternative sources of arms. Much like Pakistan had a coalition of seven favored conflict parties, Iran came to prefer some Shi'a groups over others, most notably the Nasr party, founded in 1981, and Sepah-e Pasdaran, founded in 1983 (Menashri 1990, 238).[132] On the

[132] By the mid1980's, the groups supported by Iran became known as the Teheran eight.

surface, groups like the Nasr Party and Sepah have a lot in common with Hezbollah. Iran was a significant model to the Shi'a clergy in Afghanistan and Lebanon, many of whom were educated at the same institutions as the ayatollahs that were leading revolutionary events in the neighboring country (Harpviken 1997, 279). Groups in both countries were established with Iranian involvement in the early 80's in the context of a war against an occupation after experiencing decades of political, economic, and social suppression. In Lebanon it was Israel and the US. In Afghanistan it was the Soviet Union. Both Hezbollah and the Hazara groups relied on Iran for weapons and training and members of both communities were welcomed in Iran to receive it. Yet, U.S. and Israeli occupational forces in Lebanon were targeted with suicide attacks and the Soviet Union were not.

There are two main points to consider here: Iranian interests in the respective countries and internal conflict dynamics. To begin with the former. While Hezbollah's activities in the 1980's were predominantly targeting Israeli and international forces, Hazara mujahideen became increasingly engulfed in in-fighting. The high number of groups established following the invasion in 1979 created both ineffective rule and factionalism. Iran therefore exerted pressure to unite the different actors under the Iranian banner (Mousavi 1998, 182-183). From 1981, the Iranian officials in charge of Iran's Afghanistan policy Ayatllah Husayn Ali Montazeri and Mehdi Hashemi were keen to exert strong control over the Shi'a populations and set up groups that were positively disposed to Khomeini's regime. This led to the creation of the aforementioned Nasr party.

However, with the ascendance of the clergy around 1982/3, Iran's policy became less equivocal and, following an evaluation mission to Hazarajat in 1982, the Iranian Foreign Ministry found Nasr "insufficient for fulfilling Iranian aims" (Harpviken 1996, 81). This was the occasion for establishing Sepah-e Pasdaran, which was even closer to Iran both politically and religiously.

When Iranian arms transfers and training to the Hazara peaked between 1982 and 1986, the objective was no longer guerilla warfare against the USSR, but to ensure that the Hazara community were falling into the 'party line'. In other words, Iran did not give weapons and training to the Hazara to fight the Soviet occupation like they did to Hezbollah to fight the Israelis and international forces, but to assure ideological control in the central zones (Harpviken 1996, 80). Over time, these not so subtle efforts at exerting influence became a frustration, and by 1987, many in the community had become critical of the regime's policies in the country (Mousavi 1998, 186).

Another possible reason for the divergence lies in the location of Afghanistan and the relationship between Iran and the occupying power. On a strategic level, Iran's policy in Afghanistan was shaped by its relationship with the Soviet Union, which was in flux during much of the 1980's (Menashri 1990). Despite ideologically considering the Soviet Union nearly as bad a regime as the U.S., Iran was occasionally reliant on the Soviet Union during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) and appears to have been hesitant to do anything in Afghanistan that might alienate them (Leffler and Westad 2010, 3:121). At the most basic level, this meant avoiding antagonizing the Soviets to an extent that would push them in the direction of supporting Iraq (Maley 1998, 119). This became especially relevant from 1985 onwards, when Iran took several steps to improve its relation with the superpower and probably realized that closely allied groups actively fighting against them in Afghanistan would represent a mixed message (Harpviken 1996, 81). While the Soviet Union intensified its Afghanistan campaign in 1984, the Hazara was largely spared, and the local government even deepened its efforts to accommodate the group in the national shura (Harpviken 1996, 81).[133]

[133] It is possible that these explanations give Iran too much explanatory weight. While Hazara organizations were under the direct influence of Iran, this did not mean that all aspects of the organizations were controlled in Teheran, as was a common Pashtu perception at the time (Mousavi 1998, 181). Some groups, like Harakat-I Islami,

With the above in mind, it appears that the reason no Afghan mujahideen adopted suicide attacks in the 1980's is twofold. Sunni mujahideen that had persisting tactical incentives were content with the state of their fighting style and ability and did not see Iran and Hezbollah as relevant models for their struggle. Those that did see Iran and Hezbollah as relevant models, however, were not actively engaging the Soviets after 1983. The next section tries to understand what changed among the Sunni mujahideen in the early 2000's.

5.3.3 The persuasiveness of al-Qaeda and the inside man

The adoption of suicide attacks among Afghanis was no simple matter of shared ideology overriding cultural sensibilities. While the configuration of mujahideen changed with the end of the soviet invasion, the Afghan perspective on suicide attack remained stable from 1980's to the early 2000's, regarded as both 'un-Afghan', 'un-Islamic', and foreign (Williams 2007, 4). For those that would come to form the Taliban in the 1990's, who typically followed the Deobandi school or jurisprudence, suicide attacks were considered cowardly and those who engaged in it cursed (Williams 2007, 4).

These cultural obstacles were overcome by a deliberate propaganda campaign enabled by on long-standing ties between allies. The first Afghani group to adopt suicide attacks in Afghanistan were the Taliban. The Taliban's interpretation of Islam was linked to the Deobandi school, and while it was influenced by the Pashtunwali code, it was hostile to tribal and feudal structures.

diverged from Iranian orthodoxy and were looked upon with suspicion both by Iran and its followers in Afghanistan (Mousavi 1998, 182). It would be a stretch to say that these groups could not act independently. However, even if some Hazara groups had an interest in attacking the USSR against the wishes of Iran, it is difficult to see why they would have wanted to after 1983 and 1984. After all, their initial aims of territorial control had already been achieved at this point. In other words, by the time Hezbollah demonstrated its potential of suicide attacks against an occupying power, it was largely irrelevant to the Hazaras and potentially counterproductive for Iran to advocate in Afghanistan.

The Deobandi school was also known as having a "deep seated antipathy to Shi'a Muslims, who are simply seen as unbelievers (Maley 1998, 75).[134]

Following the Soviet withdrawal, the Taliban became a military and political force from 1994 onwards (Maley 1998). The group consisted of refugees who had been students at Islamic schools (*madrassas*) in Pakistan during the Soviet invasion. In fact, the relationship between the Taliban and Pakistan was so close that hours after the Taliban was able to seize Kandahar in 1994, they were accused of being ISI-proxies. While the links to Pakistan were strong after nearly twenty years of war and the members' lives as refugees, the leadership of the group was entirely indigenous to Afghanistan and "fiercely independent" (Maley 1998, 72). Most of the Taliban members had been too young to fight against the Soviet, but some, like future leaders Mohammad Omar, took part in the latter stages of the war (Maley 1998, 74). What made these people change their minds about the tactic?

As has been argued by others, the fact that suicide attacks were justified within a Salafi-jihadi framework is important to understand how it could be incorporated into the repertoire of the Taliban in the mid-2000's (Moghadam 2008; Edwards 2019). However, what is equally important is to understand how Afghani mujahideen perceptions of the new suicide attack reference group – former Afghan Arabs in al-Qaeda – changed. The fact that the Taliban would be persuaded by al-Qaeda to use suicide attacks was not a given. Al-Qaeda was built by former Afghan Arabs and, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, these foreign fighters were not exactly sought out for advice on the battlefield against the Soviets. Arabs came to Afghanistan to receive training; they were in no way seen as adding relevant expertise.

[134] Within three years, the group was responsible for killing Abdul Ali Mazari, the principal Shi'a leader in Afghanistan and for closing the Iranian embassy in Kabul.

The Taliban had relations with the people who would form al-Qaeda, including Osama bin Laden, from an early stage. According to Bergen, the leader of Hezb-I Islami, Younis Khalis, offered bin Laden a place to stay in Jalalabad, Afghanistan following his exile from Sudan in 1996 (Bergen 2006, 158). Once in Afghanistan, bin Laden gradually positioned himself with the Taliban and was welcomed by its leader, Mullah Omar (Bergen 2006, 164). Bin Laden is also said to have convinced Jalaluldin Haqqani, one of Khalis's best generals, to join Mullah Omar's organization (Bergen 2006, 236). That said, information about this sequence of events, as well as about the relationships between the people and groups involved, is characterized by a lot of uncertainty (K. Bell 2013). What is more certain, is that the first suicide attack in Afghanistan was carried out on September 9, 2001, when bin Laden sent two suicide bombers to assassinate Ahmad Shah Massoud, the leader of the Northern Alliance and Taliban's adversary. While the Taliban did not approve of the tactic, they did approve of the man.

With the American invasion of Afghanistan and the toppling of the Taliban regime in Kabul in October 2001, the relationship between him and the organization's leadership was still strong.[135] In the next four years, bin Laden began to call for suicide attacks on Afghani soil. In February 2003, al-Qaeda issued a tape called "martyrdom operations against the enemy" showcasing the tactic in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Those that responded to that call, however, were Arabs. Attacks on June 9th and December 28 against Afghan and coalition troops were both attributed to al-Qaeda. At this stage, the Taliban was likely facilitating for al-Qaeda using the tactic, but they did not use it themselves (Williams 2007, 5). In 2004, scattered reports began to emerge of Afghanis carrying out similar attacks, but most refused to accept that this was the case (Williams 2007, 5). By 2006, both Afghani and Pakistani Pashtuns gradually began using

[135] In a statement to the press, Haqqani stated "We will retreat to the mountains and begin a long guerrilla war to reclaim our pure land from the infidels and free our country again like we did against the Soviets. We are eagerly awaiting the American troops to land on our soil. (…) Mullah Omar, Osama bin Laden and all of the commanders are safe and sound and carrying out their duties" (Bergen 2006, 322).

the tactic *en masse*. To begin with, the Taliban tried using the tactic in line with normative and cultural sensitivities, especially the principle against targeting civilians (Williams 2008, 35). While at times successful and initially directing their bombers solely at military targets – in stark contrast to Iraq where Zarqawi deliberately targeted civilians – they still killed 4.6 civilians per attack, quite possibly due to low competence (Williams 2008, 38).

Evidently, the Taliban changed its mind about the tactic in this period, but how did this happen? Quoting UN sources interviewed for his paper, Williams points to Iraqi kill videos as the inspiration for Taliban cadre (Williams 2007, 5). Having lost governing authority in 2001 and starting an active insurgency against the Americans, the example of Iraqis engaged in much the same activity from 2003 onwards was undoubtably seen as relevant. That said, the deliberate campaign by al-Qaeda to sell the tactic should not be underestimated. It appears al-Qaeda had a strong interest in convincing the Taliban to adopt the tactic, initiating a targeted propaganda campaign on its behalf. By the summer of 2004, videos from Iraq had been dubbed into Pashtun and made available in tribal areas of Pakistan (Williams 2007). These were often spliced with collateral damage in Afghanistan. Even more specific, an al-Qaeda operative named Abu Yahya al-Libi began producing jihad videos in Afghanistan based on the model used in Iraq. As observed by Williams, "These came to include such hits as "Holocaust of the Americans in Afghanistan," Pyre for the Americans in Afghanistan" and "The Winds of Paradise" (Williams 2008, 31–32). Using cultural references to counter the Afghan reservation against "unmanly tactics" they explained that suicide bombers were Allah's warriors and true ghazis – a term for warrior from early Islamic literature venerated in Afghani warrior culture (T. H. Johnson 2013; Williams 2008).

Mullah Omar remained reluctant, but this did not deter al-Qaeda from continuing their efforts. In his article from September 2006, Syed Saleem Shahzad described:

> "In March 2006, a delegation of three people was sent to Afghanistan by Abou Moussab Al-Zarqawi (leader of Al-Qaida in Iraq), where it met Osama bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahiri and Mullah Omar. (…) The delegation used video material to justify the suicide attacks. The very observant Afghan society generally regards suicide as a sin. If we have seen, in the past, a few isolated kamikazes sacrifice themselves, this mode of action has never become common in the country. To generalize this practice, Mullah Dadullah therefore used dozens of videos showing how the Iraqi resistance used it effectively. He managed to convince the groups of Waziristan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and various cities of Pakistan" (Saleem Shahzad 2006).[136]

Mullah Dadullah, a mid-level Taliban commander who was known to hobble due to an injury from a Soviet mine, appears to have been the man most willing to incorporate Arab principles into the Taliban's campaign (Williams 2008, 35; Brown and Rassler 2013, 124).[137] In an interview with Al-Jazeera, Dadullah elaborated on the relationship with al-Qaeda:

> "For example, the bombings we carry out - we learned it from them. We learn other types of operations from them as well. We have "give and take" relations with the mujahideen of Iraq. We cooperate and help each other (…) We have training centers here in Afghanistan, and, as you know, they have their own centers there. If we discover anything new, they come here to learn it, and if they discover anything new, our friends go to learn it from them" (Williams 2008).[138]

[136] The article was translated from its original French.
[137] Sources from the early 2000's state that he never held a formal position within the Taliban hierarchy, but by the time of his capture in the latter half of the decade he was described as one of the group's most prominent operational leaders.
[138] Upon his death in 2007, Dadullah's brother received a letter of condolences from Osama where he told him to follow in the steps of his brother and "urged Muslims to follow the steps of Mullah Dadullah because he was a mujahid" (Ersan 2007).

A similar statement given by a man named Maulvi Mohammad Haqqani. He was a former Taliban deputy minister who fled Kabul during the US bombing campaign, suffered a nervous breakdown in an Afghan refugee camp, and later became an important propagandist and recruiter:

> "Arab and Iraqi mujahedin began visiting us,[139] transferring the latest IED technology and suicide-bomber tactics they had learned in the Iraqi resistance during combat with U.S. forces. The American invasion of Iraq was very positive for us. It distracted the United States from Afghanistan. Until 2004 or so, we were using traditional means of fighting like we used against the Soviets—AK-47s and RPGs. But then our resistance became more lethal, with new weapons and techniques: bigger and better IEDs for roadside bombings, and suicide attacks" (Yousafzai 2009).

There were different opinions within the Taliban with regards to the advisability of incorporating the tactic, but Dadullah appear to have been firmly planted in the positive camp. Sources are scarce, but in another interview with a Taliban commander named Maulvi Abdul Rehman Akhundzada, further re-enforces this impression. Akhundzada was posted in northern Afghanistan but was forced to move to Pakistan during the U.S. bombing campaign of 2003.

[139] It is not entirely clear how the knowledge of how to effectively carry out suicide attacks came to the Taliban. Along the line of this quote, Williams suggests it was learnt from foreign fighters coming from Iraq to Afghanistan, and from Afghanis that spent time with Al Qaeda in the Sunni triangle in Iraq (Williams 2008; 2007). However, having studied Al Qaeda's martyr biographies from between 2002 and 2006, Anne Stenersen found very few examples of Iraqi operatives coming to Afghanistan (Stenersen 2011, 179). The makeup of foreign fighters in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2006 was diverse, including people from the Middle East, North Africa, the former USSR, and the Xinyang province of China Many of these were individuals who were inspired by the attack on 9/11, but too inexperienced to be accepted by groups in Iraq. Afghani groups in this period were less selective when it came to recruits so the country was a good steppingstone for aspiring jihadis (Stenersen 2011, 179-181). She argues that Al Qaeda likely had a demonstration effect, but disputes that there existed an organized effort on part of Al Qaeda to transfer knowledge from one battlefield to another (Stenersen 2011, 180-181).

He sold potatoes there for a while, before returning to command 50 insurgents in Afghanistan. While describing his time there, he noted,

> "We lacked weapons and money. So, I visited Mullah Dadullah. He had gone into Helmand province in early 2006 with 30 people. When he returned months later, he had organized 300 sub-commanders who each had dozens of troops. He had also signed up and was training hundreds of suicide-bomb volunteers. His return was like the arrival of rain after five years of drought" (Yousafzai 2009).

That the tactic was already justified in the Sunni Islamic framework saved the Taliban from having to go through the justification process outlined in the previous chapter. However, it did not render adoption less controversial culturally. It was only after mid-level commanders were able to mobilize and employ suicide bombers that it gained some traction (Williams 2008; 2007). Dadullah was able to do this despite disagreements internally because he was awarded significant operational freedom by Mullah Omar. The circumstantial information provided above, assuming it is indeed true, suggests that he was convinced by Arab comrades, in particular Zarqawi. While he never drew a link between himself and Zarqawi that we know of, his use of suicide bombings in the next few years made western reporters draw the link, with one writing:

> "If you hoped his June 7 death might be the end of the line for Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi, you really don't want to see the newest recruitment videos for the Taliban. Although they never mention the Jordanian-born terrorist by name, the echoes of his Internet videos--and his sheer viciousness--are unmistakable and chilling. The star is Mullah Dadullah Akhund, a one-legged guerrilla commander in southern Afghanistan who now

seems bent on matching or exceeding Zarqawi's ugly reputation" (Moreau and Yousafzai 2006).

Once Dadullah came to see al-Qaeda as an ideal-prototypical out group and adopted the tactic, it changed the cost-benefit analysis for other groups in the same theatre (Acosta 2016, 193). By 2007, even Hekmatyar's group, which had a reputation for strict Islamic orthodoxy during the Soviet invasion, was pushed off the fence and began to deploy suicide bombers (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan 2007). Suicide attacks were brought into the Afghani repertoire through the back door by and inside man.

This leaves one thing to be explained, how did al-Qaeda become a suicide attack emissary in the first place? Despite the Afghan Arabs penchant for suicidal tactics in the 1980's, they had shown no signs of transforming martyrdom into an aggressive doctrine. How did the Arabs go from being a suicidal curiosity to a fashion leader and desirable source of imitation pushing suicide attacks?

5.3.4 How al-Qaeda became a suicide attack emissary

That former Afghan Arabs should be the community to convince mujahideen to employ the tactic would have come as a surprise to most observers in the 1980's. Islam in the context of political rivalries between Sunni and Shi'a communities acted more as an obstacle to diffusion than a facilitating factor. While the 1980's had been characterized by regional infighting and stark fronts between Saudi and Iran, the 1990's saw a desire to unite against a common enemy, the west. This created a foundation for another round of Sunni-Shi'a reproachment and supplied both the ideological basis and physical forums for the tactic to cross the sectarian divide once again.

5.3.4.1 Islam as an obstacle: political rivalries rendering religion a barrier for diffusion

We do not know much about Osama bin Laden's views on suicide attacks in this period, but we know more about the views of those closest to him: Abdallah Azzam and Aymenn al-Zawahiri. Azzam was revered by bin Laden at different points in his life and has been identified as the prime maker of myths surrounding martyrdom (Hegghammer 2020, 244–88; L. Wright 2006, 96). Before his death in 1989, he became an important propagandist for jihad in Afghanistan, inspiring Muslims abroad to enthusiastically die in the name of jihad (Edwards 2019).However, while Abdallah Azzam was central to developing the victim-centric notion of martyrdom in the context of the Afghan jihad, he did not advocate for actively killing oneself by weaponizing the body the way people were doing in Iran and Lebanon (Moghadam 2008, 78). As such, crediting him with the aggressive form the phenomenon would take among jihadis in the next decades is at best an oversimplification that covers up important debates within the movement.

In contrast to the Palestinian jihadi groups discussed in the previous chapter, Azzam's martyrdom ideology developed independently Iran's symbolic complex. Although Azzam – like many other Islamists across the Arab world – was initially enthusiastic about Iran's Islamic revolution, this changed when he travelled to Afghanistan. As recounted by Azzam's daughter:

> "The day that the Islamic revolution in Iran exploded, you were following the news of the jihad there, and God knows you were elated. You did not know how Shia-centric they would be, and when you realized that, you were sad and disappointed» (Hegghammer 2020, 99–100)

Azzam mentions Iran and Shi'as infrequently in his writings and when he does, it is usually not in a positive light. He hesitates to brand Iranians as apostates and recognizes the Iranian revolution as the first in the third world not to be built on capitalism or Marxism.[140] However, he was critical of Iran's treatment of Afghan refugees, which he considers very poor. He was also critical of what he saw as Iran's role in trying to 'regionalize' the conflict in Afghanistan as well as their aggressive persecution of Wahabi scholars. This must be seen in the context of Azzam associating himself with Sayyaf's mujahideen faction, Ittehad-e Islami, which was backed by Saudi Arabia and whose agenda was partially to disseminate anti-Iranian Wahhabi Islam (Maley 1998, 30–31). Others have pointed out the possibility that Azzam wanted the Soviet-Afghan war to be seen as a Sunni Islamic feat and did not want the momentum gained to be equated or linked to the Iranian Revolution (Aboul–Enein 2008). Whether or not this is the case, by the end of the 1980's, he was thoroughly disillusioned with the Iranian project (Hegghammer 2020, 100). Unlike in Palestine, there were no traces of a selective incorporation of Iranian or Shi'a symbolism.

