SUICIDE TERRORISM: A FUTURE TREND?

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This thesis reviews the literature on “new terrorism,” to be differentiated from the “old terrorism.” The study tests two hypotheses. First, has an increase in religiously inspired terrorist groups led to an increase in terrorism’s lethality? Second, does suicide bombing as a tactic explain the increased lethality of “new terrorism”? The study demonstrates three findings. First, it was found that religiously inspired terrorist groups are more lethal, though not more indiscriminate. Second, that suicide bombing has had a significant effect on the number of terrorist related fatalities. And, third, that non-religious suicide bombing is more lethal than its religious counterpart. To test these hypotheses I used Ordinary Least Squares Regression and data provided by The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism.
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the world watched the televised horror of 19 terrorist hijackers importing death and destruction to the United States of America. In simultaneously orchestrated attacks, these individuals flew passenger airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. It has been widely speculated that another targeted attack was avoided when the fourth hijacked plane crashed into a Pennsylvania field killing all aboard including those who had commandeered the plane. With these highly coordinated incidents, in a matter of an hour, almost 3,000 civilians lost their lives, including nationals of 62 different countries. These incidents affirmed a notion relatively new to the terrorism literature today: terrorism has undergone a “change of face” and has become more lethal in the process.

It has been argued that while actual incidents of terrorism are on the decline, and the number of groups engaged in terrorism has declined fatalities have yet increased (Johnson, 1990). Many are quick to argue that it is the fundamental nature of this “new breed” of terrorist, which many associate with a revival in religious fundamentalism, and more particularly Islamic fundamentalism, that has given terrorism its increased lethality today. This new breed of terrorist is more prone to extreme acts of indiscriminate violence due to worldviews, processes of legitimization, and mindsets different from those of their predecessors. This “new breed” seems to have all but replaced those groups, mostly left-wing or more politically ideological in nature, that seem to have fallen by the wayside after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.
Bruce Hoffman, of the RAND Corporation, and notably one of the world’s leading experts on terrorism, argues that religion is the most defining characteristic of terrorist groups today and that religion is the cause of terrorism’s recent increased lethality (Hoffman, 1998). Arguing that religiously inspired terrorists may be much more likely to entertain the notion of using weapons of mass destruction -- that is, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons -- he has stated that the world may be entering a period of increased bloodshed and violence. Hoffman states that religion as the “driving force” behind the increased lethality in contemporary modern terrorism shatters some of our most basic beliefs and assumptions about terrorists. The once widely perceived notion that terrorists wanted more people watching and listening than dead, no longer seems to hold true. If what Hoffman states then is true, and that this new breed of terrorist differs so from those of old, then reanalysis of the small, but steadily growing literature on terrorism is much overdue and conventional wisdom needs be revisited. But, is what Hoffman argues true? Is it really the religious nature of these new groups that accounts for the increase in terrorism’s lethality today even though actual incidents of terrorism are on the decline? It is the purpose of this thesis to answer to this compelling and policy relevant question.

As mentioned above, serious students and observers of terrorism are now acutely concerned with what Harvey Kushner has referred to as, “the new terrorism” (Kushner, 1998). Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the toppling of the Shah of Iran, an Islamic revolutionary movement has grown in the Middle East – a movement that supports a form of terrorism more lethal and violent than the terrorism that thrived during the days of the Cold War. These groups profess to represent the impoverished, the
disaffected, the alienated and in the case of the Palestinians, the displaced. Although their motives may indeed to some seem noble, the means they choose to achieve these ends are not. The terrorism of these new groups is a virulent, more violent manner of terrorism, one that promises those involved great rewards for their deeds in the afterlife and this is a form of terrorism that will prove very difficult to counter.

Many scholars have become concerned with the notion that it is the religious nature of these groups that make terrorism today so much more lethal than before. Though this may be a necessary part of the explanation I do not believe this is sufficient. By far, one of the most lethal terrorist organizations active today is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE). This group, fighting against the governing authorities, for a national homeland in Sri Lanka, is arguably one of the most violent and indiscriminate terrorist groups today. According to Yoram Schweitzer of The International Policy Institute of for Counter-Terrorism, between July 1987 and February 2000, the LTTE, “has carried out 168 suicide terror attacks in Sri-Lanka and India leaving thousands of innocent bystanders dead or wounded (Schweitzer, 2000, p.3). Its suicide unit commonly referred to as “The Black Panthers” is comprised of both men and women and has left countless individuals, both high-ranking officials and civilians dead. The LTTE is not a religious group, but is nationalist in nature.