Assaf Moghaddam credits Egyptian Islamic Jihad leader Aymenn Zawahiri with convincing Bin Laden to adopt the tactic in advance of al-Qaeda's 1998 embassy attacks in Africa (Moghadam 2009a). Gerges too emphasizes the influence Zawahiri in his writing, stating that "With the exception of Azzam, Zawahiri contributed the most to the radicalization of bin Laden and the deepening of his politicization and versatility in jihadist tactics"(Gerges 2005, 139). The same argument is made by Wright, who posited that Zawahiri overcame the prophets prohibition of suicide with clever sophistry and opened the door to universal murder (L. Wright 2006, 218–

[140] His views are scattered in different writings, many of which have been difficult to date, but see, (Stoddard and Arslān 1971; Azzam Unknown).

19).[141] Like the Palestinian jihadis and in contrast to Azzam, Zawahiri was more positively disposed towards Iran.

In the early 1980's, Zawahiri was pondering where he could set up a secure base to build and army that could wage jihad against the Egyptian government (L. Wright 2006, 44). Around this time, a fellow Muslim brother asked if he would like to tend to Afghan refugees in Afghanistan. Zawahiri traveled to Peshawar and spent four months working for the red crescent society (L. Wright 2006, 44). Upon his return to Egypt, he was rounded up as part of the mass arrests following the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981 (Wright 2006, 57-58). He spent the next three years in prison, convicted for dealing in weapons, after prison he left for Saudi Arabia, where he practiced as a doctor for a year, and possibly met bin Laden for the first time (Wright 2006, 57-58). Zawahiri picked up on his idea to establish a safe haven in 1986, when EIJ set up a presence in Peshawar (Hegghammer 2020, 264).

Zawahiri was a part of the growing movement of Islamic fundamentalists that emerged in opposition to the Ulama in the 1970's. What is peculiar about this movement is its positive view of Iran. Between 1977 and 1979, researcher Saad Eddin Ibrahim spent two years interviewing thirty-three militants inside Egyptian prisons that were arrested in government crackdowns in 1974.[142] These belonged to *al-takfir wa al-hijra* (TH), a predecessor organization to Zawahiri's EIJ, and *Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Islami* (MTI). Ibrahim spoke with the militants up until

[141] Zawahiri was responsible for breathing life into two innovations: the use of violence against Muslim regimes perceived as illegitimate and construing suicide attacks as a legitimate sacrifice to God. The EIJ was among the first Islamist groups in Egypt to take up arms against the regime. It drew inspiration and legitimacy from the well-known Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Said Qutb and his highly influential book Milestones (1964). In it, Qutb proposed that the Muslim community has fallen into a state of decline and ignorance. The root of the problem as he saw it was that God's law had been replaced by human law, made primarily in the interest of the leaders who wrote it. Qutb consequently denounced Muslim rulers as heretics through the idea of excommunication (Takfir) and advocated for violently toppling them (Hansen and Kainz 2007). EIJ was among the first groups to take Qutb's thought to heart, using his theory, especially the concept of takfir, to justify violent attacks against Sunni Muslim political leaders they perceived as unjust.

[142] The interviews stopped in February 1979 – according to the author – because Egyptian authorities grew concerned with the unrest in relation to the Iranian revolution (Ibrahim 1980, 428).

February 1979, a month after the Iranian revolution, and his observations on its effect on the people in prison is worth quoting at length:

> "The initial success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, led by the Ayatollah Khomeini, has given them a tremendous boost. At the time our interviews were stopped by the government, the morale of both groups was soaring high. When we drew their attention to the significant doctrinal differences between the Shi'is and the Sunnis, both dismissed them as inconsequential.
>
> But there were signs of other influences of the Iranian example on the strategic thinking of both groups. The use of 'popular uprisings' as a mechanism to topple the regime was more seriously looked into in late 1978 and early I979. Until then such organizational weapons were perceived by the Islamic militants as essentially 'communistic.' Our interviewing was terminated before we could establish whether either or both groups had adopted popular uprisings as a strategic weapon in their fight against the regime. It is worth noting, however, that during 1979 and I980 a host of Islamic groups began to stage sit-ins as well as campus and street demonstrations - protest activities similar to those that occurred during the early stages of the Iranian Revolution"(Ibrahim 1980, 443).

However, it is not this initial praise, but the lasting admiration that sets radical Islamists in the Egyptian environment apart. In the early 1980's, Zawahiri distributed leaflets an cassette tapes with the message of Khomeini (L. Wright 2006, 47). During their trial, the assassins of Anwar Sadat also brought up Khomeini as a source of inspiration for their act in 1981 (Shay 2005). The revolution still had had currency in 1985, when EIJ reacted to Egyptian president

Mubarak's cancelation of a pro-Sharia demonstration by demanding "an Islamic republic led by religious men, like Ayatollah Khomeini's government in Iran" (Ramazani 1986, 173).[143]

By the mid 1980's, it appears a low-flame conflict of influence over Osama bin Laden took place between Azzam and Zawahiri. When Azzam dispatched an old friend and brother in law of bin Laden, Jamal Khalifa, to him from establishing a permanent camp at Jaji, Egyptians associated with Zawahiri's EIJ began sounding him out about his politics (L. Wright 2006, 112–13). They even tried to prevent him from speaking with bin Laden after a disagreement about the definition and scope of *Kafr*, a term meaning infidel and unbelievers. Khalifa did not take orders from them and met with bin Laden anyway but the whole experience made him wonder whether bin Laden was being manipulated by the Egyptians. However, there are no trace of Zawahiri trying to convince bin Laden of the potential efficacy of suicide attacks in the 1980's. That does not surface until the early and mid-1990, after Azzam's death in 1989, the end of the Soviet invasion, and the move of both bin Laden and Zawahiri to Sudan.

5.3.4.2 Islam as a facilitator: political rapprochement facilitating diffusion

As we have seen, there were two parallel doctrines of martyrdom being developed among Sunni militants in the 1980's. A passive doctrine developed by Azzam and an activist one taking shape among members of the PIJ and IJB, inspired by Iran. An underappreciated factor in existing explanations for how the Palestinian jihadi view came to dominate al-Qaeda is the regional political context of Sunni - Shi'a reproachment in the early 1990's. This is indirectly mentioned by Moghaddam, who provides the most detailed account of the use of suicide attacks among Salafi-jihadis. (Moghadam 2008, 65). Quoting the 9/11 report, he notes that bin Laden sent a

[143] The author refers to a Washington Post article from June 29, 1985, which I was unable to retrieve. A variation of the quote ("an Iranian-style government, with a like Khomeini at its head") is however cited in a Times of India article published on the same day (Blundy and Davies 1985).

delegation to the Bekaa valley in 1993 to receive training from Hezbollah and that he was particularly interested in learning about bombs "of the kind that had been used in the SM by Hizballah against the Marine Barracks in Beirut in 1983" (Moghadam 2008, 83).

But how does someone who has spent a decade ostensibly acting as an emissary for Saudi, an anti-Iranian regime, come to seek out training from allies of Iran? Starting from 1989, there was a shift in focus from regional rivalry to clash of civilizations – something both armed communities of both Shi'as and Sunni's agreed should be a priority. This was coupled with a large degree of freedom of movement which generated a feeling of common purpose and facilitated for the exchange of ideas across different ideological divides.

A unique set of factors were in place in the early 1990's that facilitated for building a bridge across the Sunni - Shi'a divide. With Khomeini's death in 1989, Imam Ali Hussayn Khameini took the role as Iran's new supreme leader and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani became the new president (M. Burr and Collins 2003, 85). Rafsanjani was now the new man in charge of exporting the Iranian revolution. He was arguably well situated to do this. Among other things, he is commonly credited with convincing the Iranian regime to accept a controversial ceasefire in the eight-year-long war with Iraq, announced on July 28, 1988 (R. Wright 2017). Right before the announcement, Khomeini stressed that the end of the war did not mean the end of international efforts to revive the Islamic identity: "I openly announce that Iran will work with all its might for the revival of the Islamic identity of Muslims throughout the world. Our war is one of ideology and does not recognize borders or geography" (Karsh 1989, 115). However, with Rafsanjani revolutionary rhetoric was adapted to new political, strategic, and economic realities and took a more pragmatic turn (Calabrese 1994, 145).

What this meant in praxis was a change in style, subject, and emphasis. Iran now sought to build an Islamic consensus based on economics and reserved harsh criticism of other governments to the non-Islamic ones (Calabrese 1994, 161). As a consequence the country began favoring less violent paths to power in areas with economic and strategic interests, read: the Gulf, but it continued to emphasize armed struggle in countries where this was not the case, such as Sudan and Algeria (Calabrese 1994, 145). In 1990, Iran reportedly had a $120 million budget to support revolutionary Islamic groups. This increased by 20% in 1991. The end of the Iran-Iraq War and change in policy also brought about more favorable relations with its starkest critic, Saudi Arabia, which came to worry less about the challenge the revolution posed to its legitimacy as leader of the Islamic world (Maley 1998, 121).

Meanwhile in Sudan, Omar al-Bashir and Hassan al-Turabi came to power in a coup led by the National Islamic Front (L. Wright 2006). Turabi was one of the most vocal proponents of reproachment between Sunnis and Shi'a in the early 1990's, calling for both parties to bridge their differences in favor of a pan-Islamic alliance (M. Burr and Collins 2003, 79). A prolific traveler, he toured the Middle East and North Africa, getting to know prominent Islamist intellectuals, leaders, and revolutionaries with different political and religious leanings along the way.

He steadily worked his way toward making both himself and Sudan into *the* pan-Islamic meeting point. From 1990 onwards, he began meeting with Iraqi officials in Jordan and Baghdad (Hayes and Joscelyn 2005). In 1991, there are records of Turabi in both Libya and Algeria, where he attended conferences together with the Tunisian leader of al-Nahda, and met people like al-Shiqaqi, the leader of PIJ. In October 1991, Turabi participated in Teheran's response to the Madrid Peace Conference together with representatives of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In December that year, Khartoum saw the arrival of a "conspicuous in flux of Iranians",

followed by Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanja coming for the first official state visit to Sudan since 1979 (Burr and Collins 2003, 81). Perhaps the most significant Iranian delegation to arrive that December was led by Ayatollah Ardabili. He was the personal representative of Hussayn Khameini and brough with him the commander in chief of the Revolutionary Guard, Gholan Rida, and Majid Kamal, who had played an important role in the formation of Hezbollah in the early 1980's. Kamal was named chargé d'affaires and later ambassador in Iran's Khartoum embassy (M. Burr and Collins 2003, 83). In 1992 forty-six Iranian delegations arrived in Khartoum.

So, starting from 1989, there was a shift in focus from regional rivalry to clash of civilizations – something both armed communities of both Shi'as and Sunni's agreed should be a priority. This was coupled with a large degree of freedom of movement which generated a feeling of common purpose and facilitated for the exchange of ideas across different ideological divides. It was within this context that former Afghan Arabs underwent a period of introspection after their perceived failures in Afghanistan. As we will see below, their failure arguably gave them a vanguard mentality characterized by a search for new ways to excel. It just so happened that this took place in the early 90's pan-Islamic center, Sudan.

5.3.4.2.1 The Popular Arab Islamic Congresses

After Afghanistan, there was a sense of failure in the Afghan Arab movement because they had been unable to capture the state and turn it into a Islamic regime (Pedahzur 2006, 124). Many foreign fighters left for their respective countries, but many were no longer welcome by their home governments. Some of them, including Osama bin Laden, were invited to set up permanent residence in Sudan and arrived in July 1991 (Burr and Collins 2003, 68). Here bin Laden became acquainted with Turabi. The relationship between him and Turabi is

characterized by conflicting accounts. Some have described it as friendly, with Turabi taking on the roles of mentor, friend, and host (Hayes and Joscelyn 2005). According to Wright, however, Bin Laden did not particularly care for Turabi, in fact he is described to have distrusted and even hated him (L. Wright 2006, 174). Turabi spoke of his relationship with Osama bin Laden as entirely cordial,

> "I met bin Laden in this chair once. I never invited him for dinner here. It was only to chat, to visit for a while. And I then visited his home, but it wasn't for dinner of lunch or anything. He wasn't present in public life – not in the mosque and not in the papers. He was just investing here (…) We spoke a little bit about his country, about Saudi Arabia, and a little bit about investing" (Bergen 2006, 122).

Turabi's assistant provided a bit more detail a year later, saying,

> "Osama bin Laden came to the Sudan offering his help making roads and they assigned him to make a road north of Khartoum. And he began to make canals and cultivating soil, and sunflower oil. It was very successful. I remembered he showed us [a sunflower] it was thirty centimeters, a very big one. In this way we knew him for the first time. (…) At that time Dr. Turabi and Osama were friends. We used to sit together and were chatting about his agricultural schemes and how he made the roads and the kind of stones [he used]. (Bergen 2006, 124)

As is well known by now, roads, geology, and sunflowers were not the only topics discussed in Sudan in the early 1990's. Regardless of how they felt about each other, testimonies by al-Qaeda members and the multiple lawsuits against Sudan in the aftermath of the embassy bombings of

1998, the US Cole bombing of 2000, and the World Trade Center bombing in 2001, suggests they downplayed both the scope and depth of their relationship.

According to Wright, one of the redeeming factors of Turabi in the eyes of bin Laden was his thoughts on a pan-Islamic front. As such, it is safe to assume that if bin Laden shared Azzam's disregard for Iran, this was superseded by practical and pragmatic considerations. There were other people inside the network of bin Laden who held the same views. In addition to Zawahiri, another such influence was Sudanese Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, who would eventually be part of the founding members of al-Qaeda. He has been described as another key advocate "for Sunni and Shi'a Muslims to put aside age-old rivalries and join forces against the United States and Israel, arguing repeatedly that an alliance would be "Islamically proper"" (Grunwald 1998).

The opportunity to act on these beliefs came in 1991, when Turabi convened a conference in Khartoum called Popular Arab and Islamic Congress (PAIC). It lasted from April 25-28 and he invited bin Laden and two hundred other delegates (Central Intelligence Agency 1997a; Plaintiffs v. The Republic of The Sudan 2020). This was to be the first of three congresses based on the idea of uniting revolutionary factions across the Muslim world, allowing enemies to meet and differences to be overcome. In a statement for an article in the New York Times in 1992, it was precisely the diversity of actors, from "prominent Shi'a leaders" to "mainstream leftist Arab nationalist figures" that was emphasized (J. Miller 1992). The first congress convened on the issue of opposing U.S. involvement in the Gulf War and U.S. presence of Saudi soil (Hayes and Joscelyn 2005). It is not easy to reconstruct exactly who attended this conference, but the below table attempts to do so (J. M. Burr 2009, 104–5).[144]

[144] Zawahiri was present at PAIC 1, but little is known of his activities while there. Although he set up a base in Sudan in 1991, he spent most of his time in Yemen until 1993.

Table 7 List of participant groups at PAIC I from April 25-28, 1991

Location	**Attendee**	**Organization**
Afghanistan	Gulbuddin Hekmatyar	Hazb-i Islami
Afghanistan	Unknown	Jamiat-i Islami
Afghanistan	Abdul Rasul Sayyaf	Intehar-i Islami
Albania	Unknown	unknown
Algeria	Abbasi Madani, others	Islamic Salvation Front
Burma*	Abd al-Quddus	Arakan Liberation Front
Bahrain	Unknown	Unknown
Bosnia	Unknown	Unknown
Canada	Unknown	Unknown
Egypt	Ibrahim Shukri	Muslim Brotherhood
Egypt	Ayman al-Zawahiri	Egyptian Islamic Jihad
Egypt	commanders	al-Gamaa al-Islamiya
Eritrea	Unknown	Eritra Islamic Jihad
Ethiopia	Unknown	Oromo Liberation Front
Indonesia	Unknown	unknown
Iran	Unknown	Iran Embassy
Iraq	Saad al-Tiklriti	Government
Iraq	?	Trade Union Delegation
Jordan	Delegation	Muslim Brotherhood
Lebanon	Delegation	Muslim Brotherhood
Lebanon	Imad Mughniyah	Hezbollah
Libya	Unknown	Government
Malaysia	Unknown	unknown
Morocco	Delegation	unknown
Pakistan	Unknown	Jama'at-i Islami
Pak/Kashmir	Mubarak Ali Shah Jilani	Hizb al-Mujahideen
Palestine	Nayif Hawatma	DFLP
Palestine	George Habash	PFLP

Palestine	Yassir Arafat	PLO
Palestine	Ibrahim Ghousha	Popular Struggle Front
Palestine	Fathi al-Shiqaqi	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
Palestine	Jabbar Amar	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
Palestine	Munir Said	Hamas
Palestine	Khalid Mishaal	Hamas
Palestine	Mounir Shafiq	Former Islamic Jihad Brigades
Philippines*	Abdurajak Janjalani	Abu Sayyaf
Philippines	Muhammad Jamil Khalifa	Abu Sayyaf
Saudi Arabia	Osama bin Laden	Islamic Salvation Foundation
Somalia	Ali Mahdi	unknown
Sudan	Turabi, Sanoussi	PAIC
Syria	Represetatives	Ikhwan in exile
Tunisia	Rachid Ghannouchi	al-nahda
United States	Unknown	unknown
United Kingdom	Daud Musa Pidcock	Islamic Party of U.K.
United Kingdom	Abdel Bari Atwan	al-Quds al-Arabi
Yemen	Abdul Majid-alzidani	al-Islah
?	Mohamed Issa el-Nasrawy	unknown

There were two other congresses in Khartoum in the four years to come: PAIC II took place in 1993 and PAIC III in 1995 (J. M. Burr 2009).[145] Participants varied from year to year, and the agenda was shaped by current events concerning the pan-Islamic community and issues of countering western aggression.[146]

[145] For a detailed list of participants in each congress see appendix 1 for this chapter

[146] Turabi's activities were strangely similar to al-Afghani's efforts to make Constantinople into a place of reconciliation between the Persians and the Ottomans almost exactly a century earlier. Upon accepting an invitation from sultan Abdülhamid II in 1882, he hoped to organize a general conference for Islamic leaders of the Ottoman empire, Persia, and Afghanistan and "decide questions of common concern and declare jihad against western aggression" (Hourani 1983, 115–16). In this, Turabi was arguably more successful, as Afghani's vision for a Constantinople conference was ultimately unrealized due to political differences with the Sultan and possibly palace intrigues (Landau 1994, 20). The Sultan arguably saw al-Afghani as a means of extending his

5.3.4.2.2 The Tripartite Front

As noted in a research note from 2006 on PAIC and the relationship between Turabi and bin Laden, it "implies associated relationships, but in the absence of open disclosure by the principals involved, it is impossible in some cases to confirm details let alone evaluate influence" (M. Taylor and Elbushra 2006, 456). However, since 2006, some more information has become available, and although the documentary sources remain scant it is possible to get an idea of how bin Laden's view of suicide attacks changed through exposure to Iran and Hezbollah. According to Burr, Mughniyah and bin Laden were reported to have met at PAIC I in 1991 (J. M. Burr 2009, 356). While not specifying any occasion, two CIA information reports from 1997 partially decalcified in 2012, state that representatives of Sudan, Iran, met with bin Laden in 1991 and agreed to open a tripartite front against the U.S.:

> "Circa 1991, Sudanese national Islamic front (NIF) […] and Iran had common anti-imperialist objectives and, as such, should coordinate their activities […] Shia and Sunni Islamists might effectively coordinate their activities and form a tripartite front against their common enemies. The front would consist of the NIF, Iran and Usama (bin Laden)'s Islamic Army. […] Eventually an agreement was reached to collaborate politically and militarily. The primary goal of this collaboration was to confront Israel and the United States while the secondary goal was to undermine Arab regimes which supported Israel and the United States. […] After the agreement was reached […] Experience from Hizballah and Iran should be transferred to new nations/extremist groups who lack this expertise. This would then allow Islamic Army members to gain

own pan-Islamic propaganda into the shi'a communities (Hourani 1983, 116). However, ideological and political differences with regards to constitutionalism and reform, as well as palace schemers whispering to the Sultan about Afghani's ambitions arguably came in the way Landau 1994, 20).

> the necessary experience in terrorist operations. […]"(Central Intelligence Agency 1997b)

The second information report is almost entirely redacted, but reads:

> "Shortly after the tripartite agreement was reached […] operatives traveled to southern Lebanon to receive training in explosives from Hizballah […] Iran also began training individuals" (Central Intelligence Agency 1997a).