In this thesis, I propose that it is not only religion that accounts for terrorism’s new lethality, but that one must also take into account the type of tactic, or modus operandi that has become popular with many groups active today, suicide terrorism. This form of terrorism, which seems to empower the weak and render the strong powerless against it, has ancient beginnings and is by no means new or innovative. To those
employing such means, it seems to have become an effective and extremely lethal way of
carrying out their missions and delivering their messages to the watching world.

In this thesis, I provide the an overview of this “new terrorism,” which many
individuals, including Bruce Hoffman advocate as an explanation of modern terrorism’s
new lethality in contrast to the more familiar “old terrorism” of the literature of the
1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In an attempt to answer the questions about the ties between
religion and terrorism’s newfound lethality, I will utilize The International Policy
Institute for Counter-Terrorism’s (ICT) “International Terrorism” database,
encompassing selected international terrorist incidents between the years 1980 to the
present, to check the validity of Hoffman’s thesis and try to provide some foundation for
my own. Specifically, to understand modern terrorism’s increased lethality, one needs to
look further than religion as a motive and also take into account modern terrorists’
williness to use “suicide terror” as their primary modus operandi.
CHAPTER 2  LITERATURE REVIEW

The systematic study of terrorism and thus the growth of relevant academic literature is a relatively new enterprise. For example, when compared to other fields of study, such as studies on conflict, warfare and democratization, it becomes evident that the literature on terrorism is only in its nascent stage. The modest, though steadily growing literature dealing with terrorism generally focuses on two types of problems. First, much attention has been paid to whether or not governments should negotiate with terrorists (very popular through the 1970s and 1980s) and subsequently on the choice of retaliation, more particularly, on the efficacy of a repressive retaliatory policy. Second, much of the literature focuses on the definitional quagmire that those who study this phenomenon have found themselves mired. No one, to date, has been able to come up with one acceptable definition of the concept of terrorism. Earlier literature, revolved around work on what is now sometimes called the “old terrorism,” focusing on the ideologically left-wing terrorist groups that once dominated the international terrorist arena, but from the 1990s to now, new ideas have come forth about what I earlier referred to as the “new terrorism.” It is the definitional aspects and the change in the literature with respect to this “new terrorism” that I explore here.

Crenshaw (1992) has argued that the study of terrorism today is “theoretically impoverished,” and as such stands to benefit in terms of theoretical scope, precision, and cumulativeness of findings. Understanding that on theoretical grounds and narrowing
one’s scope to a specific form of political violence (as terrorism is a part of the larger
concept of political violence) often makes sense, it is also important to recognize that an
overemphasis on the policy responses to terrorism is a barrier to systematic, scholarly
research on its causes, processes, and results. Much of the study of terrorism has suffered
from a focus on remedies, to the exclusion of understanding the phenomenon. Helping
policy-makers gain a better understanding of this phenomenon will hopefully point future
scholars, and policy makers in the right direction in their efforts to address terrorism.

A DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

To get around the academic quagmire that engulfs the scholarly debate about what
is or is not terrorism it is essential to conceptualize the term in such a manner that allows
for empirical observation and analysis. There is little agreement in the extant literature
on what does or does not constitute terrorism or the act of terrorism itself (Crenshaw
1992; Schmid and Jongman et al., 1988; and Thackrah 1987). Cooper (2001) states that,
there has never been, since the topic began to command serious attention, some
golden age in which terrorism was easy to define or, for that matter, to
comprehend, and that, as we plunge gaily into the brave new world of the 21st
century, there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the problem of definition,
or as it was once described, the problem of the problem of definition (Cooper,
1978) will come closer to any sensible resolution.

It seems that the old adage, “one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter,”
still holds today, nearly two decades after ex-President Ronald Regan coined the phrase.

Laqueur (1986) identified 109 different definitions of the term terrorism advanced
between the years 1936 and 1985, and more have appeared since. Generally both
academics and politicians have used for example, the terms "terrorists" and "terrorism" alike as labels to tar their images of their enemies and the pejorative nature of this value laden term has been duly noted in the literature (Fattah, 1981; Jenkins, 1981; Prince 1989; and White, 2002). As previously mentioned, the cliché "one mans terrorist is another mans freedom fighter," is an infamous reflection of this futile semantics.

Most conceptual definitions of terrorism, according to Crenshaw (1992) however divided on other points, "agree that it is a form of political violence". A collection of just a few of the definitions includes: terrorism is often seen as the use of force (Anand 1993; Schmid and Jongman et al., 1988;) against random or symbolic victims (Hanle 1989) to produce terror or fear (Anand 1984; Schmid and Jongman 1988). The goals are viewed as political by nature (Mickolus 1983), although some individuals do not view the political condition as a necessity (Hanle 1989). Conversely, within those scholars who view terrorism as the use of force, some also believe that even just the threat of force is a sufficient condition for a terrorist act (Wilkinson 1987). Some incorporate facets of the actual outcome in their conceptual definition of terrorism (fear) which they conjecture results in a behavior change (Schmid and Jongman et al., 1988). A sound argument can also be made that intent alone can define terrorism irrespective of the result (Meari 1981).

According to White (2002) the most widely used or common definitions of terrorism in the world of criminal justice, and in military and security circles, are two definitions developed separately but which come to remarkably similar conclusions. These are views fostered by Walter Laqueur, a leading authority on terrorism from Georgetown University and Brian Jenkins, a well-known counter-terrorism specialist.
Laqueur (1987, p.72) argues that terrorism, “constitutes the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective by targeting innocent people.” Laqueur adds that attempts to move beyond a simple definition are futile because the term is inherently so controversial. Volumes, Laqueur later adds in a footnote, can be written about the definition of terrorism, but they will do nothing to add one iota to our understanding of the concept. In a later work, Laqueur (1999, 8-10) does offer the reader a simple definition, only this time adding the caveat that definitions and meanings fluctuate with the tides of history.

Jenkins (1984) proffers a definition similar to that offered by Laqueur, a definition often used in consultation with security forces. Jenkins suggests that terrorism is the use or threatened (my italics) use of force designed to bring about political change.

Both of these authors recognize the simplicity of their approaches and the problems this gives rise. As White (2002) points out, neither of these definitions limits the topic and there is no meaningful way to apply such definitions to specific terrorist acts. Simplistic definitions leave both social scientists and policy-makers frustrated, yet as Laqueur (1999) intimates above, the problems and weaknesses of a simple definition become a necessary evil we are forced to live with because terrorism will always mean different things to different people.

Crenshaw (1983) adds her own caveats to the debate arguing that terrorism cannot be adequately defined unless the act itself, the target, and also the possibility of success are analyzed as well. Within her approach, terrorists fail to meet the legitimacy litmus test in one of three categories: their methods, targets, and some chance of victory.
To Crenshaw, terrorism means politically and socially acceptable violence aimed at an innocent target for the purpose of achieving a psychological effect. Such an analytical approach has made Crenshaw a leading authority in her field, but her definition is not perfect. White (2002, p.9) sees two problems pointing out that, “whoever has the political power to define “legitimacy” has the power to define terrorism, “ and that, “ the analytical definition has not moved far from the simple definition.”

Others academics have offered various definitions which they believe account for the phenomenon of terrorism, though not as simplistic or analytical as those offered above. For example, Herman (1983) and Stohl (1988) both advocate that terrorism should be defined in terms of state repression. The former cites examples of corrupt Latin American governments, and the latter claims that terrorism is most often used by repressive regimes to maintain power. Schmid (1983) tries to take the middle road by creating an amalgam of varying positions, concluding that there is no correct definition of terrorism, that it is an abstract notion with no tangible presence. He does offer that most definitions have two things in common: someone is terrorized, and the significance of this term is derived from the terrorist’s targets or victims. Terrorism is a method of combat in which the victims serve as symbolic targets, the terrorists use violence to create a climate of fear, and this produces an audience beyond the victim and results in a change of public attitudes and actions.