While these documents are partial, the relationship is also corroborated by the well-known testimony of an al-Qaeda member named Ali Mohammed, implicated in the 1998 embassy bombings:

> "THE DEFENDANT: (…) I was aware of certain contacts between al Qaeda and al Jihad organization, on one side, and Iran and Hezbollah on the other side. I arranged security for a meeting in the Sudan between Mughaniyah, Hezbollah's chief, and Bin Laden. Hezbollah provided explosives training for al Qaeda and al Jihad. Iran supplied Egyptian Jihad with weapons. Iran also used Hezbollah to supply explosives that were disguised to look like rocks. (…)
> THE DEFENDANT: …And the objective of all this, just to attack any Western target in the Middle East, to force the government of the Western countries just to pull out from the Middle East, not interfere in the
> THE COURT: And to achieve that objective, did the conspiracy include killing nationals of the United States?

> THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. Based on the marine explosion in Beirut in 1984[147] and the American pull-out from Beirut, they will be the same method, to force the United States to pull out from Saudi Arabia" (Leonard 2000, 30).

According to the 9/11 report, there were at least two al-Qaeda field trips to Lebanon, one shortly after the tripartite agreement and one in 1993 (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States 2004). The finer details of their meetings will remain unknown, but what is interesting for this purpose is the pan-Islamic participation and the fact that bin Laden was interested in learning from Iran.

In August 1993, Zawahiri initiated a plot from his base in Sudan. In an attempt to assassinate the Egyptian interior minister Hasan al-Alfi, the group dispatched an operative on a bomb-laden motorcycle with the order to detonate next to the minister's car (Moghadam 2008, 79).[148] The assassination was unsuccessful, but suicide attacks had entered the group's tactical catalogue and Zawahiri became one of its strongest proponents. With the expulsion of EIJ from Egypt in 1989, Zawahiri was to become the first jihadi with a transnational outlook who believed in its tactical and strategic efficacy (L. Wright 2006). His attack in 1993 and another in 1995 were both controversial within the Salafi-jihadi community and Zawahiri still had to defend the decision to employ the tactic (L. Wright 2006).

The 1993 attack by the EIJ was criticized by significant parts of the network in Sudan and bin Laden personally condemned another suicide attack by the group against an embassy in Pakistan. This is likely when Zawahiri's sophistry comes to play an important role, as well as

[147] The defendant is misremembering the date, it occurred in October 1983.
[148] According to the stanford center for security and international cooperation, this marks the first time Sunni militants utilized a suicide bomb. https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/egyptian-islamic-jihad

the repeated use by Palestinian jihadi groups. While the subject of suicidal attacks can be found among some medieval writers, the contemporary discussion has largely been generated on an ad hoc basis. The most cited defense of the tactic is the 1997 book *al-'Amaliyyat al-istishhadiyya fi almizanal-fiqhi* (Martyrdom Operations in the Legal Balance), written by Nawwaf al-Takruri. By drawing his conclusions based on historical and legal material that speak in favor of individuals fighting until death, he presents a theological defense of the contemporary praxis (Cook 2007, 151-152). Various Fatwas, some eventually written by individuals associated with al-Qaeda, have since been published in defense of the tactic (Cook 2007, 151-152). With the justification production by ideologues, adoption in 1998 and the success of 9/11, the tactic became more than a practical way for al-Qaeda to kill a lot of people, it became a form of symbolic currency largely wiped of its Shi'a origins.

As discussed, Palestinian jihadi groups and the EIJ were moved by Khomeini a decade earlier because the Islamic revolution was fundamentally a national project. During the 1980's these groups saw their projects as similar to Iran's revolution, and in the effort to achieve it they made efforts to align their struggle both rhetorically and practically. This made them open to imitate Hezbollah and drawing on the justification created during the Basij in Iran. It was different for bin Laden and the other foreign fighters who had joined him. The example of Iran and Hezbollah was largely irrelevant until he got an interest in conducting mass-casualty attacks. The Hezbollah trail was not the only avenue pursued to his end: it was around the same time (1993) members of the network around bin Laden, notably Salim, attempted to obtain enriched uranium for the purpose of developing nuclear weapons (Grunwald 1998; United States of America v. Usama bin Laden, et. al. Day 72 2001).

With an interest in mass casualty attacks and an opportunity to learn from Hezbollah due to the political environment being conducive to the establishment of a tripartite Sunni-Shi'ia

alliance, circumstances aligned to make suicide attacks an interesting option. Like the Taliban in the 2000's the al-Qaeda leadership[149] was not moved by value expressive influence of the kind inspiring Egyptians and Palestinians in the 80's. The fact that it took several years before bin Laden would condone the use of the tactic despite having the expertise and organizational capacity to carry speaks to this. However, bin Laden, like Dadullah after him, were eventually sufficiently convinced to give the tactic a try.

5.4 Discussion

During the 1980's, Afghan mujahideen did not adopt suicide attacks nor justify it as part of their developing ethos of martyrdom. Several organizations in the movement had tactical incentives, ability, and opportunity from the mid-1980's onwards, but cultural and normative sensibilities spoke against adoption. While this was also the case in Palestine, the Iranian revolution and Hezbollah's attack against the marine barracks did not similarly inspire mujahideen to imitate suicide attacks in the face of uncertain returns. This chapter has argued that the reason the mujahideen remained unmoved was that neither Iran nor Hezbollah were considered ideal-prototypical out groups. As a consequence, their achievements did not trigger admiration. The mujahideen saw themselves as highly competent fighters, were skeptical to outside advice, and considered Iran more of an enemy than an idealized self-image.

In this sense, the 1980's are in line with expectations from the theory chapter, that: Revolutionaries that do not admire the reference group associated with an act are unwilling to imitate in the face of uncertain tactical and strategic returns. If we return to the group typology based on different types of influence, the mujahideen were conservatives. Their low similarity with Iran meant that its actions did not exert any utilitarian influence. Their self-perception of

[149] Excluding Zawahiri.

high competence means that Iran also did not exert any value expressive or informational influence. In other words, rejection was highly likely.

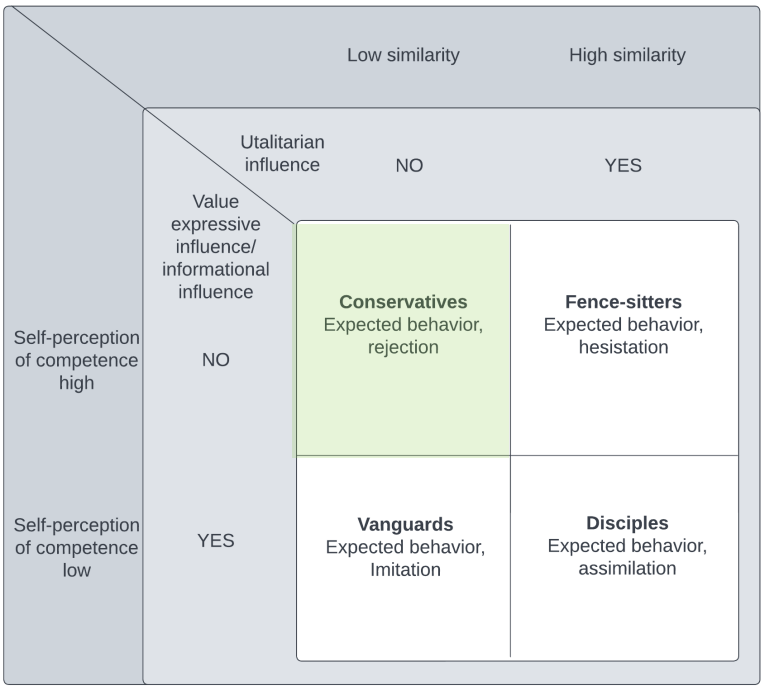


Figure 9 Afghan mujahideen in the influence typology

However, this being the case, what changed by the 2000's? It was not the characteristics of the tactic nor so much the strength of the occupying adversary, it is hard to make the case that suicide attacks were any better or worse idea in the 2000's than it was in the 1980's. The most important thing that changed was the identity of the suicide attack emissary: it altered from Iran to al-Qaeda during a period of pan-Islamic rapprochement in the 1990's. Secondly, the Arabs Afghans who formed the nucleus of al-Qaeda had come to be held in higher esteem.

Like the mujahideen of the 1980's, the Mullah Omar's Taliban fits best in the conservative category. The group still regarded itself as embedded in an Afghan warrior tradition, and

although al-Qaeda was held in higher esteem than the Afghan Arabs twenty years earlier they were not regarded as superior. However, because al-Qaeda repeatedly carried out suicide attacks in Afghanistan with an ideologically and religiously resonant justification, some individuals within the Taliban (Mullah Dadullah) became vanguards. Considering al-Qaeda an ideal-prototypical out group, he was convinced to imitate despite cultural and normative constraints. As a consequence of the adoption by this vanguard fringe inside the Taliban, the group's mainstream as well as other groups in Afghanistan were moved to the fence. This arguably mirrored the dynamic that had taken place inside al-Qaeda ten years prior, when bin Laden came to regard Hezbollah as an ideal out-group in the realm of mass-casualty attacks.

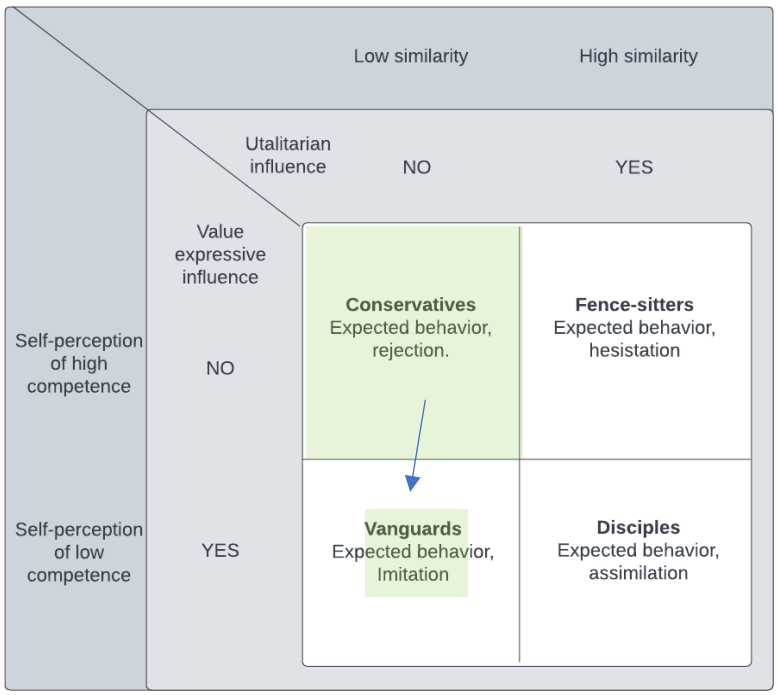


Figure 10 The Taliban and Mullah Dadullah in the influence typology

Unlike the PIJ and IJB in Palestine and EIJ Egypt, it would be a mistake to say that the Afghan mujahideen were *inspired* to use suicide attacks. Even after 9/11, parties in Afghanistan were still very much skeptical of what they saw as a foreign, cowardly, and sinful tactic, despite being on friendly terms with al-Qaeda (Williams 2007). Imitation was not triggered by example alone, it appears to have taken active convincing and demonstrations of local utility by al-Qaeda for

some Taliban mid-level commanders to argue in favor of adopting. The difference in ease of persuasion likely lies in the asymmetry between the model and the onlooker.

In 1979, Palestinian and Egyptian groups regarded Iran as something extraordinary. They saw it achieve a feat they themselves sought to do but had been unable to realize. In the 2000's, the power asymmetry between al-Qaeda and the Taliban was not equally pronounced, but the members of the al-Qaeda were held in much higher esteem than the Afghan Arabs twenty years earlier. This indicates that the more equal a group consider a potential model, the more that model has to work in order to convince the person it is trying to influence to adopt its decision on a particular issue.

The events of 2000's arguably goes against the hypothesis that revolutionaries that do not admire the reference group associated with an act will be unwilling to adopt in the face of uncertain returns. As mentioned, it would be an exaggeration to say that the Taliban admired al-Qaeda. However, it arguably indicates it is sometimes sufficient for lower lever commanders to feel admiration for a praxis to be adopted. Here, the fact that the Taliban was a decentralized movement which devolved a great deal of liberty to individual commanders likely comes into play. Had Mullah Omar had a centralized command, his views might have been more uniformly dominant in the movement. Regardless, like Palestine, Afghanistan is an interesting case where the tactic was adopted despite a lack of cultural resonance and norm-congruence, not because of a pre-existing hospitable environment.

6 Conservatives in Northern Ireland

This chapter takes a step back from the Middle East, exploring why suicide attacks were not adopted in Northern Ireland. It is well known that those who volunteered for the Republican cause were presented with two outcomes – death or prison. This certainty could be drawn from years of experience with armed struggle, from the Border Campaign of the 1950's, to the civil war in the 1920's, the Easter Rising in 1916, back to the 19th century Fenian revolts. Each campaign produced heroes and martyrs, many of whom remain alive in stories, songs, and murals throughout Northern Ireland until this day. "Martyrdom motivates people and inspires people. It makes people sit up, you know and shows the passion that this person or this movement has," reflected a former Republican prisoner. "It puts fear in the opponents when they see [that] 'this is what we are up against, these people are prepared to sacrifice their lives for their cause'" (NI8 2021).

Yet, while martyrdom manifested in hunger strikes and in high-risk operations, Republican organizations never used suicide bombings. What suggest suicide attacks might have been an attractive option? The conflict in Northern Ireland shared many characteristics with contexts where suicide attacks have been employed. In addition to having a culture of martyrdom, the Republican groups fighting against the English were facing a materially and numerically superior military adversary. They also held a preference for targeting police, military, and government targets. Yet, like the Afghan mujahideen of the Soviet invasion discussed in the previous chapter, they remained immune to suicide attack's tactical and strategic appeal.

Much like the Afghan mujahideen, the republican organizations remained a conservative organization throughout the Troubles. They did not consider examples of struggles from the Middle East as relevant to their own experience. Having waged a campaign against the British

spanning nearly a century, they also did not consider the knowledge generated in those conflict contexts as superior to their own. Republicans, in contrast to the Palestinians, saw themselves as already capable of achieving Hezbollah's feat by using tools already in their repertoire. Unlike in Afghanistan, where the appeal of suicide attack changed with the change in reference group from Iran to al-Qaeda, no such switch affected the desire in Northern Ireland.

This chapter begins by looking at the Irish national liberation struggle. It then goes through the variables used to predict adoption in the literature, focusing on the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). As in Palestine and Afghanistan, Republicans had tactical incentives, ability, and opportunity, but no cultural or normative grounding that could grant them certainty on how suicide attacks would be received. In contrast to the groups in the previous chapters, however, the PIRA remained conservative throughout its lifespan. Its saw itself has highly competent and none of the actors that promoted suicide attacks were seen as relevant to the Republican experience. Therefore, neither value expressive, utilitarian, or informational influence inspired the PIRA to challenge the prevailing norms and test suicide attacks potential merits.

As there is no adoption case to center around, the third section discusses the various explanations provided by the people of the movement for why suicide attacks were never an attractive option. These center around norms, culture, and history, underscoring the degree to which the tactic was seen as incompatible with the republican tradition of warfare. However, looking back at the annals of republican history, external influence on violent repertoires is not unique to the Middle East. In fact, the PIRA's weapon of choice, the improvised explosive device, was once regarded with a similar skepticism as suicide attacks. Debates on dynamite in the 19th century Ireland are reminiscent of debates about suicide attacks a century later. However, skirmishing and dynamite arguably entered the Northern Irish environment the same way suicide attacks entered the Afghani one, through a rogue insider.

6.1 The Irish National Liberation struggle

In 1918, Irish politician Eamon de Valera wrote, "England rules in Ireland by military force alone – for seven centuries and a half she has held it as Germany holds Belgium today by the right of the sword" (Devoy, O'Brien, and Ryan 1948a, 1:522). Irish nationalism of this sort, seeing Ireland and England engaged in a centuries long David and Goliath style stand-off, emerged around the end of the 18th century (Kee 2000, 6). In 1800, an English Act of Union decreed that Ireland was to become an integral part of the United Kingdom. A year later, the Irish Parliament ceased to exist and Westminster began to exercise direct rule over the territory (Nic Craith 2002, 9). The English had exercised control over Irish soil in the past, but it had not sparked a contest between two nations as much as conflicts between different forms of government with self-interested Gaelic tribes and Englishmen finding themselves on both sides depending on circumstances (Kee 2000, 11).

The Act of Union left large parts of the Irish population dissatisfied – especially the Catholic community. The Catholics saw themselves as the original Irish and traced their origin to the Gael people which first came onto the island around 300 BC.[150] The other large community in Ireland at the time were protestants of predominantly of English and Scottish descent. They came to Ireland to work on plantations established in the early 17th century under the reign of King James I. Under James' I regime, Gaelic chiefs who did not recognize the sovereignty of the English monarchy or who resisted the Tudor administration were dispossessed of their land. After forcing Irish chiefs to flee, the English would confiscate the land and send Protestants of English or Scottish descent to tend to it (Kee 2000, 12). This disproportionally happened in the

[150] It is a common nationalist trope to trace the beginning of the Irish to the invasion of the Gaels around 300BC. The Gaels, under the leadership of High King Brian Boru, were defeated by invading Norsemen at Clontarf in 1014. In the century following the fall of King Boru, several people would cross into Ireland from England. Most of them were not actually English, but Norman adventurers speaking Norman French (Kee 2000, 9).

north of Ireland, in the province of Ulster, making it a more religiously diverse area than provinces further south. The settler policy created two communities in the north, one Catholic community that feelt alienated and exploited by the English and one Protestant community that identified more as English than Irish.

From the 1870's, Irish nationalists in the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) demanded Home Rule, or self-government, from Britain. Other nationalist organizations opposed the idea and demanded full Irish independence, some as a republic and some as independent under the crown (Kee 2000, 497). Meanwhile, the predominantly Protestant population in the north wanted to exclude the province of Ulster from any prospective home rule arrangement and remain English (Kee 2000, 477). In 1912, the Home Rule bill began to move through parliament under IPP's leader John Redmond, and it was unclear whether or not Ulster would be able to prevent inclusion (Gwynn 1932, 248–51). To fight it, the Ulster Union Council created the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) in 1913, with the aim of mobilizing 100, 000 men to resist devolution of power – violently if necessary (Kee 2000, 478).[151] The IPP had misgivings about dividing Ireland in the manner advocated by Protestants in Ulster. In a public address in 1913, Redmon proclaimed that "Irish Nationalists can never be assenting parties to the mutilation of the Irish Nation; Ireland is a unit. (…) The two-nation theory is to us an abomination and a blasphemy" (Gwynn 1932, 232). At the same time both the IPP and the population in the south grew increasingly concerned about the Catholics in the north who now faced an armed population of Protestants (Gwynn 1932, 231).[152]

[151] They succeeded at mobilizing this number by March 1914. Importing arms and drilling was not illegal at this time, so the force was able to arm large parts of its force, although it did face a shortage of rifles (Kee 2000, 485). It also had support from a British movement for the support of Ulster, which helped the movement by recruiting British Army reserve officers to take command of some UVF regiments (Kee 2000, 485).

[152] Adding to the south's concern, the soldiers of the British Army stationed in Ulster to resist the UVF were asked by their superiors whether they would agree to serve if given orders to attack or whether they would rather be dismissed from service (Kee 2000, 488). The soldiers chose to be dismissed, and the event – which took place in March 1914, incidentally the same month UVF reached 100, 000 volunteers – became known as 'The Mutiny at

Not long after the creation of the UVF, Catholic nationalists headed by politician and scholar Eoin MacNeill formed an organization called the Irish Volunteers to pursue full independence. The organization functioned as an umbrella for several older groups that had been engaged in armed struggle throughout the 19th century, including the Irish Republican Brotherhood (1858), the Gaelic League (1894), and Sinn Fein (1905). In 1916 Irish nationalists in Dublin, belonging primarily to the Irish Republican Brotherhood, began an insurrection to end British rule. The rebels issued the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, which asserted Ireland's independence. The British response was severe, including executing leaders and widespread arrests. The rebellion, which became known as the Easter Rising, ended within a week but shocked the Irish population and galvanized support for Sinn Fein and the volunteers.