According to White (2002) most individuals when confronted with this definitional dilemma do one of three things: some follow the lead of Crenshaw (1983) and look for the use of illegitimate violence as their defining characteristic; others follow the lead of Schmid (1983) synthesizing definitions or using those of others; and finally,
some choosing to ignore the problem all together and assume that when they discuss the term terrorism, everybody else knows what they mean.

However, not only the academics are having trouble defining the elusive concept of terrorism, it is equally as frustrating for policy-makers. While it is not necessary to delve too heavily into this area, it is desirable to show the discrepancies existing between academia and the policy world, and the debates within the policy arena itself.

Considering that it is the government of a state that is expected to guard and protect the population from such evils as terrorism, one would be inclined to believe that government agencies would be on line with one another. However, nothing could be further from the truth. All government departments, bureaus and agencies -- whether it be the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the State Department, the Defense Department or the Defense Intelligence Agency – all are mandated with different definitions of the term terrorism. For example, the State Department, under Title 22 of the United States Code section 2656f(d) defines terrorism as: premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience (State Department, 2000). On the other hand, the F.B.I. denotes terrorism as: the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (F.B.I., 1999). Such discrepancies do nothing to aid one in solving the definitional problem of a concept already mired in vagueness.
THE “OLD TERRORISM” LITERATURE

To date, the literature dealing with terrorism has been mostly qualitative in nature, mostly due to the problems associated with limited data in a relatively young field of study, and mostly include historical accounts of the origins of terrorism, and essays on left-wing terrorism which dominated the field of study for so long.

These historical studies of terrorism generally concentrated on the origins of terrorist groups, group structure and motivations, biographies of important leaders and the tactics or modus operandi they employed. As mentioned above, few were empirical and most followed the case study approach. Studies that typified this approach are those by Bell (1975), Clark (1978), Cox (1982), Horchem (1986), Hyams (1975), Laqueur (1977), Moodie (1978), Palmer (1988), Piscano (1989), and Wilkinson (1979).

Laqueur (1977) proposed a cyclical theory of terrorism, and that scholars and policy makers ought to focus more on these incidents on a case-by-case basis. Wilkinson (1979) further elaborated on Laqueur’s work by suggesting that terrorism is a special mode of violence, different from guerrilla warfare, and should not be equated with other political violence in general.

Using the examples of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Hyams (1975) offered that terrorism should be viewed as a tool used by the weak to bring about political and social change. Hyams, using a somewhat moralistic argument, says that terrorism is only the end result of intolerable regimes and
social climate. Many today may find this approach illustrative of much of the Middle Eastern terrorism as applicable to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Bell (1975), Clark (1978), and Moodie (1978) also use the PLO and IRA as case studies, but rather than analyzing why these groups use terrorism, they focus on the tactics and strategies employed by these two groups. Bell (1975) tends to focus on their respective histories and points out the systematic nature of the acts that these groups carry out. Clark (1978), looking particularly at the IRA, discusses the tools this group had to use because of their relatively weak position vis-à-vis the governing authorities and their lack of military structure. Clark’s work echoes that of others who argue that terrorism is the tool of the weak. Moodie (1978), goes on to extend Clark’s arguments about the IRA. He includes in his analysis the existing power relationships between the parties involved and how it relates to policy decisions.

In contrast to those studies mentioned above, Horchem (1986) and Pisano (1989) focused their studies on domestic left-wing terrorist groups influenced by Marxist-Leninist and anarchist philosophies. In his 1986 study, Horchem looked at the beliefs of the students who became involved in the Baader-Meinhof Gang and Red Army Group (RAG) in West Germany. He concentrated on their underlying anarchist beliefs and stated that groups like these adhered to the belief that force was the proper means of liberating oppressed peoples of the world. Pisano (1989) examined France’s Action Directe, another group that combined Marxist-Leninist beliefs with anarchist philosophies. Pisano provides the reader with a political and psychological profile of the typical Action Directe member and documents his methods of operation. Pisano’s main
focus was to better understand links between this organization and other separatist groups in the region.