The extent to which the rising rallied the Irish masses around the nationalist cause could be seen in the December 1918 general election, when Sinn Fein received a solid majority. The party proceeded to form a break-away government (Dáil Éireann)[153] and shortly thereafter proclaimed Irish independence. This ignited the Irish Civil War. To fight, the Dáli mobilized an army from the ranks of the volunteer force established in 1913, naming it the Irish Republican Army.[154] The war resulted in a country divided: the majority of counties, 26 of 32, became part of the new 'Irish Free State', while the six northern counties of the Ulster province (Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyron) opted to stay within the U.K. (Morland 2014, 83). Reflecting the Home Rule debate, the protestants of Ulster argued that the border between the U.K. and Ireland should not be based on the geographic reality of two

the Currah'. This not only bolstered the confidence of Ulster but indicated to the Irish nationalists that they could not expect protection or support from the English.

[153] Translates to the Asembly of Ireland but is also known as the First Dáli and as the Revolutionary Dáli.

[154] These days, this army is known as the 'old' Irish Republican Army, or the Old IRA. With the start of WWI, the volunteer force split between those who believed the Irish should support the British in the war and those who believed they should be a standalone force remaining in Ireland. While the former constituted the early core of the Irish Republican Army, many in the latter camp came to join the IRA upon their return from the war.

island but the demographic reality and will of the people (Morland 2014, 86).[155] The Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 was based on this view and created political entities that separated the majority catholic community in the south from the majority protestant community in the north. The arrangement left a Catholic minority in the north under U.K. rule – many of whom would have preferred an independent republic. This left Ireland divided, something many in the South considered unacceptable, leading them to take an anti-treaty stance.

The IRA continued activities after the war, fueled by anti-treaty Catholics in both Ireland and Northern Ireland who carried out acts of sabotage in Ulster and on the English mainland. These attacks were mainly carried out by small cells who took orders from the organization's leadership based in the south. The republican cause did not function as a platform for broad mobilization again until the late 1960's, with the start of the Troubles (Horgan and Taylor 1997).

During the 1950's, the IRA struggled with both membership and moral. In 1956, the IRA carried out a guerrilla campaign targeting security and military installations in the Northern Irish border areas of Fermanagh, Tyrone, and Armagh (Moloney 2007, 50). The attacks triggered government countermeasures but failed to mobilize the anticipated popular support. The majority of the Northern Irish Catholic population simply ignored the call to arms (Moloney 2007, 50). The campaign lasted until 1962, but after seven years and twelve killed (six unionists and six IRA men) the IRA leadership officially acknowledges defeat, pointing to nationalist indifference as central to their decision.

[155] However, it should be noted that they are unambiguously an ethnic group, is not a homogenous one. It is also characterized by different protestant identities (predominantly Presbyterians and Episcopalians), class cleavages, and different combinations of Irish and British national identities (Morland 2014, 88).

The failure of the campaign triggered a period of introspection and restructuring in the IRA. Some in the organization argued for a shift in emphasis towards socialism and other forms of collective action, rather than the military operations that had characterized the movement (Bell 1998, 340). This faction was headed by Cathal Goulding, who argued that the failure of the Border Campaign illustrated that the IRA could not achieve its aims through the use of arms alone (Hanley and Millar 2010, 28). To achieve liberation, Goulding argued, the organization needed to re-focus on democratization, mobilization, and class struggle.

More than simply a reaction to military defeat, the turn to socialism was also inspired by the civil rights movement that grew out of the United States a in the 1950's. This had – quite independently of republicanism and the IRA – inspired Catholics in Northern Ireland to seek equal rights in the face of Unionist misrule (Hanley and Millar 2010, 88; Ó Dochartaigh 1997, 42). In the 1960's, people in Derry and elsewhere charged headlong into social activism, protesting unequal access to jobs, unequal voting rights, and poor housing conditions (Ó Dochartaigh 1997, 43). These demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience gradually gained momentum and became more organized with the establishment of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) in Belfast in 1967 (Bell 1998, 350).[156]

Broad mobilization in Derry and elsewhere throughout the 1960's reinforced the view among left-leaning members in the IRA leadership that there was power in in the streets (Bell 1998, 361). The trend was further augmented as more orthodox IRA old-timers were replaced by new recruits. Several came to the organization through the civil rights movement, bringing with

[156] While not an orchestrating force, members of both the IRA and Sinn Fein were ordered to attend the meetings leading up to the establishment of NICRA. The leadership in Dublin saw it as congruent with its new ambition of creating an army of the working class (Hanley and Millar 2010, 85; Ó Dochartaigh 1997, 43). Billy Mcmillen, a prominent Sinn Fein member, was even a part of a three-person subcommittee drawing up the constitution of the organization (Hanley and Millar 2010, 85). Mcmillen quickly resigned as his involvement would have been an easy target for British and Unionist critics, but members from both the IRA and Sinn Fein remained very active in the protests organized by the association (Hanley and Millar 2010, 85).

them a belief in the efficacy of non-violent confrontation and political action. As a consequence, members increasingly engaged in social action and took on new types of targets, addressing socio-economic issues rather than confronting the British occupation militarily (Bell 1998, 350).[157] The relationship between the civil rights movement and the IRA is complex, but Bell argues that during this time, the civil rights movement likely had far more influence on the IRA than the reverse (Bell 1998, 358). However, these new forms of action and targets were controversial among those who saw militancy as the historical core of the IRA (Hanley and Millar 2010). The rising tensions within the organization in the 60's became insurmountable in 1969. At this point, the IRA split into two factions: the socialist oriented Official IRA (OIRA), headed by Cathal Goulding, and the more traditional Provisional IRA (PIRA), headed by an Army Council.

With confrontations between unionists and republicans becoming increasingly frequent during peaceful demonstrations towards the 1970's, the Provisional army council determined that the key priority of the organization going forward should be the defense of republican areas (Macstiofain 1975, 145). Provisional Army Council member and Chief of Staff Sean McStofain writes that they envisioned a gradual transition into a strategy of combined defense and retaliation against loyalist and British forces, where northern units would receive material, financial and training assistance from the south (Macstiofain 1975, 146). However, the arms situation was less than ideal and so the organization was not really equipped to go ahead with the plan (Macstiofain 1975, 147).

[157] The role of the IRA in the early civil rights movement should not be over-emphasized, a small group of young left-wing republicans enthusiastically supported the campaign. This was particularly the case in Derry, where the IRA saw a modest surge of recruits in the early and mid-60's. These young recruits established a branch of Fianna Eireann in 1963, the Republican scouting movements which was considered a gateway to the IRA, and directed their energies towards housing activism rather than military activities (Ó Dochartaigh 1997, 42). In 1968 the group even blew up a lobster boat at the center of a fishing dispute to "protect the Irish shell-fishing industry against exploitation by foreign interests" (Bell 1998, 350).

The opportunity to shift to a more offensive stance came with the introduction of internment in 1971, which gave a significant boost to the PIRA's personnel strength and weapons arsenal. "The value of internment was most striking of all in its effect on the IRAs personnel strength." Wrote Macstiofain, "When everybody had been accounted for in our own check out of all units and staffs, we knew that only fifty-six members of the Provisional IRA had been interned. Adding the three volunteers killed in action the total depletion was fifty-nine. Against this, during the following weeks the intake of new members was so great that it caused serious difficulties in several areas. They had real problems getting this influx properly integrated into the movement and putting the new volunteers to work. And as Derry people know, there was nothing for it there but to open a waiting list" (Macstiofain 1975, 193).

In the early seventies, the both the OIRA and the PIRA thought victory was close at hand. With Irish unification on the horizon, the PIRA decided that they would 'escalate, escalate, and escalate' until the British agreed to go (O'Brien 1999, 119). This is evident from attack statistics from the period (S. Smith 2006):

Table 8 Attack statistics of the Troubles from 1969 to 1993

Year	Civilians	Army	UDR/RIP	RUC	Total Security Forces	Total All	% Security forces
1969	12	0	0	1	1	13	7.7
1970	23	0	0	2	2	25	8
1971	115	43	5	11	59	174	33.9
1972	322	103	26	17	146	468	31.2
1973	171	58	8	13	79	250	31.6
1974	166	28	7	15	50	216	23.1

1975	216	14	6	11	31	247	12.5
1976	245	14	15	23	52	297	17.5
1977	69	15	14	14	43	112	38.4
1978	50	14	7	10	31	81	38.3
1979	51	38	10	14	62	113	54.9
1980	50	8	8	9	25	75	33.3
1981	57	10	13	21	44	101	43.6
1982	57	21	7	12	40	97	41.2
1983	44	5	10	18	33	77	42.8
1984	36	9	10	9	28	64	43.75
1985	25	22	4	23	29	54	53.7
1986	37	4	8	12	24	61	39.3
1987	66	3	8	16	27	93	29
1988	54	22	12	6	40	95	42.1
1989	41	12	2	9	23	64	35.9
1990	49	7	8	12	27	76	35.5
1991	76	5	8	6	19	95	20
1992	75	3	3	4	10	85	11.8
1993	36	4	2	4	10	46	21.7

The years between 1972-76 became the deadliest years of the conflict, with high proportions of civilian casualties and new explosive innovations (S. Smith 2006, 64–65). The period also saw several mistakes made by the British Army, chief among them the events of Bloody Sunday on January 30, 1972, where thirteen participants in a NICRA civil rights march in Derry were killed. Adams recalls,

> "The day of the funerals in Derry was a day of national mourning. In Dublin three days of marches and riots climaxed in the burning of the British Embassy, in front of a crowd

> of 30,000. In the North riots, barricades and strikes followed bloody Sunday; 50,000 people joined a NICRA march in Newry. At the British Parliament at Westminster, Bernadette Devlin attacked Home Secretary Maudling, hitting him in the face. Money, guns, and recruits flooded into the IRA. In the six or seven months after the internment swoops, the armed struggle was waged with greater intensity than ever and with major support and tolerance from the nationalist community" (Adams 2017, 181).

Despite the unprecedented mobilization and better access to arms, the anticipated swift victory did not materialize.

In 1977, the organization therefore shifted its strategy towards a doctrine called 'The Long War.' In his autobiography, leader of the PIRA political wing Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams, described the ambition underlying the shift in the following way, "We wanted to go back to our radical republican roots, as we saw it, and we wanted to popularize the base of the struggle. For its part there was a need also for the IRA to fight in a more cohesive way and in a manner which encouraged the development and building of popular struggle on a thirty-two-county basis" (Adams 2017, 265). The same year, the group published an updated version of its 1956 pamphlet the green book, where it outlined its 5-point strategy:

> "1. A War of attrition against enemy personnel which is aimed at causing as many casualties and deaths as possible so as to create a demand from their people at home for their withdrawal.
>
> 2. A bombing campaign aimed at making the enemy's financial interest in our country unprofitable while at the same time curbing long term financial investment in our country.
>
> 3. To make the Six Counties as at present and for the past several years ungovernable except by colonial military rule.

4. To sustain the war and gain support for its end by National and International propaganda and publicity campaigns.

5. By defending the war of liberation by punishing criminals, collaborators and informers" (The Irish Republican Army 1977).

The aim was not to drive the British army out by military might, but to break the political will of the British government to remain in the country by attacking military and economic targets (O'Doherty 1998, 110). This strategy prevailed until the end of the campaign in the late 1990's.

6.2 Why were suicide attacks not adopted in Northern Ireland in the 1980's?

The PIRA did not have the tactical incentives for suicide attacks throughout their struggle. The optimism of the early 1970's meant that the organization was not really looking for new ways of fighting – cadre were able to fight in the open and they felt it was going relatively well. However, effective government crackdowns between 1976 and 1978 forced the PIRA to think anew, leading to a strategic and organizational shift well suited for suicide attacks right when the tactic entered the scene. While the PIRA also arguably had the necessary expertise and organizational capital necessary to carry out the attacks from the 1980's onwards, suicide attacks met both normative and cultural obstacles.

6.2.1 Tactical incentives

As Hezbollah's suicide attack became widely publicized in 1983, the PIRA had been forced to go underground and were looking to hit hard targets where the tactic could have provided an advantage. However, to meet the challenge of increased fortification and detection capabilities by the British, the PIRA leadership opted to continue innovation along tried and tested lines. The hardening of targets did not bring suicide attacks to mind as a realistic option, with one former republican activist musing,

> "You probably would get someone to do it depending on what the target would be, but what realistically would justify that, what target would justify that, I can't think of any. If you would do it against an army base, why send someone with explosives on them when you can send mortars in? […] Even if you do go in and blow up a base. I mean there were hundreds of bases. In Beirut you have to look at the politics – why would they [the U.S.] want to stay there? Here they are locked in, you have the unionist and settler community"(NI8 2021).

While this is a good point, much the same could be said about Palestine. The Israelis were arguably as entrenched in Palestine as the English and Unionists were in Northern Ireland. Still, the first suicide attack planned by the IJB was directly modeled off the marine barracks attack, aimed at a security facility in Jerusalem. Despite the difference in context, the IJB believed it worth a try to model an attack based on Hezbollah's example. Were suicide attacks necessary in their case? As has been discussed at length, this is a question of dubious merit – suicide attacks can rarely, if ever, be described as necessary. They are one option among many, better thought of as a preference. In both Palestine and Afghanistan, suicide bombings arguably created the condition for their own demand by becoming a signal of resolve, but this was not something the organizations could predict, nor was it a given that it would happen. Adoption was a risk, one that Afghanis and Palestinians took, and the Republicans did not.

6.2.2 Availability of information, expertise, and material

From the early 1980's onwards, the PIRA developed sufficient explosive expertise and organizational infrastructure to carry out suicide attack if it had wished to. As relations with Libya rekindled in the mid-1980's the organization did not lack the necessary materials. As for

the availability of volunteers, some interviewees stated that they would have been willing to carry it out, while others believed they would be possible to find.

Suicide attacks entered the Republican radar in 1983. In the late 60's and early 1970's, very few, if any, would have been aware of suicide attacks outside the context of the Second World War. The news that Palestinian left-wing groups dabbled in this type of attack in the 1970's does not appear to have reached Northern Ireland.[158] For one, this is probably because the rank and file involved in the struggle did not have much time to follow the news. "Remember," said a former activist who was involved in the 1970's, "I am at home with three kids and one on the way. I had little education, and I was working around the clock. I didn't even see the news. (…) What you had was the Olympics in 72 and then there was a lot of airplane hostages taken. You got to learn about that stuff because it was in your face. But you have to remember the nearest phone was down the street, a red box, the last television program stopped at 10 O'clock, and the last taxi was at 12 O'clock"(NI4 2021). One of the 1981 hunger strikers similarly noted,

[158] It is possible higher-ranking members of the organization gained an awareness in the 1970's though direct diffusion from informal ties with other actors. The most likely source would be Libya, whose leader you might recall was the strongest international proponent of the tactic. There were well documented relations between the Libyan government and the IRA in the first half of the 1970's in the realms of funding and arms trade. For example, PIRA member Joe Cahill was arrested in 1973 onboard Claudia carrying five tons of weapons from Ghadaffi (Oppenheimer 2009, 163). Relations cooled down in 1975, however, and only resumed again in the mid-1980's. One possible link in the realm of explosives-making is Pat Magee, a Belfast volunteer who was central in the unit that carried out the 1984 Brighton bombing aimed at assassinating Thatcher. He is described as one of the PIRA's most well-known bomb makers and is rumored to have received training in Libya in the 1970's (Ackerman 2016, 19). Available information about Libya-IRA relations and Magee's life makes it difficult to discern exactly when such a trip would have taken place. The only year it could realistically have happened is 1972/73, but this is unlikely. Magee volunteered for the G Company of the PIRA Third Battalion, Belfast Brigade in mid-1972, and was sworn into the organization a few months later only to be captured and interned in June 1973 (Magee 2021, 54). He was not released until November 1975, at which point the IRA's relations with Libya were entering a ten year hiatus (Oppenheimer 2009, 163). This means he had around a nine-month period after being sworn into the Third Battalion to embark on a Libya trip. This is a time he claims he spent learning about explosives in Ardoyne, a role he was elected to because his officer commanding was of the opinion that "the only other volunteer available 'couldn't be trusted with a box of matches'" (Magee 2021, 57). He himself claims Libya-links were media speculations with no grounds in reality designed to discredit the attack: "I don't think I am exaggerating when I claim that there was something in the papers about the Brighton operation every day for many, many months. (…) for example, that I was either Soviet-or Libyan-trained. There was even speculation of direct involvement from Libya. I thought at the time that these stories were designed to lessen the credibility of the IRA as a guerrilla force; one lacking the necessary experience and resolve to carry out this level of operation on its own" (Magee 2021, 134).

"Suicide attacks were kind of unheard of, except the Japanese but we thought they were just crazy men. So no, it just wasn't on the horizon at all" (NI9 2021).

That said, the possibility of suicide attacks was contemplated informally in chats between friends before 1983, but that was all it was – theoretical musings. "I cannot say it didn't cross our minds." Recalled one former republican prisoner, "After the hunger strikes [1981] that did come up, now just among ourselves. About strapping on explosives and getting over to Maggie Thatcher and blowing Maggie Thatcher up. (…) When I say discussion, it would have come up among comrades, it wouldn't have been an organized discussion. Just like 'that bitch Thatcher', you know. Just conversation, on what people would be prepared to do to take it out.[159] But obviously the IRA were planning to do that anyway" (NI8 2021). Most likely, the informal musings about suicide attacks in the 70's and early 80's emerged endogenously. After all, the possibility had been played out in popular culture, most notably the movie Hennessey (1975), in which a rogue IRA Belfast operative plans to carry out a human bomb attack to assassinate the Queen. While described as a "sluggish unthrilling thriller", it gained a fair bit of publicity because of the royal household's outrage at the director's decision to intercut documentary footage of the Queen into the assassination scene (Arnold 1975).

It was the attack by Hezbollah in 1983 against the American embassy that put suicide attacks on the map. Hezbollah demonstrated the potential of suicide attacks in a way that caught the attention of everyone interviewed for this chapter. "I was out on bail in America," recalled one participant, "I was about to go on trial, and I had never seen the CNN before. I can't remember the attack on the French, but I remember the attack on the Americans because of this TV at the house I was staying in – I had it on all night and watched it all through the night. What was

[159] The use of "it" is not a typo.

interesting about it was the Reagan quickly withdrew from Beirut. You know, so from their point of view, it was a success" (NI1 2021).

Despite being considered a success, it was not adopted in Northern Ireland. Before 1980, one might argue that suicide attacks were not logistically practical. The late 1960's and early 1970's were characterized by limited access to arms, with Coogan noting that "It is literally true, for instance, that in August 1969, the only weapons known to be available to [PIRA] were ten guns" (Coogan 1994, 278–79). Moreover, the early 70's were characterized by rather crude explosive devices which were both unreliable and put the user at considerable risk (Oppenheimer 2009, 58). As described by one interviewee recounting how he became involved in militancy during the Troubles:

> "I was about 16. We were sitting in a pub I turned to my friend, and I said rather than talk about all this stuff lets go and join the Provos. He was hesitant because of the amount of people who were killed by their own bombs in those early days. He said let's go to the Officials and get trained by them, then we join the Provos. After about a year of not doing very much we left the officials. We didn't do much until 1974 when the INLA broke away, their main focus in Dungiven was trying to get guns"(NI9 2021).

Their impression was shared by English anti-terrorist officers, who described PIRA devices at this time as crude, simple, and usually small (S. Smith 2006, 91). Fortunately for budding explosive makers, their inexperience was matched by the personnel dispatched by the British Army to counter them. As noted by a British bomb disposal officer, "…it is glaringly apparent that, of the first years of the Troubles, the control of the Army's entire bomb-disposal effort in Northern Ireland was passing through the hands of very inexperienced, 'green' young captains

(Willcox and Goad), both of whom had been sent out immediately after their respective ATO courses [Antiterrorism Officer courses]" (S. Smith 2006, 25–26).

While the beginning of the 1970's saw both the PIRA and the British Army employ relatively inexperienced cadre, the 1980's were characterized by more experienced personnel. The PIRA had talented amateur explosive makers such as Shane Pat Magee and Paul O'Doherty in the 1970's, but recruits with engineering backgrounds who joined the organization in the 1980's increased the group's capacity to develop and innovate in the arms realm (Ackerman 2016, 18).[160] The engineering department also received assistance from laboratories in the United States (Horgan and Taylor 1997, 14). This resulted in the development and employment of new types of weapons, most famously the Mark series mortars as well as more powerful explosive devices based on ammonium nitrate (ANFO) (Ackerman 2016).