Cox (1982) and Palmer (1989) studied the correlations between the process of modernization and political and economic repression of indigenous populations, and the rise of Latin American guerrilla movements. Cox (1982) examined state terror as a means to repress the population, using the case of Argentina, while Palmer (1989) examined Peru’s Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path organization, and its use of terror as a tool in the hands of a repressed population against the governing regime, focusing his research on the relationship between targeted economic development (the modernization process) and insurgency.

Psychological studies of terrorists and profiling found a niche in the terrorism literature as well during its beginnings; the works of Hacker (1976, 1983), Rubenstein (1987), Freedman (1983), Russel and Miller (1978), and Strentz (1981) are illustrative.

Hacker (1976) found that terrorists seek reinforcement on their orientation to life and he referred to three types of terrorists: criminals, crazies, and crusaders. Though not mutually exclusive, these categories could plausibly contain a variety of these personality types. It has often been suggested that Hacker’s approach or typology was far too simplistic. In his 1983 study, Hacker went further to add that he believed that terrorists are motivated by both a need to seek remedies of injustices and to overcome certain psychological shortcomings.

In his retort to Hacker’s argument, Rubenstein (1987) suggests that the terrorist is more akin to the average person, though we may have trouble admitting that. He further added that terrorists are devoted to ideals and often driven by despair or perceived
wrongdoings and a subsequent need for vengeance. However, Freedman (1983) on the other hand offers that political terrorists are not motivated by despair and ideals, but rather the need to re-affirm a sense of self-esteem, the depersonalization (often demonization in the context of religious groups) of the associated target, a need to create a type of relationship that otherwise could only exist in fantasy, and the belief in the “magic of violence” (1983, p.5). Such views also become important later in the discussion of the “new breed” of terrorists found in more recent literature.

Russell and Miller (1978), examined eighteen urban guerrilla organizations putting together a composite profile of what they believed the average terrorist looked like. The portrait Russell and Miller painted was one of a dispossessed intelligencia, whose activists are characterized as idealistic, university educated youths, with either anarchist or Marxist-Leninist views, or a mix of both. Strentz (1981) offered a similar picture. However, he differentiated between the roles that those involved played, including the roles of the leader, the opportunist and the idealist.

While these studies tend to focus only on the individual or the group, remaining free of political considerations, they do provide law enforcement officials with some general guidelines to go adhere to in efforts to profile possible terrorists.

As mentioned earlier, these were all historical studies, as the literature on terrorism is highly qualitative in nature. There have been some quantitative studies to date, though they are far outnumbered by those employing the more traditional approach as quantitative empirical studies of terrorism are still in their infancy. These types have studies have been more policy driven, and concerned less with the origins of terrorism or historical descriptions, but more with testing the effectiveness of government anti-

Gurr (1968) made the first move in this field towards pushing the literature in a more empirically grounded direction. In his 1968 work, “Causal Model of Civil Strife,” Gurr compiled a database that was intended to focus on the variables that possibly led to internal violence. This furthered the literature because it was a cross-national approach, building on the case-study approach of earlier works, and it pointed out that terrorist campaigns are generally short-lived. In his 1979 work though, Gurr adds a caveat stating that longer-term terrorist campaigns tend to occur in democracies due to a political environment conducive to indulging, often conflicting, political views.

Jenkins, Johnson, and Ronfeldt (1977), as well as Mickolus (1977) were studies that began to move away from examining the origins of terrorism. Jenkins, et al., focused generally on hostage taking and kidnapping (a popular phenomenon at the time of their writing) and found that in 77 different events, there was evidence to support the notion that terrorists apply a sort of “cost-benefit ratio” type of analysis when considering their planned actions.

Mickolus (1977), and Mickolus, et al., (1989,1993) provided scholars with in-depth databases to substantiate their analysis. The ITERATE 2, ITERTATE 3, and now ITERATE 4 (International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events) databases have supplied researchers with chronologies and events data, and 107 various classifications of
terrorist incidents as well as the outcomes of each. This has been a valued addition to the literature, though some have offered criticisms that will be discussed later in the Methodology section of this paper.