Given the availability of expertise, the next thing to consider is whether the organization would have had volunteers to carry out the tactic. When asked about the idea of volunteering for suicide operations, some of the people interviewed for this chapter responded that they would have been willing, but that they were never asked.[161] Much like with the hunger strikes, several assumed that volunteers would have presented themselves if there had been a request from the organization. "It is interesting that it did never happen here," said one of the 1981 hunger strikers. "I have no doubt that given the right situation it might have happened. I don't think there was any moral opposition to that type of attack. Definitely not against civilians, that would not even have been considered. But if it had been for example against the British cabinet or a

[160] Most notably Richard Johnson and Eamon McGuire (Ackerman 2016, 18).
[161] One participant noted that while he himself might have been willing, he would never have let his son volunteer (NI12 2021).

large military detachment or something like that, if the leadership at the time had asked for volunteers, then I'd say that they would have gotten volunteers" (NI7 2021).

So why did the organization never ask for volunteers? Being a hierarchical organization with centralized decision-making structures, this possibility was likely discarded on a leadership level. Following the 1977 re-organization, the PIRA transformed from having a conventional military organization reminiscent of the 1920 civil war to a cell-based one aimed at operating clandestinely (Horgan and Taylor 1997, 3). Based on work by Horgan and Taylor, as well as interviews conducted by the author, the structure of the organization can be illustrated in the following way.

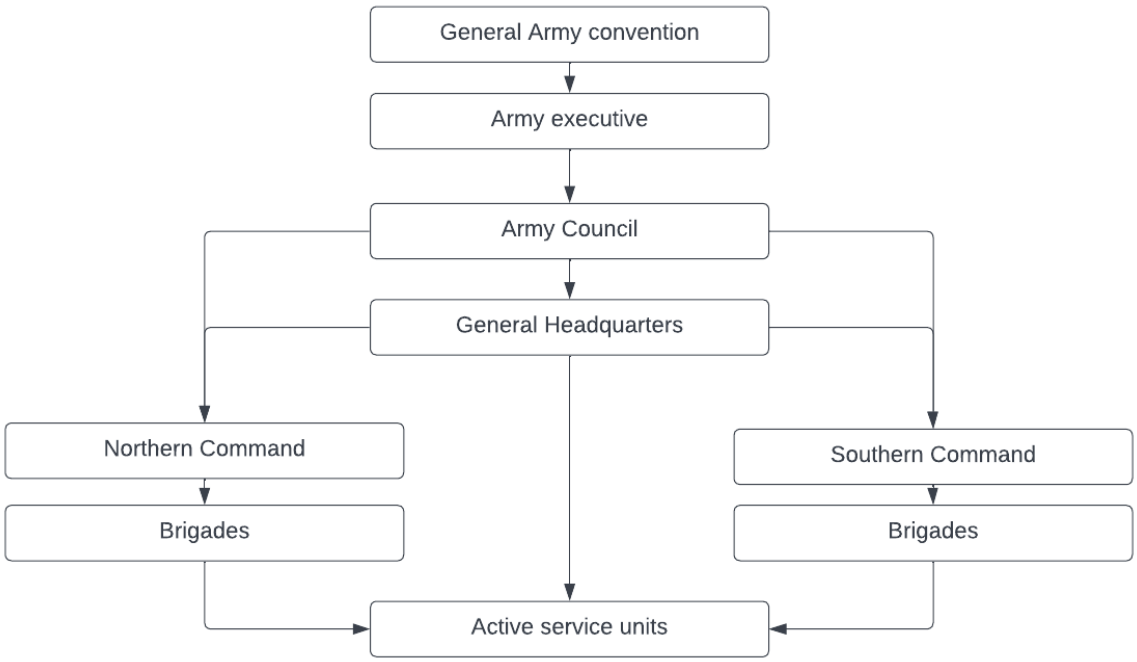


Figure 11 The leadership structure of the PIRA

The General Army Convention (GAC) was a meeting of PIRA delegates that was supposed to convene every two years, although this was subject to fluctuations in the security situation. One

GAC's functions was to elect an Army Executive, a council of twelve people. This body was supposed to meet every two months (also subject to the security situation) and was responsible for electing members to the Army Council and for overseeing that it was operating in line with the decisions made in the latest GAC. The Army Council was generally considered the main decision-making body of the organization, responsible for planning operations in line with the GAC strategy. The Council consisted of seven members who met at least monthly, often more frequently, and elected a chief of staff who was generally considered the main decision maker of the organization.

Plans by the Army Council were executed by the organization's General Headquarter (GHQ), based in Dublin. The GHQ were divided into ten departments: the quartermaster, security, foreign operations, engineering, intelligence, operations, finance, training, education, publicity (Horgan and Taylor 1997, 10). The GHQ operated besides the Northern and Southern Commands, which denoted both areas of operation and the executive command structures that carried out armed operations. The Northern Command covered the counties in Northern Ireland and border adjacent counties in the Republic of Ireland. This command was most actively engaged in operations. The Southern Command covered the remaining counties in the Republic of Ireland and had more of a support function.[162]

Decisions about methods and targets were taken in the Army Council and operations were carried out by units in the different commands. The technical development of weapons and

[162] Both areas of operation had similar command structures, consisting of Brigadiers, Officers Commanding (OC) and Active Service Units (ACU). An ACU typically consisted of four people and had one OC attached to it, responsible for communication with the Brigadier, and for obtaining intelligence and training for the ASU through intelligence and training officers. Each ASU would typically have one area of expertise (explosive operations, armed assaults, etc.). Each Brigadier was typically responsible for four to five ACUs and acted as the link between the units, the GHQ and the Army Council. The organization emphases minimizing contact between people in the commands, ideally having only one point of personal contact between each level of the structure. Orders generally went from the top down, although the increased counter-terror efforts by British authorities in the 1990's led to greater autonomy at the ASU-level in selecting their targets and methods (Horgan and Taylor 1997, 23).

logistics related to their transport and storage, on the other hand, fell under the auspices of the GHQ's engineering department and quartermaster. The department of the quartermaster was responsible for procuring material, transporting arms, and finding adequate locations for storage. The weapons developed by the engineering department were subject to several constraints, the wishes of the leadership, technical capabilities of the staff, and access to material. The importance and type of constraints varied over time, but from the 1980's onwards the department generally had access to both the necessary material and expertise to develop a range of explosive devices. So why were suicide attacks not order in the 1980's? While it is not possible to reconstruct the thought process which led to suicide attacks being discarded, participants consulted during this research suggest that they related to norms and culture.

6.2.3 Suicide attacks and norms about violence and death

Several interview participants expressed moral reservations against suicide attacks tied to the associated risk of civilian casualties. The explanations were often presented with reference to how suicide bombing campaigns had been carried out in the 1990's, in Sri Lanka and in the aftermath of the Oslo accords. In fact, the frame of reference for thinking about suicide attack campaigns was so dominated by these contexts that people had a difficult time imagining suicide attacks where civilians did not die.

While the PIRA conducted attacks where there were real risks for civilian casualties, such operations were generally avoided. The focus on avoiding civilian casualties is repeatedly mentioned in biographies by republican fighters and is a longstanding focus on just war theory in the Republican movement.[163] "So let me give you a crude example." Said one formerly high-

[163] For example, MacStiofain wrote in his memoires 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" (Macstiofain 1975, 214). Similarly,

ranking activist, "To me Thatcher was a war monger. (…) If somebody came to me [and said], give me 20 pounds of gelignite, Thatcher is going to appear in the city center of Nottingham tonight. I will run up to her and blow her up, but everyone in the vicinity is also going to get blown up. Well, I could not support that. Because, again, no matter how bad Thatcher is you cannot justify taking all those civilian lives to take out one evil person. So that is why I can't make a judgement except to say our struggle does not justify those tactics" (NI1 2021).

Another interviewee recalled: "I remember talking to this American one time, I was at an event in Jericho. She said to me "it is not for me to criticize suicide bombings" I said, "well, I think it is, because…" Let's even leave morality to the side for a second. Tactically how does it advance the Palestinian struggle? It doesn't because it allows the media especially in the west as fanatics, attacking civilians, killing children and so on and so forth, so tactically it is not good and morally it is wrong. I think if you just target civilians, you lose a lot of moral authority because if you are claiming to be a soldier in a guerilla sense or even conventional sense you should be fighting other people who are involved in the military on the other side. If you are killing civilians what does that say about your moral authority?" (NI7 2021).

Along the same line, another activist with a history of leadership positions said, "You know, IRA volunteers were instructed to give warnings to their bombs, except when targeting British soldiers or members of the RUC. Apart from that, the IRA invariably gave warning of the bombs. Because of the inexperience, lack of training, and all sorts of other things, there were

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Eamon Collins famously remarked, "I would still say that the IRA also fought with one hand tied 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 and which, when I was a committed revolutionary, wanted to fight" (E. Collins 1998, 8). Collins also claims the organization rejected attacks with overt sectarian overtones, writing, "…present-day 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. The IRA - regardless of their public utterances dismissing the condemnations of their behavior from church and community leaders - tried to act in a way that would avoid severe censure from within the nationalist community; they knew they were operating within a sophisticated set of informal restrictions on their behavior, no less powerful for being largely unspoken" (E. Collins 1998, 8).

countless atrocities where civilians were killed. But at the end of the day, civilians were not targets. There would have been some excesses where, against the policy of the leadership, units and individuals would have taken action that resulted in the deaths of civilians, usually from working class unionist communities. There is no sense in me trying to deny that, but that was against leadership policy"(NI5 2021).

Regardless of a conservative leadership policy, the risk of killing civilians could never be eliminated. "Any group should try to avoid innocent civilians. But even if you, on the Falls Road here, if the IRA here opened fire on a British army patrol there is no guarantee there is not gonna be a ricochet that kills a civilian, and that risk is taken. And people were killed in ricochets, and people were killed in bombings where not enough warning was given. Now, it didn't stop the IRA from bombing. Because they saw bombing, and attacking the British state, and undermining the British authorities as being the priority. So, I won't be a hypocrite, but I would not support similar attacks [suicide bombings] here" (NI1 2021).

The link to civilian victimization is interesting because although some suicide bombing campaigns, like the one carried out in Palestine, became characterized by civilian targeting, it was not initially construed as such. At the outset, Palestinians too expressed the intent to use suicide bombings to target solely military targets. This changed as the conflict developed, with Hatina pointing out the massacre by Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein in 1994 as a turning point that removed reservations about civilian targeting (2005, 251-253). The same was the case in Afghanistan. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the Taliban initially sought to use the tactic in line with normative and cultural principle against targeting civilians (Williams 2008, 35). Much like NI1's statement with regards to mistakes made during attacks with conventional explosives, the initial failure to achieve this by the Taliban was likely linked to inexperience and mistakes (Williams 2008, 38).

A more general problem with this explanation is that it conflates targeting and tactics. It is possible, indeed more common at the time of writing, to use suicide attacks against military and police targets, which would suit republicans well at certain phases of their campaign (Piazza 2018). When asked to reflect on the risk of killing civilians in conventional bomb attacks and the possibility of using suicide attacks against hard targets, the arguments for why it was not employed tended to shift to culture-centric explanations. As stated by one participant, "I mean, I don't think morally there would have been opposition to it, I think the reason it didn't happen was for cultural reasons. Just as hunger striking was culturally part of Irish republicanism" (NI7 2021).

The Irish 'psyche', or culture, was sometimes contrasted against that of other users, implying that suicide attacks were somehow more culturally rooted in societies of groups that had adopted. One participant noted, "It [suicide attacks] wasn't in the Irish psyche somehow. I think the Muslim philosophy of going to paradise and have 70 virgins and all that kind of stuff, they seem to go for that. How well educated they are I don't know" (NI8 2021). When asked about the Tamil Tigers, who adopted without a religious basis, he stated "Something must have tipped, maybe it was a desperation thing. It does seem quite crazy. (…) There was one [suicide bomb] here in Derry that I thought was very wrong. The Patsy Galasby one. I thought if they wanted to do a suicide bomb, they should have done it themselves. He was forced. I just felt that was wrong. If they weren't prepared to kill themselves doing that then… I think they crossed a line. There was a certain though of trying to keep as many people on your side as you can and not to go too extreme. [However] once any type of conflict starts you start acting in ways and you look back and ask how did I ever do stuff like that"(NI8 2021).

A recurring feature in cultural explanations was the link between heroism and survival captured in the idea of "The Runback". As recounted by NI5,

> "Whenever IRA volunteers went out on active service, they always did so on the basis that you would carry out the operation and you would escape. That was part and parcel of our psychology. A couple of friends of mine were telling me about a conversation with Arab guys they met in prison in Britain. The Arab guys were in jail for attacking targets in London, people seen to be sponsors of the Israeli state. The guy was talking to a couple of guys who were involved in it, he says 'ok so you shot the guy, how were you gonna get away.' He said, 'We didn't plan to get away.' And he said 'What? How could you plan an operation and not have what we call the runback?' The IRA always has a runback, whether the runback is Andersonstown or London, it is part and parcel of the plan. If you don't work that out the operation would generally not be allowed to go ahead. That's just who we are (…) Martyrdom operations were not part of our psychology. (…) They wouldn't have been acceptable to the general population. It is not part of how we view struggle. You know the things we would have been involved in, like we would have looked at Tom Barrey, who faced the British 100 years ago, and we wouldn't have seen ourselves doing very much different than from what those guys were doing"(NI5 2021).

Asked about the example of Hezbollah's suicide bombing in 1983 and whether that exerted any inspiration force, one of the 1981 hunger strikers noted, "You always have people saying, you know, why don't we go down to downing street and have a sack of explosives. It was something maybe people talked about, but I don't think it was something the IRA seriously considered. You have that sort of martyrdom thing in Irish republicanism. Leaving hunger strikes out of it for a second. Take the 1916 rising, anybody looking back at that would say it was bound to be

a failure, what chance have they of succeeding. The leaders were executed – that was probably entirely predictable. The leaders saw that as in some way inspiring other people to take the baton and go on with the struggle. And I suppose that is what did happen […] So you do have that sense of people sacrificing themselves, but not in the way that suicide bombers do, but it is not really part of our culture" (NI7 2021).

Yet as chapter four and five have illustrated, suicide bombings can hardly be characterized as modalities of Palestinian or Afghani culture either. Yes, there was precedence for using suicide attack in the Palestinian struggle among the left-wing groups, but there was not among Palestinian Islamists nor among the Sunni Afghans. So, while culture might be an obstacle, it is not a static one, nor is it necessarily a factor that facilitates for adoption. In the case of both Palestine and al-Qaeda, cultural and religious concepts were accommodated to take on new symbolic meaning. In the case of the Taliban, they had to be convinced that the logic informing the accommodation was indeed sound. The point is that the above statements are built on the assumption that some cultures are more hospitable to suicide attacks than others due to inherent characteristics. This is not the case, rather they are subject to molding by external influences under certain conditions.

6.3 What is missing from the explanation?

In both the previous chapters, the innovation came from the outside, from groups and states whose leaders and achievements were either admired, respected, or both. As we will see in this chapter, the PIRA did not look east for tactical inspiration. Rather, the organization was largely introspective, looking back at its own history and ways of fighting rather than outside. In contrast to the Palestinians and like the mujahideen, the PIRA had too much confidence in

their own skills and experience in this period for the success of out-groups to trigger introspection.

6.3.1 Outsiders not regarded as superior models

Some have argued that suicide attacks were not adopted in Northern Ireland because it was not necessary in light of their innovation with mortars and other remote detonation technologies (William Lewis 2012). While this thesis has repeatedly challenged the notion that suicide attacks are ever necessary, the fact that the PIRA was recognized as among the world's most competent explosive experts made them hard to impress. Because considering a reference group as superior to oneself is essential to trigger a desire to imitate, especially if that reference group is an out-group, external influences were unlikely to move Republicans to change their explosive habits.

The Irish were among the first to realize dynamite's potential as a weapon of systematic revolutionary violence (Herman 2017, 2).[164] By the 1980's, the PIRA had become synonymous with explosives expertise (Oppenheimer 2009, 199). PIRA-developed IED technology and technical specifications has since been found in conflict zones in Colombia, Israel, Lebanon, Spain, Iraq, and Afghanistan (Gill et al. 2013, 136). The expertise was honed through longstanding experimentation, beginning in the 1880's in communities of Fenian revolutionaries in the U.S. The two organizations at the helm were the Fenian Brotherhood and Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood (IRB).[165] In the 1860's explosives were just entering the realm of what was technologically and logistically possible and was therefore not strictly regulated. The decade saw the emergence of a fear of so-called 'Fenian' or 'Greek' fire in

[164] Both the Irish rebels and Anarchist started experimenting with dynamite around the same time, but the Irish arguably employed it in a more systematic manner.
[165] The Fenian Brotherhood was founded in the U.S. in 1858 by two Irish U.S. émigré's, John O'Mahony and Michael Doheny (Short 1979, 13). The name Fenian came from the legendary pre-historic Irish army named the Finna. The Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood was established by James Stephens, who was closely involved with the French revolutionary republicans between 1848 and 1852 (Short 1979, 14). It was later known as the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

England, especially following an attack where a group of IRB members procured 200 pounds of gunpowder and proceeded to blow up a prison in Clerkwell to facilitate the escape of Fenian prisoners (Short 1979, 11–12).

The material needed to construct explosive devices were not difficult to procure, and American newspapers recounting incidents involving 'infernal machines' were not unusual (Whelehan 2012, 141). It is perhaps a testament to the general fascination of these devices that the technical specifications were sometimes described as a matter of public interest:

> "On Monday last, Dr. Davidson entered the store of Mr. Duncan, (…) He had under his cloak a willow market basket, in which, covered over with some eggs, was an infernal machine of his own invention. A description of this instrument of death may be interesting. It was a tin tube, large enough to contain five or six pounds of powder, with which it was filled. This magazine was contained within another tin canister of double the size. The space between the two was filled with bullets or large-size shot, a sufficient number to weigh ten or twelve pounds" (*Bradford Reporter* 1860).

The Fenian Brotherhood and other Fenian organizations in the U.S. enthusiastically embraced the invention.[166] Around the same time, the movement got an additional boost following the amnesty and emigration of Irishmen imprisoned for their revolutionary activity during the failed Fenian Rising of 1867 in Ireland. The first group of emigrees, known as the Cuba Five, left for

[166] In the 1880's, Irish radicals associated with the United Irishmen and the Clan ne Gael founded at least two bomb making schools in the United States. The aim of this instruction was to challenge Britain at home and to give a tool to the oppressed peoples of the colonies. Its students went back to Britain with knowledge of how to manage nitro-glycerine with timed- and chemical detonators, carrying out several attacks on government offices in the 1880's (Larabee 2015, 21–22). Some of these were organized from a laboratory run by Irish radicals in a phony paint shop in Birmingham (Larabee 2015, 30). Among the Anarhicsts, high explosives were seen as the solution to the unequal competition between capital and labour, described as the "equalizing and emancipating agent of modern civilization" (Larabee 2015, 22).

the United States in 1871: Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, Charles Underwood O'Connell, John Devoy, John McClure, and Henry Shaw Mulleda (Short 1979, 24). Among the five, O'Donovan Rossa would become particularly influential in the embrace of dynamite as a weapon of anti-establishment warfare in England.

The Fenian community was plagued by factionalism, but this was partially resolved in a 1872 convention aimed at centralizing activities under a secret organization called Clan na Gael (Short 1979, 27). Clan na Gael had been established in New York in 1867 and distinguished by a strong focus on secrecy, requiring its members to be Irish or of Irish decent, with a number of rituals intended to prevent infiltration and betrayal (Short 1979, 28). Members took an oath to take up arms to establish an Irish Republic when called upon by their leaders (Short 1979, 28). Crucially, it believed that this aim could only be achieved through violence perpetrated in small groups rather than the idea of a ground-up Irish mass rebellion envisioned by many of their contemporaries.

In 1876, the US based newspaper *The Irish World* began calling for re-ignition of the Irish struggle with an approach relying primarily on explosive attacks in Britain (Whelehan 2012, 141). The editor of *The Irish World*, Irish-American Patrick Ford, argued that the Irish needed to commandeer England's weapons, such as Gatling guns and rockets, often used to suppress uprisings in its colonies (Larabee 2015, 20). [167] At one Fenian convention, American civil war veteran Patrick K. Horgan, a prominent New York Fenian in the same circle as O'Donovan

[167] Although there were plenty of textbooks available with instructions on how to manufacture different types of explosives, they were not easily accessible to the masses. To remedy this, anarchists would create their own manuals Among the most famous were German anarchist Johann Most, who collated, translated, and adapted the material into an accessible weapon manual in 1886, titled *Revolutionäre Kriegswissenschaft* (The Science of Revolutionary Warfare). Using available daily substances and writing instruction like a cooking recipe, it was supposed to facilitate for popular usage, but its recipes were often faulty (Larabee 2015, 24-25). Malfunctioning bombs is a recurring trope in anarchist attacks, and headlines such as "Anarchist blown to pieces" are recurrent in British newspapers between 1880 and 1920.

Rossa and Patrick Ford, exalted "Greek-fire and dynamite" as the beacon light to Irish freedom (*The New York Times* 1882). At the same event, chemist of 'the Irish dynamite party' described it as the way to counter 'Gladstone's Resources of Civilization'(*The New York Times* 1882).

It was around this time that O'Donovan Rossa began thinking out loud about how to adapt a contemporary military concept known as "skirmishing" to fit the purposes of an Irish rebellion (Beiner 2014, 209).[168] The concept was borrowed from the American Revolutionary War, defined as "small groups of select troops operating at great risk in advance of the main forces, probing for weaknesses in the enemy's defenses and the leading in their subsequent exploitation" (Short 1979, 34). O'Donovan Rossa first advocated for skirmishing as a new concept for violent engagement in a letter published in the Irish World in 1876, He wrote:

> "We are not now advising a general insurrection. On the contrary, we should oppose a general insurrection in Ireland as untimely and ill-advised. But we believe in action nevertheless. A few active, intrepid and intelligent men can do so much to annoy and hurt England. The Irish cause requires Skirmishers. It requires a little band of heroes who will initiate and keep up without intermission a guerrilla warfare—men who will fly over land and sea like invisible beings. (…)
>
> Language, skin-color, dress, general manners, are all in favor of the Irish. Then, tens of thousands of Irishmen, from long residence in the enemy's country, know England's cities well. Our Irish skirmishers would be well disguised. They would enter London unknown and unnoticed. When the night for action came; the night that the wind was

[168] That these ideas developed in the U.S. was no coincidence. As noted by Steward and McGoven, "Anti-English sentiment became a transnationalist phenomenon wherever Irish immigrants settled, (…) Fenianism flourished in reaction to the xenophobia and poverty with which Famine refugees had to contend in their adopted communities" (Steward and McGovern 2013, 3).

> blowing strong—this little band would deploy, each man setting about his own allotted task, and no man, save the captain of the band alone, knowing what any other man was to do, and at the same instant strike with lightning the enemy of their land and race... In two hours from the word of command London would be in flames, shooting up to the heavens in fifty different places. Whilst this would be going on, the men could be still at work. The blazing spectacle would attract all eyes, and leave the skirmishers to operate with impunity in the darkness" (*The Irish World* 1876a).

To bring the idea to life, *The Irish World* publicized a Skirmishing Fund in 1876, intended to pay for violently subversive activities against the British. The stated aim of the fund was to raise $5000, but received $90 000 by 1880 (Beiner 2014, 211). This provided the financial basis for what became known as the Fenian Dynamite Campaign in England between 1881 to around 1887 (Oppenheimer 2009, 51–52).[169] Among the areas of experimentation during this campaign were timers, spearheaded by William Mackey Lomasney. Unfortunately, he became one of the early 'own goals', as his timer failed while he was planting a device under the London bridge in 1884.

Explosives did not play a big role in the Easter Rising of 1916 but were used in a series of attacks against the English mainland in the 1920's, and then again in 1939 during what became known as the S-plan. As had been the case in 1880 and 1920's, the S-plan targeted English infrastructure. This campaign saw the IRA begin employing potassium chlorate, ferrous oxide, sulphuric acid, and aluminum powder together with alarm clocks as timing devices (Oppenheimer 2009, 54). During the Border Campaign of 1956, the IRA relied primarily on

[169] According to Oppenheimer, the Dynamite Campaign saw a total of 39 incidents in and around London, targeting "stations, military barracks, gasworks, public buildings and tourist centers such as the Tower of London" (Oppenheimer 2009, 52). That particular attack killed 16 visitors on what became known as Dynamite Sunday.

gelignite, following a break in of a military store which left them with 110 kg of the explosive. These devices were neither safe nor reliable, with Oppenheimer describing them as 'cartoon devices', usually consisting of sticks of gelignite, a detonator, a power unit, and an alarm clock (Oppenheimer 2009, 57).

The 1950's dip in quality notwithstanding, this was the long historical background of explosives expertise against which Republicans were operating. Along that vein, interview participants repeatedly expressed seeing the republican movement as highly competent fighters. When the conversation entered the subject of inspiration, the focus invariably centered on how they had inspired groups in other contexts rather than how they themselves were inspired.

Speaking about external influences on tactics, one of the former leaders said, "Did people here emulate other struggles? No. You know, prior to 1798, the reason why Ulster has protestants in the numbers that it does have is because it was the most resistant province in Ireland, that is why the English decided to plant it with English and Scottish settlers. So, there were wars in the 17th century and the 16th century whenever people were being dispossessed, then there was the 1798 rebellion, the 1803 rebellion, the 1848 rebellion, 1867 rebellion, the bombing of England in 1880's, the 1916 rising, the IRA bombing England in the 1940, the IRA bombing England in the 70's, 80's, and 90's. So, we probably have been an example to other struggles, you know, more so"(NI1 2021).

One of the participants who had been involved in international work noted, "I had a conversation with a member of a national liberation struggle. Throughout the world, the IRA are mythical, they are seen as mythical figures who have been through 800 years of struggle (…) He said, 'I do not regard the Irish freedom fighters as real people'" (NI6 2021). NI5 made a similar statement, "You know, we wrote the manual on anti-colonial warfare and what

happened was everybody else followed us. Around 1916 until 1923, there were a number of Indians living and studying [in Ireland]. A lot of them were doctors in Dublin. One of these Indians were a member of Sinn Fein. He was expelled from Dublin after the 1916 rising. He returned to India and became the president of India after the liberation. […] The Israeli anti-British movement, which came about with, the Stern Gang and the Haganah, they all studied the tactics of Michel Collins" (NI5 2021).

Declassified MI5 documents at the National Archives point to the potential influence of pre-Second World War Irish tactics on Irgun and the Stern Gang's 1940's bombing campaign in Palestine. Among other things, Israel's seventh prime minister and member of the Stern Gang leadership, Yitzhak Shamir, adopted the nom de guerre 'Michael'. Its founder, Avraham Stern, translated P. S. O'Hegarty's *The Victory of Sinn Fein* into Hebrew (Walton 2013; Shindler 2003). The history of Irish influence on the Indian liberation movement is more complex (Silvestri 2000; Brasted 1980). Ideas about nationalism were exchanged by individuals in both countries from the 1870's onwards, who viewed their respective struggles as part of a larger international effort against British imperialism.[170] When it came to the means of struggle adopted by the Irish, it resonated differently across time and for different factions in India. Unsurprisingly, Gandhi argued that the Indian liberation movement should avoid the methods of Sinn Fein. Following a political assassination in 1920, he wrote:

> "This is an opportunity for distinguishing the Sinn Fein or the Egyptian non-co-operation from ours. The Sinn Feiners resort to violence in every shape and form. Theirs

[170] On the Irish side, this was particularly pushed by Frank Hugh O'Donnell, a Home Ruler in the Irish Parliamentary Party, and Patrick Ford, the editor of the Fenian U.S.-based newspaper, *The Irish World*. The link between the two contexts was also reinforced by the British connecting the two contexts through domino theory, which held that "Irish nationalism contained the 'seeds of imperial decay'" (Brasted 1980, 47).

> is a "frightfulness" not unlike General Dyer's.[171] We may pardon it if we choose, because we sympathize with their cause. But it does not on that account differ in quality from General Dyer's act"(Gandhi 1965, 18:219–20).

In contrast, the Irish had a significant influence on some Bengali factions in the nationalist movement after the Irish achieved the partition in the 1921 war (Silvestri 2000, 456).[172] Some examples are particularly striking, such as a Bengali leaflet from 1929 urging members of the movement to imitate the sacrifice of republican fighter and martyr Patrick Pearse:

> "This is how a nation awakes. Flare up with the fire of vengeance for the annihilation of foreign enemies. You will find that the victory is yours. History bears testimony to this. Read and learn the history of Pearse – the gem of young Ireland – and you will find how noble is his sacrifice; how he stimulated new animation in the nation, being mad over independence.... Pearse died and by so dying he roused in the heart of the nation an indomitable desire for armed revolution" (Silvestri 2000, 469).[173]

The sense of having more experience than other groups did not mean that the tactics adopted by other movements were not considered. "As it [the Troubles] progressed, absolutely, you would have looked at other examples." Stated one interviewee. "I guess one I should have mentioned was the PLO and we looked at hijackings. You know plane hijackings was big then. It was on the news. The IRA was not involved in hijackings, but you would have looked at that, it would have been something that had been discussed" (NI8 2021). However, participants

[171] General Dyer was the man held responsible for the Amritsar massacre of April 13,1919, where at least 379 Indian protestors and pro-independence activists were killed following the general's orders to fire into the crowds.
[172] Prior to 1916, the Bengalis considered the Irish variant too quietist, but the partition had a noticeable inspirational effect (Silvestri 2000).
[173] As for the English, their officers stationed in India viewed the resistance in the country through their experience in Ireland (Silvestri 2000).

repeatedly stressed the context-dependence of tactics. Another of the participants with international experience captured a recurring sentiment when stating, "What happens in other places and how they can advance or how they felt they needed to fight their resistance – every fight is different. It [suicide bombings] was a tool that one might have said was there, it happened well before our peace and political process. It was a tool that the republican movement would not and did not want to use. (…) The republican movement, we look down the annals of history, we would have looked at how the republican movement wouldn't have used and didn't use it"(NI6 2021).

Considering that the Republican movement is known for its international work and solidarity with national liberation groups, this conservative attitude is surprising. However, as we will see below, while solidarity and education on foreign groups was widespread in the movement, the threshold for regarding their experience as relevant to the Republican struggle was high.

6.3.2 Outsiders not regarded as relevant models

Based on fashion theory, a reference group must be perceived as relevant for it to exert an inspirational influence and its prestige to be recognized. Conversations with Republican activists suggested that they identified with groups outside of Northern Ireland and examined the relevance of their experience based on the similarity to the republican struggle. This question often boiled down to whether or not a given movement engaged in an anti-colonial struggle. "Probably our strongest links from the 1980's onwards were with the South Africans (ANC)." Said NI7, "I wouldn't class it as much mutual admiration, but a recognition that we had common cause. Most of these struggles and most of the other organizations that we identified with were involved in similar anti-colonial struggles as we ourselves were involved in" (NI7 2021).

Alongside the ANC, the ETA, Cuban-, Vietnamese-, and Palestinian rebels, all recurred as groups interviewees described as frequently discussed in the organization and similar to their own.[174] Solidarity and identification came to expression in a variety of ways, perhaps most visibly in the political murals decorating the walls along Falls Road, Belfast, and the Bogside, Derry. In addition to depicting martyrs from Irish history, they have at different times shown Nelson Mandela, Che Guevarra, Palestinians, the LTTE, ETA, and others. However, the level of knowledge about liberation struggles in other contexts varied a great deal at the beginning of the Troubles and was largely a function of social background, but this began to change after the blanket protests and 1981 hunger strike.[175] At this point, Republicans in prison began systematic efforts to organize libraries and education, which generated a more uniform level of knowledge.[176]

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[174] This is also reflected in the collection of books amassed in the prison libraries, which eventually encompassed topics ranging from Ireland, trade unionism, international politics, to gender studies. It included more than a hundred books on political ideology, heavily featuring the works of Karl Marx, Lenin, and Leon Trotsky, but also including writings by Rosa Luxemburg, Frantz Fanon, Che Guevarra. It contained a similar number of books on world politics and history, covering rebel groups and resistance movements in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East, together with works like "Comparative Revolutionary Movements" by Thomas H. Greene. It also held biographies and works by Mao Tse-tung, Nikita Khrushev, Nelson Mandela, and Fidel Castro, besides more general work on repression, revolution, and resistance, and books on more specific events like the student riots in Paris and the Spanish Civil War.

[175] The pattern between the participant's background and their knowledge of struggles outside of Ireland corresponds to pathways to armed activism between 1969 and 1972 identified by Lorenzo Bosi (2012). Bosi describes three trajectories, one through longstanding counterhegemonic consciousness in the participant's home, another through disillusionment with social and political action, and a third through British and Loyalist repression (Bosi 2012, 349–50).[175] For those who came from families with a Republican presence, an international awareness came through socialization inside and outside the home. Those who grew up outside of that environment but emphasized becoming active in social and political action during the 1960's, recalled being moved by the transnational civil rights movement, especially the events in the United States. Participants who emphasized particular events to describe how they became involved tended to be less aware of events outside of Ireland.

[176] While internment and imprisoned had been common for over a decade, education came more to the forefront during the 1980's for a few reasons. One former prisoner described, "During the period while we were fight for political status we had no access to books whatsoever, you had no access to anything between 1976 to 1981" (NI5, 2021) Between 1972 and 1976, when volunteers were considered political prisoners, some books were allowed within detainment facilities. Then too efforts were made to educate internees, especially young people. "[X] was 15 when he was arrested and taken for interment," said another participant, "The first few months in Long Kesh schoolboys all hated the OC because the one shining light of being an internee was no school, and then they got there and found out it had been decided that they had to go right back" (NI 10, 2021). Yet another former prisoner described, "in the early 70's there was no time for classes [in prison] – it was all about getting out and doing the shooting" (NI4, 2021).

"We would have begun to build a library from 1982, I suppose, until 2000," said a participant who was involved in organizing the educational push in the early 1980's. "The books would have been [from] Guevarra, it would have been Frantz Fanon, Liam Mallows, James Connolly. We saw it as our rule to educate our guys before they went back out on the streets. We had reading circles, we had debates and discussions, we had recordings and documentaries"(NI5 2021). One of the hunger strikers similarly remembered, "When the blanket protests ended, and we had access to reading material and books, there was a lot of studying done of other struggles and revolutions. Particularly Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, South Africa"(NI7 2021). People who had joined the movement as teenagers could now get access to books and education that had not been accessible on the outside. "It was great for me," said one of the former Derry activists, "because I went to jail with limited education, and you then began looking at all these different scenarios and comparing it to your own" (NI4 2021).

The dimension given the most weight when comparing the Republican struggle to other conflicts was the comparison-group's standing in its local community. Several European revolutionary groups were described as a separate phenomenon on this basis.[177] "In 1970's and 1980 there were different armed organizations around Europe – Baader Meinhof (RAF), Action Direct, Brigatte Rossa." Noted NI5 "And we would have had absolutely no time for these guys, simply because they were trying to change society through armed action without the mass support of the people, and therefore we saw ourselves in a very different light" (NI5 2021). Another participant elaborated on the same topic, saying "Even though in 1970's our support had not been quantified in electoral terms, we knew we had substantial support in the areas we operated in. (…) And we understood, you know, that South Africans had support among their

[177] Interviewees who identified as Republican socialists (members of the INLA) were more inclusive of European revolutionary groups.

people, the Cubans supported the revolution, the Vietnamese people supported their struggle and so on. The Baader Meinhoff and Red Brigade seemed like an extreme left that wasn't based around popular support or a popular uprising against widespread oppression" (NI7 2021).

However, even in cases where admiration and solidarity existed between the Republicans and outsiders, the means adopted by the other was not necessarily seen as relevant or desirable. While none of the interviews condemned the means adopted by other groups, they were careful to point out that conditions and culture in Northern Ireland would not necessarily justify nor condone them.

In a way reminiscent of Gandhi's remarks in 1920, one participant made the distinction between solidarity with the aim of a movement and the endorsement of the means used to realize it. This is worth quoting in some length:

> "The thing is, while we would always support other people in struggle, the Kurds, the Turkish prisoners who imitated our own hunger strikes, (…) and we viewed in solidarity their successes as our successes, it did not mean blanket support for their methodology no more than we would have expected them to support unequivocally our methodology of conducting our war. Though we would have spoken in private how other organizations carried out their struggle, we would never have been publican critical. I would never speak about them publicly. It is not my place to speak about how any other man or woman chooses to free their people. Until I have walked a mile in their shoes I will not condemn"(NI10 2021).

Along that vein, the tactics and strategy of the Tamil Tigers, a group that has featured on the solidarity wall in Belfast on several occasions, were viewed with skepticism. When asked whether

Republicans looked to the Tamils for inspiration, one interviewee replied "Absolutely not. Absolutely not. I did some conversations with the Tamil Tigers, and I thought the whole strategy was insane. Whenever I was in conversation with them. I'd ask them what is your bottom line? [They'd say] We don't have a bottom line. So, what are you asking for? [They'd say] we can't say because our opponent comes in and undermines it"(NI5 2021). In light of Hezbollah's 1983 attack, I asked the same participant if the tactic became a subject of discussion in the organization. "Yes. Or No. The suicide element didn't, but the idea of killing 243 enemy troops did. Killing 243 the way Hezbollah did in Beirut that certainly changed thing [in terms of American and French involvement in Lebanon]. But you know it just never entered the way we viewed our struggle. More than likely, it would have been discussed in the light of different things, but it was never actually a realistic possibility"(NI5 2021).

He had an equally critical attitude for groups that were located more closely to Northern Ireland.

> "ETA would have been fraternal partners at times that we would have had a very comradely relationship with. But as to [emulating] their tactics, absolutely no. I remember actually travelling to Basque country and being very surprised at the way that their enemy was able to move about and control territory at what you would have though was ETA heartlands which was surprising for me. But that is not us, we're not going to go over and say you should be doing this and that. That is not how we work. If anyone came to Ireland and say you should be doing this and that, I'd say fuck off. It didn't work like that, we didn't work like that"(NI5 2021).

However, as with the Bengali nationalists and Zionist revisionist groups, influence is not typically exerted by members of outside-groups saying, "you *should* do this", it is exerted by the

power of example and the sharing of information. On this point, one of the activists with experience in international work made a comment worth quoting at length:

> "I think some people make the mistake of trying to have one size fits all into resistance movements, I mean there is international solidarity, and long may it live and survive through recognition of oppressed people and people in struggle. But every struggle is different, and the context of every struggle is different. You can't transpose, but you can learn from each other, about recommendations, what to do and what not to do. (…) And I think ourselves in terms of the international work that we do, whether it is Columbia whether it is anywhere else that people like myself and others have gone to and engaged with people. You're explaining the experience that we have had and the pathways that we have embarked upon and the importance of having strategic objectives and the importance of being strategic. To be strategic in your tactics and how you will implement those, but you are only sharing the information. People could go 'well, oh that could be similar to' or 'we could maybe learn more about that particular aspect', but there is no transposment of any struggle from one place to another that you can imitate or mimic or whatever. It would be folly to do that because it has to be done in the context of where people are living and the conditions they are trying to survive in"(NI6 2021).

6.3.3 Bringing controversial tactics in the back door

A recurrent theme in both the literature on Irish republicanism and in the interviews conducted for this chapter was the proclivity of republicans to find inspiration in their own history. Much like the Palestinian national liberation movement in the late 1970's, the Irish Republican movement had a period of crisis in the 1950. Whereas the Palestinian turn coincided with the

revolution in Iran, the downturn Irish Republicanism coincided with the civil rights movement. That is not to say that the difference in orientation was merely a matter of timing, it was also a matter of identification. In other words, had the Iranian Revolution happened 20 years earlier, it is still entirely improbably that Irish Republicans would have looked to Iran for inspiration. Just as perceived prestige of the innovator acts as a conduit for imitation, a perceived 'strangeness' acts as an inhibitor (König 1973, 118).

On the other hand, as the preceding chapters have illustrated, a shared identity is not enough. Shared identity matters by making the feedback from attacks carried out by the reference group more relevant to the group considering adopting. It also increases the number of platforms for interaction between the reference group and prospective adopted. This is well illustrated in the adoption of the tactic that became emblematic for the Republican movement in the 20th century, the use of covert improvised explosive devices. The history of the use of explosives by Fenians provided above gives the impression that such devices were seamlessly incorporated into the repertoire of the movement. This was not the case. Both dynamite and its advocate, O'Donovan Rossa, were highly controversial. They were regarded as anachronistic and spurred intense debate in Irish circles. They were only incorporated into what we might call the official 'Republican lore' ahead of the Easter Rising in 1916, thirty years after the Dynamite Campaign of 1881 which propelled them to fame.

While neither the use of explosives nor the idea of skirmishing were new in the 1870's, it's novelty in the Irish context was noteworthy. As argued by Whelehan, "The emergence of small group violence should not be viewed simply as a political tactic equal to others in the "physical force" repertoire. Skirmishing was a dramatic departure from traditional forms of resistance, and it required a sophisticated explanatory rhetoric that addressed concerns that escalations in Fenian violence were getting out of hand" (Whelehan 2007, 181).