Both the Jenkins, et al., and Mickolus’ studies examine the symptoms of terrorism as opposed to its origins, and build on Gurr’s study by taking their level of analysis to the international level, rather than solely looking at terrorism at the domestic level. They examine the effects of terrorism as opposed to its causes and began to push the field in a new direction.

Following the lead of the above authors, some researchers began to push the literature further by examining transnational terrorism: essentially, terrorist incidents occurring within the international arena by an individual or group not controlled by the nation-state. During this period of writing, hijackings were a popular tool of the PLO, and the Abu Nidal Organization, headed by the now infamous Sabri al-Banna was at its apex, events that certainly fostered interest in such types of investigations.

Hamilton and Hamilton (1983), using the ITERATE dataset, employed a time series analysis to test the contagion effects of transnational terrorism. Basing their analysis on the level of repression a governing authority is willing to use to fight terrorism, they reach two conclusions. First, successful terrorist acts provide motivation for future terrorist activity. Secondly, that an increase in repressive internal measures by governing authorities generally leads to a decrease in the spread of terrorism or the contagion effect. Gleason (1981), analyzed international terrorism in third world countries, using a Poisson model, and concluded that such technique does not readily allow for empirical universal generalizations on terrorism to be made.
Im, Cauley and Sandler (1987) and Enders and Sandler (1993), both did similar studies examining substituting acts of terror for one another. Im et al., (1987) used a time series spectral analysis to determine whether acts of terrorism are cyclical in nature, and whether substitution occurs during this cycle. Looking only at hostage-taking events, the authors determined that over a period of time, terrorists will change their tactics to circumvent effective counter-terrorism measures. For example, if the recent heightened airport security after “9-11” reduces terrorists ability to act, they will likely try to find another successful tactic or turn to another type of modus operandi.

Adding to this earlier study, Enders and Sandler (1993) attempted to measure the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policies during the Carter and Reagan Administrations. The authors employed vector-autoregression intervention models to test their hypotheses and concluded that certain key policy changes (like the addition of metal detectors at airports) were effective in deterring certain types of terrorism. However, echoing the previous study, they offer that this in turn has led to an increase in other forms of terrorist activities.

Brophy-Baermann et al., (1994), and Turetzky (1998), also conducted studies examining the efficacy of government counter-terrorism policies. In their 1994 study, Brophy-Baermann and Coneybeare tested the effectiveness of unexpected retaliations in causing terrorist attacks to deviate from their natural rate and whether or not their was a time inconsistency problem in responding to acts of terrorism. Using Israel as an example, and applying a time series intervention model of terrorist attacks against Israel, they found support for the natural rate hypothesis and thus support for the desirability of quick responses over policy discretion in this area.
Turetzky (1998) also examined counter-terrorism policies, but rather in Egypt during the Mubarak regime (1981-1994). Using a regression analysis, Turetzky concluded that punitive counter-terrorist actions by the Mubarak regime actually had a positive effect on the level of terrorism in Egypt, contrary to what one may believe. Thus, in this study at least, the much lauded "iron fist" hypothesis was refuted. Turetzky also tried to offer some explanation of the causes of terrorism, finding little support for the “root causes” (i.e. economic explanations) argument. Yet, he found clear support for the argument that internally organizational inertia has a notable influence on the level of terrorism. More simply, the level of terrorism in the preceding period is an important gauge of the level of terrorism during the current period (Turetzky, 1998).

This section has surveyed the “old terrorism” literature. However, throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, many studies have appeared (and probably much more will appear now after the events of “9-11”) detailing the “new terrorism”, and the increase in the number of religiously inspired terrorist groups and their effect on the nature of today’s terrorist threat. This is the body of literature I will now discuss and from which I draw my hypotheses.
Do not be misled by the new terrorists’ lack of sophistication. Actually, the new terrorism will be even deadlier than the old. It will be harder to combat to, precisely because its practitioners are less sophisticated which means less organized than their forebears and consequently more difficult to spot, track and intercept. It is much harder to infiltrate groups that are not organized in any systematic way. (Kushner, 1994, p.43)