As such, the early 1881 saw two ideas about revolutionary warfare brought into conflict in the Fenian movement – the traditional mode of mass mobilization against the proposed use of clandestine cells engaging in targeted provocation. Several people in Clan na Gael and the IRB looked at the proposed skirmishes with aversion and were particularly skeptical of how it would be received by the population in Ireland. William Mackey Lomasney, participant in the Fenian Rising and a member of Clan na Gael wrote a letter to John Devoy in March 1881 titled "the conditions and limits of terrorism". Here, he asked,

> "Are we fully prepared for this? I must candidly say that so far as I can judge we are not, and that, if we try to force on a crisis unprepared, we will have not only the enemy to deal with, but the majority of our own people, who would in no way approve of such tactics at present. (…) I feel convinced that you would fully agree with me that it is best to work on quietly till we have sufficiently armed the people, so that when once a struggle commences, or a crisis should be forced on us, they will be in a position to thoroughly defend themselves" (Devoy, O'Brien, and Ryan 1948b).[178]

Proponents of skirmishing argued that the failed uprising of 1867 had proved that mass rebellions were unrealistic in the face of England's military might. A few weeks after Lomasney sent his letter to Devoy, Ford and *The Irish World* wrote,

> "Ireland is not able to cope with England in the open. With respect to position, resources, and weapons, the dualists would be all together unequal. For us, therefore, to

[178] Considering that he was rumored to have plotted the bombing of Dublin Castle in 1882 and died two years later, on December 13, 1884, during an attempt to blow up the London Bridge and, he must have gradually changed his mind.

> encourage an Erin-go-bregh "rising" in Ireland would be criminal. We go in for Success. One of the conditions essential for the justification of an insurrection is the probability of success, and that on the green-hill-side plan is wanting. If Ireland means war let her make war on the scientific plan. Gunpowder was at one time thought to be "dishonorable;" and some centuries ago saltpeter was said to be as "villainous" as dynamite to-day. Torpedoes, bombs, and Greek Fire are now employed by all the great powers. Is Ireland too big a Power to despise such little things? (…) Scientific warfare, which tends to equalize the great and the small, is giving the tyrannies to understand that the victory is not always to the strong" (Ford 1881).

In their view, employing dynamite clandestinely was a move designed to even out the inequality between the conflict parties and, as such, honorable. They attempted to make it so that opposition to the idea of Skirmishing based on acceptable forms of violence was tantamount to taking an English point of view, as in Ford's article "Washington and his Skirmishers — a style of warfare which the British pronounced 'irregular' and 'ungenerous'" (*The Irish World* 1876b).

However, Lomasney was not alone with his skepticism of Ford and O'Donnavan Rossa. A more detailed reasoning for why dynamite was a bad idea was given by James J. O'Kelley in lieu of a plot to target the Dublin Castle in September 1882,

> "Before I left Ireland a rumor reached me that a scheme was on foot, with the knowledge and approval of the Heads of the Organization in America, to blow up Dublin Castle. (…) I hope there is no truth in this rumor, or, if there should be, that the projectors will abandon their intention. In the first place, as the Government are forewarned it will probably fail, and in the second and most important place, if it succeeded it would do infinite harm to the National movement and very little if any good. Public opinion in

> Ireland is not in four of militaristic operations, and the reaction produced by the Phoenix Park affair would be repeated with a hundred fold intensity if an act were done which would probably lead to the loss of hundreds of innocent lives and produce a reign of terror similar to that which preceded 1798" (Devoy, O'Brien, and Ryan 1948b, 2:57–58).

In the same letter, O'Kelley also argued against Ford and Rossa's expectation that dynamite would inspire the Irish masses to participate in a more general insurrection:

> "Perhaps some gentlemen imagine that this [a reign of terror] would be a good thing and would inevitably lead to the vengeful uprising of the people. In this they are mistaken. What would happen would be one set of men would fly to America, England, or Australia like rats from a sinking ship, while others would join the loyalists in suppressing the Nationalist movement and everyone connected with it. If men in America would constantly keep in mind that out of a population of 5, 000,000 there are 1,500,000 Protestants who are against the National movement to a man, and, at least, 500,000 Catholics equally hostile, they would come to understand that Irish politics need careful handling" (Devoy, O'Brien, and Ryan 1948b, 2:57–58).

Based on letters and editorials, both staff and readers of *The Irish World* situated skirmishing within what they considered a lineage of honorable conflicts, predominated by the French revolution and American War of independence, as well as conflicts in the colonies – especially where resistance against the English was involved.[179] These were described in commendable

[179] Warfare against the British in the Colonies during this period was looked at with admiration, with South Africa attracting particular attention around 1880-1881. As the First Boer War raged, the newspaper reported on "The Boers' Brave Resistance" describing their exploits as "Swift as eagles the Boers gallop on their horses

terms, were the subject of regular columns about famous battles, and were used as sources to advocate for particular tactics, such as barricades from France and Spain and skirmishing from America (*The Irish World* 1876d; *The Irish World* 1876c).

Rossa did conduct a dynamite campaign in England in the 1880's, but he was seen as a somewhat nefarious figure until his death in 1915 (Nyhan Grey 2016, 20–22). At that point John Devoy brought his corpse back to Ireland for a funeral. (Nyhan Grey 2016, 26). The funeral was led by Patrick Pearse, who would become one of the leaders of the Easter Rising. The speech Pearse gave at O'Donovan Rossa's funeral brought O'Donovan into the republican tradition following the Easter Rising. With him came dynamite and skirmishing as an acceptable means of republican warfare.

6.4 Discussion

There are no indications that the PIRA or any other organization in the republican movement sought to adopt suicide attacks. Like the groups in the other two cases studies, PIRA had tactical incentives, ability, and opportunity from the early 1980's onward. However, the cultural context and social norms spoke against adoption. While Hezbollah's attack against the marine barracks inspired discussions in the organization about carrying out that type of attack, participants in this chapter stated that it was not seriously considered. Given that the PIRA had a self-perception of high competence and low similarity with the suicide attack reference groups of the 1980's, Iran and Hezbollah, the non-adoption is not surprising. Iran has been conspicuously

from town to town, making prisoners of small garrisons, and compelling the stronger garrisons to evacuate and resort to camp entrenchments" (*The Irish World* 1881). The Irish World also drew parallels between anti-colonial struggles and the American war of independence. During the Second Boer War in 1901, the newspaper connected the ongoing battles to George Washington's actions during 1777-78: "The American revolution has had and is still having a powerful moral influence upon the South African war. The Boer generals are known to be closely acquainted with the history of General Washington and they derive great inspiration from the story of the hardships the colonists endured in the seven-year struggle for liberty. In this dark hour de Wet, Botha and Steyn undoubtedly remember Valley Forge and are determined to continue the war, as the Americans did, at any cost to the bitter end" (Potter 2004, 206).

absent from this chapter because it was never mentioned in any interview. Hezbollah was mentioned, but it was not regarded as an ideal-prototypical out group. The PIRA was a conservative group, it had too much history and self-esteem to adopt a new practice based on the example provided by a new and relatively unknown group.

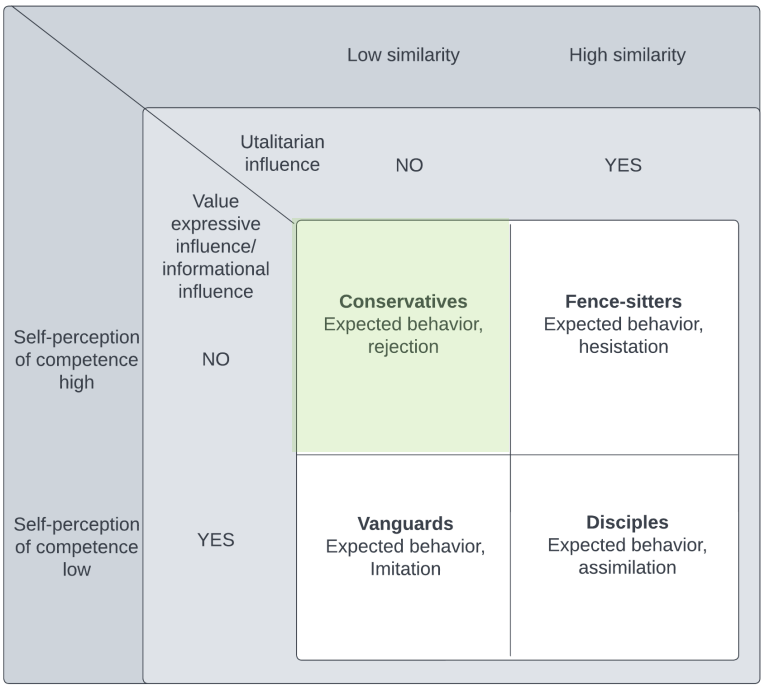


Figure 12 The PIRA in the influence typology

The Northern Irish looked at Hezbollah and saw a highly successful attack but perceived the context as too different to extract any relevant lessons. Unlike the Palestinians, they did not see a group that succeeded at something they had not, but a group that succeeded at something they believed they were fully capable of achieving by alternative means. The magnetic pull felt by Marxists and Islamists in Palestine towards both Iran and Hezbollah was entirely absent in Northern Ireland. Moreover, because the PIRA did not share ideological links with the 1980's suicide attack emissaries, there was little basis nor many forums for members of the group to be convinced in the same way some within the Taliban were in the 2000's.

Although many of the interviews made it seem like the republican movement is impervious to outside influence, this is not the case. Clandestine explosive attacks were once considered an 'untraditional' form of violence but become the movement's most emblematic tactic. The process of adoption of skirmishing and dynamite can fruitfully be compared to that of suicide attacks in Afghanistan. The innovation was first accepted by people somewhat peripheral to the movement, in this case O'Donovan Rossa, with freedom to act independently. Its merits were then showcased by his clique with little risk to the overall movement and then later coopted by the mainstream when it proved a fruitful basis for mobilization. Given the increased centralization of command in the PIRA compared to the Fenians of the 19th century and the Afghanis of the 21st, such rogue incorporation was unlikely to happen during the Troubles.

The centrality of culture and social norms in explanations for why the PIRA did not adopt is interesting. The fact that one can easily find traces of the exact same arguments made in Afghanistan speaks to their malleability. However, the PIRA, like other groups in Europe and South America who had been active for several years when Hezbollah attacked the U.S. and French marines, were not moved to try and shape them. It makes one wonder what it would have taken for suicide attacks to have proliferated in Northern Ireland despite this lack of admiration. Given its strong centralized command and leadership-level skepticism what was missing was arguably a coincidence of the kind observed in Sri Lanka with Captain Miller. Had a bomb attack incidentally turned into a suicide attack and been successful, it might have spurred the leadership to reassess. As put by one of the republican hunger strikers of 1981, when something has been done once, it is easier to follow.

> "When I received communication from the leadership that I would be replacing […] who died on the hunger strike, it said, 'Do you volunteer to go on hunger strike? You've

been selected to replace volunteer […], by doing so you will be bringing the movement into direct confrontation with the enemy, so if you have any second thoughts, stand aside now and nothing less will be thought of you, but if you decide to go ahead you will be dead in two months.' Right. Now, obviously if you go on hunger strike you have to give it a lot of thought. Sort of raps it back on your feet when you see it black and white in front of you that you are going to be dead in two months and if you have any second thoughts. And I think to doubt is to be human, how can you be absolutely one hundred percent sure that you can go through with something that you have never done before. You are going to be in uncharted territory – you don't know. I was as sure as I could be. But I suppose what made me more sure than anything is that the other lads had done it before me. And I said if they can do it, then I can do it, so I wrote back and said, 'I'm ready to go'"(NI7 2021).

7 Conclusion

Since the 1980's, suicide attacks have crossed ideological and cultural boundaries only on rare occasions. When surveying the existing literature to find an explanation for its narrow appeal one is left wondering both how the tactic spread anywhere at all, and, at the same time, why it did not spread everywhere. To address this issue, this thesis has asked why suicide attacks have not been adopted by a wider variety of actors. In answering this question, it has used a fashion theoretical framework for thinking about inspiration.

As shown in the literature review, social movement theory posits that groups operate within the boundaries of what they believe is at a minimum acceptable behavior and at best applauded by their constituency. However, empirical evidence often reveals norms to be soft constraints, something revolutionaries can try to shape to accommodate new tactics they believe will be advantageous to their struggle. While existing theories do emphasize that processes endogenous to struggle can lead groups to escalate and the population to accept previously condemned levels of violent intensity, few consider that their choice of tactics can be influenced by external actors.

Norms are typically seen as obstacles for suicide attack adoption for two reasons, the required human sacrifice and associated civilian victimization. Because both these aspects require justification towards a group's own members and constituency, diffusion was never a matter of mere knowledge transfer. However, if spread is a matter of norm congruence and we assume that most revolutionaries are risk averse, there is little reason why a controversial tactic like suicide attacks should travel anywhere outside of the social context or ideological frame it was invented. Yet, the tactic has been justified in novel countries and ideological framework, despite norm incongruence and little information about its tactical and strategic merit.

As mentioned in the introduction, this cross-country, cross-ideological, spread should be considered analytically distinct from instances of domestic spread like we saw in Lebanon in the 1980's, or ideologically homogenous spread, as observed among Salafi-jihadis.[180] Instances of spread that are outside both these categories are those that contribute to making a tactic modular, releasing it from its context specific associations. Actors responsible for such moves, the first movers in each context, have little information to ground their decision on whether to adopt. The aim of this thesis has been to understand what influences these actors' decision.

When information is scarce and people are in doubt about a particular course of action, they tend to imitate those they believe are better informed – those they admire. Targets of imitation are often referred to as reference groups or, if they hold a degree of prestige, fashion leaders. Deferring to the judgement of fashion leaders rather than relying on one's own information tends generate a herd behavior. These situations are defined by a praxis spreading, not based on information about its merit, but on the reputation of its exponents. Fashion leader influence can be informational, value expressive, or utilitarian, playing on people's desire to perform, obtain a particular status, or be in good social standing. Which type of influence is exerted depends on how competent an onlooker perceives itself and how relevant it considers the example by the fashion leader.

The thesis has provided a typology of four actor types, based on variation along two dimensions used to predict admiration: perceived competence and similarity to the reference group. The four actor types are conservatives, vanguards, fence-sitters, and disciples. As conservatives and vanguards are defined by sharing a low level of similarity with the reference group,

[180] This is not the same as distinguishing between relational, non-relational, and mediated diffusion. Each type of diffusions can occur within a domestic and transnational setting. I.e., diffusion among groups in the same conflict environment or ideologically category can be relational or non-relational.

understanding what moves these groups to imitate is most interesting for exploring how a tactic becomes modular.

To explore the merit of the admiration hypothesis, three conflict context were selected for further scrutiny. These were picked based on their similarity along dimensions used to predict suicide attack adoption and variation in adoption outcome. These were Palestine, Afghanistan, and Northern Ireland. Each case then centered on groups that shared a relatively low degree of similarity with the 1980's fashion leader, Iran. Each chapter then tried to trace internal debates with the intent of analyzing the relative weight of different forms of influences that shaped considerations about whether to adopt. Based on these discussions, a few patterns emerge.

The first dimension to consider in understanding the influence of a suicide attack reference group is its perceived superiority relative to the prospective adopter. When a group saw itself as more competent than the reference group, the latter's example did not inspire imitation. In these cases, the reference group did not really achieve the status of a fashion leader. Palestinian and Egyptian Islamists, who were largely new to militancy, and Palestinian leftists disillusioned with their current movement, were inspired by the Iranian example. This took the shape of both value expressive and informational influence. It manifested in the downplaying of formerly salient religious differences between Sunni and Shi'a Islam and the selective incorporation of parts of Khomeini's ideology. This resulted in what I termed the 'Shi'afication of sunni martyrdom ideology'. Palestinian leftists, who had gone through a series of setbacks, were equally inspired. In their case, it manifested in converting or re-emphasizing their Islamic identity, defecting from secular groups, and either joining or establishing organizations based in an Islamist ideology. Some of these brought leftist 'kamikazeal' with them but reframed it in Islamic terms.

For Afghani mujahideen in the 1980's, who had been relatively successful at toppling foreign backed regimes in the 1970's and saw themselves as embedded in a longstanding warrior tradition, Iran had little effect and the religious differences remained salient. The PIRA remained similarly unmoved. Not only did it see itself as embedded in a centuries long national liberation struggle against the English, but it also considered itself an eminent model to other groups. Armed with a sense of superiority towards outsiders, neither of these groups saw Hezbollah or Iran as desirable sources of imitation based on a status or information motive.

If we look at the broader universe of groups, findings on the relation between group age and propensity to adopt suicide attacks suggests the insight on perceived superiority might be generalizable. Both Acosta and Horowitz find that group age is statistically significant for predicting whether revolutionaries adopt suicide attacks. If we assume that younger groups are less experienced than older ones, this could support the idea that low self-perception of competence renders groups more open to external influences. Acosta (2016) suggests that a possible motivation for younger groups to adopt is that these groups have more to gain by status seeking. Status seeking entails increasing the number of network connections with other groups, which can beget cooperation and different types of support. Horowitz explained the same finding in terms of organizational flexibility, arguing that production practices and organizational cultures become more cemented the longer the group is operational, thereby making younger groups more agile and likely to adopt.

While these are plausible mechanisms for why young groups can and want to adopt, both have issues. Acosta's explanation becomes relevant only once a tactic has gained symbolic currency. As such it is interesting to understand spread within ideologically homogenous networks, but less to understand how age might lead to such boundaries being perforated. The issue with Horowitz's explanation is its inverse implication, namely that more established groups are

inflexible and therefore unlikely adaptors. As it stands, old groups are not old dogs, they do sometimes learn new tricks.[181] You might recall Hekmatiar's Hizb-I-Islami from the table of Islamic non-adopters in the literature review. This group of Afghan Mujahedeen did not adopt in the 1980's but employed the tactic after the Taliban began using it in the 2000's. By this time, however, Hizb-I-Islami had information on both audience costs and status gains. Because the tactic had been positively received among parts of its constituency, they arguably stood to lose more from not adopting than from adopting.

I would suggest that what the group age variable is capturing is not organizational flexibility, but a conservative attitude to risk based on longer experience fighting. Older groups take less on faith in the emissary alone, therefore they are more likely to be conservatives or fence sitters, situated far back in the line of adopters to gauge which way the wind is blowing. However, one might also say that what Horowitz and Acosta are really capturing is the fact that most young groups since 1980 have been Islamist and that suicide attacks became emblematic of that movement. As such they don't capture the effect of youth as much as the effect of ideology. This might be the case, but that argument does not hold for the first movers in the 1980's. In that situation, where the status of tactic had yet to be established in the Sunni Islamic framework, the inexperience of the Palestinian and Egyptian groups and disillusionment of the leftists arguably played a part.

This dynamic is interesting to situate in debates on innovation in terrorist groups. As noted by Dolnik (2007), there is some disagreement on whether terrorists are innovative or prefer to stick with tried tested methods. He suggests that while terrorists often engage in incremental innovation, defined as small adjustments made to existing technologies, they are less prone to

[181] In fact, old dogs might not even be old dogs anymore (L Wallis et al. 2018).

engage in innovations that entail a radical departure from existing tactics. Looking at the theory presented in this thesis combined with the works of people like Horowitz (2010), there might exist an inverse relationship between a group's capacity to engage in radical innovations and its desire to do so. The more established a group is, the more introspective it is with regards to its choice of methods. That does not mean established groups are not creative but suggests that their creativity is bounded in a conservative framework (Tveteraas 2022).

The second dimension important to understanding the type of influence exerted by the reference group is relevance. One could argue that the variation in adoption outcome does not depend on whether a model is seen as superior, but on the relevance of the example provided. By this account, the fact that the Iranian revolution inspired Egyptians and Palestinians more than transnational jihadis might ground in the fact that Khomeini's achievement was closer to what the Palestinians and Egyptians wanted to do. As both Egyptian and Palestinian Islamists sought to topple regimes and establish an Islamic state, it was easier for them to transpose the Iranian experience onto themselves than it was for, say, the PIRA. This is true in the case of Iran, but when it came to Hezbollah's attack, the relevance of blowing up a heavily fortified military installation should have appealed to all. As we saw in the chapter on Northern Ireland, Hezbollah's attack was relevant enough to trigger a discussion within the organization.

What stopped the adoption process in the case of the PIRA was the perceived immorality and foreignness of the tactic, which made the group anticipate serious problems with justifying it. As such, relevance of the example might be more closely tied to the substance of the ideology than the structure of the struggle. However, as the example of Afghanistan post-2000 shows, even when ideological similarity with the reference group is present and the similarity with its struggle is high, it is not sufficient for the tactic to spread. After suicide attacks had been justified within a Salafi-jihadi framework, the new reference group – al-Qaeda – still had to orchestrate

a targeted propaganda effort to convince anyone in the Taliban to adopt. In line with the above, this is because the Taliban saw itself as competent without the help of outsiders. Only after Mullah Dadullah agreed to use the tactic, a man known for being somewhat of an odd case within the organization, did others follow in a process of domestic diffusion. His adoption ran contrary to social and cultural norms both inside and outside of the Taliban, but his decision triggered a process that changed it.

In this case, shared ideology mattered because it constituted a basis for network connections that enabled persuasion over time. In other words, it heightened the likelihood of direct contact between people, which in turn made it possible for one party to actively convince the other. This might in some cases be necessary, because it appears that the more 'self-confident' a group is, the more energy a reference group needs to expend actively convincing onlookers to adopt. No such known effort was exerted for the sake of getting the PIRA to adopt, but it is in any case difficult to imagine which group would be able to do this.

That said, another reason the Taliban became a first mover, and the PIRA did not, likely has to do with organizational structures, specifically the degree of command and control. The commanders in the Taliban had more operational freedom than commanders in the PIRA. Had the Taliban leader Mullah Omar exerted an equally strong power over his cadre as the Army Council did over PIRA units, it is unlikely that the Taliban would have adopted the tactic in the mid-2000's. Visa versa, once the PIRA granted units more autonomy in the 1990's, the proxy bomb tactic was tested by someone in the organization (M. Bloom and Horgan 2008). Mullah Dadullah had an autonomy similar to O'Donovan Rossa and Patrick Ford in the Fenian movement of the 19th century. In some ways, Dadullah was the O'Donovan Rossa of the Taliban, deliberately violating the norms of both his movement and society to adopt a praxis he believed superior to current modes of operation. In Northern Ireland in the 1880's this

manifested in explosives and skirmishing, in Afghanistan in the 2000's it manifested in suicide bombings.

These two cases highlight an important point about the unit of analysis selected for this thesis. While leaders were consistently central in debates and justification processes surrounding suicide attacks, they were not the determinant factor in every case. As we saw in the Taliban, its decentralized and loosely controlled organizational structure enabled insiders to become first movers, seemingly despite the prevalent view of the tactic in the organization and top leadership. Mullah Dadullah was no low-ranking member, but it does highlight the importance of being cognizant of lower-level commanders in organizations where they have considerable freedom to work independently.

External influences only appear to trigger a justification process for suicide attacks when a few conditions are in place. Firstly, it is not enough that suicide attacks are used successfully, onlookers must be actively watching for alternatives to their present practices. The more actively a group is looking for alternatives to their own behaviors, the more susceptible they will be to outside examples. A search for examples is most commonly triggered by repeated setbacks or the fact that a group is new to the game. More importantly, however, the idea to use suicide attacks must be directly or indirectly pitched by someone a group is interested in listening to. If the idea's origin is a someone perceived as inferior to themselves or who's experience is considered irrelevant, it might be discarded despite its potential merit. If the group pitching the idea is seen as either superior or their experience as relevant, then the idea might be adopted despite its potential drawbacks.

Based on this, suicide attacks' limited spread during the 1980's and 90's owes to the narrow appeal and standing of its reference group. As argued in the introduction, this can shed some

light on the different spread trajectories of Duc's self-immolation by fire and Hezbollah's' suicide attack. According to Biggs, the spread of suicide by fire to other countries did not involve personal networks, "…it was non-relational diffusion, with information conveyed by news media" (Biggs 2013, 420). The relatively prolific nonrelational diffusion might be owed to the fact that Duc's suicide by fire came at the start of a global wave of protests loosely connected to the civil rights movement. As it occurred at the beginning of the movement, its participants were arguably more open to outside inspiration. Hezbollah's attack, on the other hand, came towards the end of the era of leftist and secularist national liberation militarism. Due to the anti-colonial wars of liberation and communist inspired rebellions waged on several continents prior 1980's, revolutionary groups on the scene tended to be quite experienced. Those that were beginning to mobilize around the time of Hezbollah's attack increasingly did so based on more locally grounded identities, in particular Islam. As such, the reason the tactic proliferated within that network and not others might simply have been due to timing.

It just so happened that during the 1980's, the Middle East was host to several novice Islamism revolutionaries interested in national liberation around the time of the Iranian revolution. Being new, they were more impressionable. Once the tactic was justified, conditions were in place for inter-ideological mass adoption. Europe, North Africa, and Latin America, on the other hand, were dominated by conservative veterans whose threshold for admiration was significantly higher. This was also the case for more veteran Islamist movements like those found in Indonesia, Algeria, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Bangladesh. With the above in mind, it appears that suicide attacks did not spread to a wider variety of actors because the world of revolutionaries is surprisingly conservative and ironically void of vanguards.

The above notwithstanding, the theory and analysis have some important shortcomings that needs discussing. Firstly, the theory only applies to a specific set of actors, namely those that

adopt suicide attacks before they have information on strategic and tactical advantages. Once this information is available, other dynamics that have been described in the existing literature, such as status motives, the diffusion of expertise, the desire to signal to authorities, and competitive dynamics come into play. It is therefore only relevant to explain spread at the beginning of the diffusion process, after the tactic has lost its context specific association from the last wave of use and before it has gained it from the new wave.[182] This gives the theory a narrow temporal window of applicability.

A second issue is that of external validity, and in this context two questions come to mind. The first is whether the theory is relevant for explaining adoption and non-adoption among groups outside the case selection. The second is whether it might be relevant for tactics other than suicide attacks. With regards to the first question, this might be the case, but it requires further study. Limiting the focus to the 1980's and early 1990's, two adoption cases are particularly relevant. As mentioned in the section on case selection, another group that began systematically employing suicide attacks before 1994 was the LTTE. Several sources suggest that the LTTE were inspired by Hezbollah's use of the tactic and sought out training in Lebanon, indicating that it falls into the category of vanguard groups.[183] However, a more detailed study is necessary to establish if admiration was in fact a relevant mechanism.

The other prominent case is the Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK). While the group was a first mover in the Turkish context and did employ suicide attacks systematically, it only began doing so in 1995. Given that it adopted after Hezbollah, Palestinians, the LTTE, and Egyptian Islamic Jihad, it had more information about tactical merit on which to base its decision. It would

[182] For example, the loss of context specific associations between the wave of anarchist use in the early 20th century and the wave of Islamist use in the late 20th early 21st century.
183 There are also examples of the group seeking out lessons from Palestinian groups in both India and Lebanon during the 1980's, suggesting it was not content with its current level of expertise (Narayan Swamy 1994).

nevertheless be interesting to look at this case in more depth to see if any of the aforementioned actors served as sources of inspiration, and if so, in what way.

As for groups that did admire Iran and Hezbollah but did not adopt, the most prominent examples are the Shi'ite groups in Afghanistan discussed in chapter five. Beyond Afghanistan, there might be other Shi'ite communities engaged in conflicts during the 1980's and 1990's that would be useful cases to explore. Moving beyond the Shi'ite clusters, there are many negative cases that would be useful to study in more detail to determine if and how admiration mattered. As listed in the literature review, the 1980's saw a substantial number of Islamist groups that did not adopt the tactic. There were similarly several groups active in insurgencies in Latin America and Asia in the 1980's and 1990's that did not adopt.

According to the theory proposed here, groups that had ability, opportunity, and incentive to use the tactic in the 1980's, such as the Shining Path in Peru and FARC in Columbia, abstained for the same reason as the PIRA. They are expected to fall in the 'conservative' category, sharing a low degree of similarity with the reference group and having accumulated a significant amount of experience by the time suicide attacks were introduced. As such they would have been unlikely candidates to be inspired by suicide attacks. Understanding if and to what extent this can account for the non-spread of the tactic to these continents requires looking at conflict therein in more depth. This would have to be undertaken by researchers who have sufficient area- and language expertise to engage with individuals and primary sources tied to revolutionary groups in those contexts.

As for the second aspect of external validity, it is possible that the theory is relevant for understanding the spread of other tactics. The theory chapter describes how fashion dynamics and herd behavior can come into play in several fields, from medicine to academia, and there

is no reason why it should not also be relevant in the spread of tactics among revolutionary groups. That said, the threshold for jumping on a bandwagon is arguably higher in a conflict context as the consequences of employing a new violent tactic are graver than experimenting with a clothing style. Moreover, the fact that an act or item must be conspicuous for theories of fashion to come into play, it is likely more applicable to tactics that are in some way radical departures from existing practices. It is at present difficult to imagine what the next such tactic might be, arguably precisely because they must be novel and to a certain extent 'unimaginable' for the fashion dynamic to come into play. That said, an interesting avenue for further research would be to look at historical cases and explore whether the dynamic has been present in the transnational spread of tactics other than suicide attacks.

Beyond issues of external validity related to the theory, an aspect of the analysis that requires discussing is confirmation bias. It is possible that the indicators discussed in the empirical chapters point to a different explanation than the one proposed in this thesis, but that the theoretical lens predisposed the researched to interpret the evidence in a particular direction. As mentioned in the discussion on methodology, one is always at risk of interpreting all information in support of an argument, overlooking plausible alternative explanations, and ignoring evidence to the contrary. There are likely instances of this in the thesis. That said, the approach and theory proposed here were arrived at after testing several different hypotheses that ultimately fell short. The example that comes easiest to mind is the argument of the MPhil thesis discussed in the introduction, which asserted that groups with territorial control would be less risk adverse in choice of tactics because they do not rely on voluntary support from the population. A cross-sectional analysis of statistics on suicide attack adoption suggested that this might be the case, but the explanation proved insufficient for explaining negative cases.

In addition to engaging in alternate theory testing, existing theories were evaluated alongside the fashion theoretical explanation in each empirical chapter to counter-act analytical tunnel vision. Alternative explanations could still have been more carefully addressed, but even so, that would not have been a guarantee against confirmation bias. While more work is needed to preclude alternative explanations and the diagnostic value of the evidence presented here is relatively low, it does not detract from the theory's potential for understanding suicide attacks' limited appeal. These shortcomings should inspire thinking about ways to overcome them and about other cases that might be interesting to explore to establish whether the theory has merit or not.

With these limitations in mind, the thesis nevertheless has a few academic and policy-relevant implications. First, it speaks to the importance of taking revolutionary group agency into account when discussing the mediating effect of norms on the type of violence employed. The empirical chapters illustrate that groups have the power to shape norms on violence through engaging in legitimization. Mirroring this process on a micro-level, individuals have the power to shape what is regarded as acceptable forms of violence within a group. While it is rare that groups risk violating norms that could cost them public support, the impact of them doing so successfully can be substantial. It is often precisely the tactics that subvert expectations that have the most powerful impact, such as Hezbollah's 1983 attack or the 9/11 attack by al-Qaeda. This speaks to the broader issue of using current and past data to generate expectations for future attacks. While this approach generates policy that protects against most plots, it leaves society vulnerable to high-impact attacks if resources are not also allocated to imagining highly unlikely scenarios.

Second, if the herd behavior dynamic proves valuable for explaining the decision of first movers on whether to adopt, it means more attention should be given to the international relations of

revolutionary groups. Transnational terrorist and insurgent networks have been a focus for some time and studies of these have improved our understanding of how tactics, material, and human resources travel between contexts. However, it might be worth expanding this focus to look more into 'non-material' relations, especially across national and ideological divides. This would include examining positive ties, characterized by expressions of solidarity or friendship, as well as negative ties that might be characterized by expressions of superiority, animosity, and disgust. Exploring this type of relations between revolutionary groups would be useful to understand where they might look for inspiration and troubleshoot when faced with novel countermeasures.

Third, and finally, even if the fashion theoretical dynamic proposed here proves insufficient for explaining suicide attacks' limited appeal, the discovery of the explanatory gap that inspired this thesis speaks to the value of asking negative questions. While such an approach is methodologically challenging, as is arguably amply illustrated in this work, it is useful to uncover problematic aspects in existing explanations previously believed to be sufficient. Taking commonly asked questions in the literature and turning them on their heads can be a useful approach to uncover novel avenues for future research. It also makes one more cognizant of contingency in historical processes and turns some of our attention from explaining events that did occur onto those that might as well have, and that could still come to pass in the future.

Appendix 1

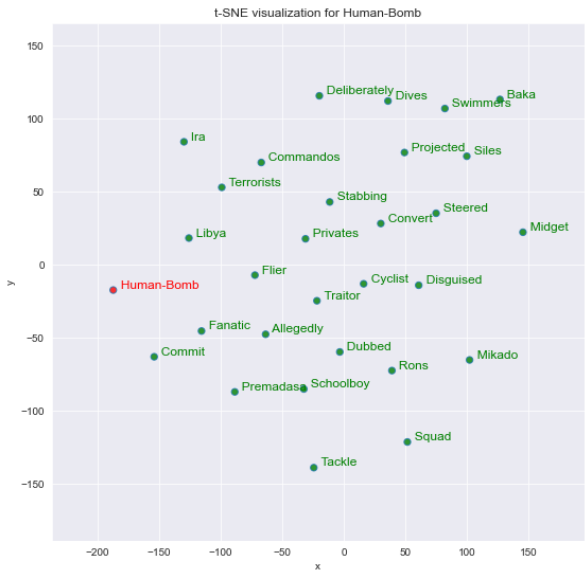
While the above gives a good idea about the type of actors that have used the tactic, it does not really capture the width of the phenomenon nor how it has been perceived. Using digitized newspaper archives, the below gives a more detailed glimpse into how people aggressively blowing themselves up has evolved globally, as well as how the perception of the tactic in the English-speaking world has changed. This is possible as the British Newspaper Archive, the Library of Congress, the Australian TROVE collection, and the New Zealand National Library archive have all undertaken large digitization efforts in recent years.[184] In total, these archives hold well over a two-hundred million articles, a quantity that would be unfeasible to browse through only a few years back. As newspaper sources are both partially curated and partially digitized, they were supplemented by books dealing with both states and revolutionary groups that have been known to use the tactic.

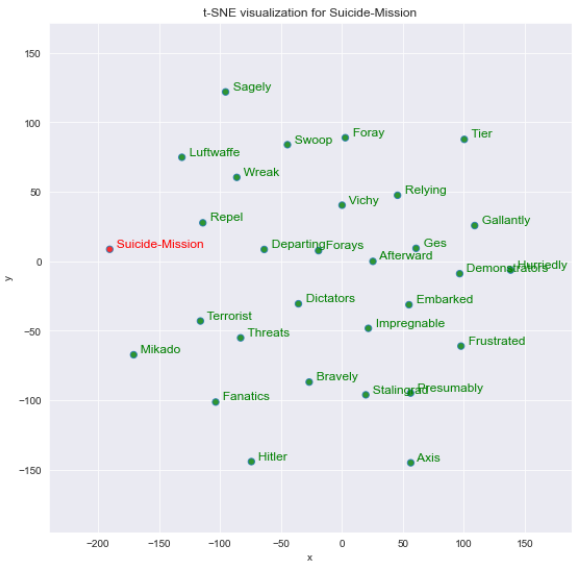
Using key word searches and natural language processing to explore digitized newspapers can provide interesting insight.[185] Of course, English language newspaper-coverage has its limitation in both scope and perspective, but they illustrate how views of people blowing themselves up can evolve over time. A Natural Language Processing modelling technique called word embedding, which models semantic change over time, is a potentially interesting approach that can be used to capture this. However, at the time of this effort (2020), too few newspaper archives had public API keys to get a sample set of large enough to usefully train the model and show temporal variation. For those that had public access APIs, the scans were often of such

[184] In addition, select newspapers not included in openly accessible archive collections, such as the Guardian, the New York Times and the Washington Post, can be accessed through ProQuest.
[185] An initial survey for relevant articles was conducted by using common phrases to describe the tactic as keyword search terms, such as "suicide attack", "suicide mission", "suicide bomb", and "human bomb". Subsequently, more context specific words such as "kamikaze", "juramentados", and "martyrdom operation" were added. In the process, terms emerged that were not included in the original search, such as "forlorn hope", "baka bomb", and "human torpedo".

poor quality that the prospective language clean-up did not warrant the time effort.[186] This being the case, a technique called distributed stochastic neighbor embedding (t-SNE) was used to visualize cross sectional semantic similarity on 6208 articles from the Trove archive. The python code for this is attached in a separate file.

This does not capture temporal variation, but served to finding potentially unknown actors, events, and phrases tied to the phenomenon that could serve as new keywords.[187] Needless to say, this approach entailed casting a relatively wide net, but it helped to capture the diversity of the phenomenon. Below is an example of output, where words that are closer to the red search terms 'human-bomb' and 'suicide-missions' were more frequently found in proximity to the word in the texts.





[186] Another consequence of scan quality being poor was that the majority of articles had to be read manually in order to make sure they did in fact include the phrase intended. In many cases the machine would ignore punctuation, reading a sentence ending in 'suicide' followed by one beginning with 'attack', or 'bomb' as 'suicide attack' and 'suicide bomb'.

[187] This was the only archive that had both a public API and medium to high OCR quality. The articles spanned from 1900 to 1983 and were selected based on the key-word searches outlined above. Needless to say, for those familiar with OCRed archival material, there tends to be an inverse relationship between article age and OCR quality.

The results were often predictable in line with well-known actors and contexts tied to the tactic, although not always. You might wonder how the phrase 'human bomb' and 'midget' came to populate the same space. Midget was a term for a Japanese two-man submarine used during Second World War. While similar to the kaiten suicide submarine, the midget-crews had a chance of returning alive, although not expected to (*The Daily Telegraph* 1954).

Appendix 2

The results and figures are based on a dataset I constructed for my MPhil in 2018. The relevant Python code, R-code and dataset are attached. It is peripheral to the argument of this thesis, so I will only outline its characteristics it in general terms. It is based on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and contains groups active between 1970 and 2017 that conform to criteria of minimum activity and organization.[188] Groups that did not have a name, killed less than ten people in its lifespan, or conducted less than ten attacks were excluded. Groups that were established in 2017 were also excluded as they had less than a year of activity at the time this dataset was compiled. Of the 3537 groups in the GTD, only 258 conformed to these criteria.

The dependent variable was suicide attacks, this was available in the GTD and constructed as a binary variable at different thresholds of use. The independent variable was control over territory, and this was coded manually using secondary sources.[189] It was coded on a scale from 0-3: (0) indicated clandestine, (1) indicated guerrilla, (2) indicated low level control in populated area, (3) indicated high level of control over a populated area. The difference between 2 and 3 is of degree, 2 indicated the group could actively interfere in the lives of the population, while 3 indicated that they were they main providers of security and services. This was then transformed to a binary variable where (1) was clandestine or guerilla and (0) was territorial regardless of degree of control.

Finally, I added control variables manually and from other datasets. These can be grouped into three categories: group-specific, measures of state capacity, and outliers. Group-specific controls

[188] The purpose of excluding groups on this basis is that it heightens the validity of the findings. It makes it more likely I am capturing groups with a level of organization commensurate with the assumptions of strategic deliberation and political aims.
[189] I was able to find data on 247 out of the 258 groups in the dataset.

were derived from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and secondary sources and were the following: size, religious ideology, revolutionary aim,[190] hard target profile,[191] political wing, and international attack profile. State capacity controls were the following: a country's score on the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC score), its Polity score, and score on the Political Terror Scale (PTS). Outlier controls were added to ensure that the results were not driven by a particular subset of groups or geographic contexts, these included: ISIS-affiliation, groups operating in Iraq, and groups in Palestine.[192]

The dataset has a few shortcomings. First, it had to use broad categories due to the lack of precise data, especially in the cases of size estimates, political affiliation, and in degree of territorial control. Secondly, it did not have a category for sanctuary abroad or foreign support, which is important for clandestine group capacity. Thirdly, it was coded on a group level, meaning the data is cross sectional and unable to capture temporal variation. The territorial control variable, for example, indicates whether a group held territory for most of its lifespan, not what periods those were or whether they did or did not correlate with a spike in suicide attacks. Because of the above, the inferences that can be based on the data is limited. However, I believe the findings included in the literature review are indicative of an actual pattern. The insight is also supported in work by other scholars, so I decided to include it, but it is important to keep its limitations in mind.

[190] Revolutionary was used differently than in this thesis. In the dataset, it sought to capture whether the aim of the group was oriented at (1) overthrowing a domestic or international regime or system, or (0) if it had nationalist or secessionist aspirations.
[191] This was used as a proxy for tactical incentive to adopt suicide attacks.
[192] Palestinians were considered outliers because of their special territorial status.

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