Harvey Kushner stated this in 1994, just after the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993 and before the 1998 Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the 2000 bombing of the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen and the events of September 9, 2001 here in America. Kushner echoes the views of many authors about the “new terrorism”; the term he coined nearly a decade ago. Since then, much has been added to the literature about how terrorism has changed since the 1960s and 1970s, when the study of terrorism was just in its infancy. Most of this literature deals with the increase in religious based terrorist groups since the end of the Cold War (when most left-wing groups all but disappeared) how they differ from groups of old, and what this means for those involved with terrorism today – whether academics, policy-makers, or one of the many innocents affected by the global reach of terrorism. The works of Kushner (1994, 1998), Laqueur (1999, 2001), Benjamin (2001), Hoffmann (1993, 1997, 1998, 1998b, 1999), Enders and Sandler (2000, 2001), and Johnson (2001), deal primarily with the “changing face” of
terrorism,” and its consequences, while Juergensmeyer (2000), and White (2002) discuss the role of eschatology in many of these new types of terrorist groups.

Kushner’s (1994) work was one of the first essays written about the changing nature of the terrorist threat and it was in this piece that he coined the term, the “new terrorism.” Kushner attributed this change to the rise of Islamic revivalism after the toppling of the Shah of Iran during the 1979 Iranian Revolution. He describes how an Islamic revolutionary movement began to grow in the Middle East, a movement that supported terrorism more dangerous than the terrorism of the past that flourished under Cold War conditions. Kushner (1998) adds to his older literature by describing the nature of this new terrorist threat and how it differed from the old. According to Kushner, these new types of terrorists are less sophisticated than their forbearers, but also less organized than their secular counterparts making them more difficult to spot and intercept. He states that knowing the structure of the terrorist groups made older groups easier to fight, but today’s organizations are less structured, not hierarchical, and cell-oriented, making counter terrorism that much more difficult. He concludes by discussing their different motivational interests, (arguing that they are fostered by spiritual leaders) which he says may help to explain the massive increase in the use of suicide bombing as a main modus operandi today. He notes that one should, “be aware of the role that inspiration plays in helping precipitate the actions of those who would commit acts of terrorism.” (Kushner, 1998, p.17).

Laqueur (1999, 2001) also discusses this “new terrorism”, writing in 1999 about the role that religion is playing within these new terrorist groups. He details how twenty to thirty years ago, global terrorism was predominantly secular in orientation and either
left-wing, right-wing, or nationalist-extremist in nature, but that since then there has been a sharp increase in the number of radical religious movements which have had a significant impact on contemporary terrorism. Laqueur looks at the relationship between this rise in radical religious movements and the “new terrorism” and the effects the former has had on the latter. Like Kushner (1998), Laqueur too discusses the role of suicide missions in these organizations, adding that this is not a new phenomenon, and many groups in the past have engaged in such horrifying acts. But in the final analysis, Laqueur maintains that as other terrorist phenomena, the global wave of religious fundamentalism will not last forever, yet he is uncertain with what will replace it.

In the aftermath of the events of “9-11”, Laqueur (2001) reiterates that, “terrorism has appeared in many guises,” and that this “new terrorism” seems to just be the latest trend. (Laqueur, 2001, p.71). Laqueur is quick to point out how these groups were born on the fringe (italics mine) of several religions, attempting not to blame any one religion for the crimes committed by a minority. Echoing his previous piece, he points out that like other campaigns, this one too will come to an end, and also that suicide terror should not be strictly linked to Islam. Though many who use this tactic today are Islamic groups, other groups, like the nationalist LTTE also employ such methods. His main theme is that he is trying to reassure the reader that these movements will not last forever.

Benjamin (2001) offers a succinct yet detailed account of how these new terrorist groups differ from those of old. The old groups sought incremental change in a manner that avoided massive blood-letting, but these new groups deliberately work to maximize their carnage in trying to achieve their aims. Their aims, he argues, are monumental, “seeking nothing less than a vast redistribution of global power and a geopolitical
revolution that would end the hegemony of the United States and its Western allies” (Benjamin, 2001, p.37). Benjamin notes that these groups express their grievances in terms of religion, highlighting the examples of the religious edicts, or *fatwas*, bin Laden has issued on occasion from his Al-Qa’ida organization. He points out that these individuals draw upon Koranic verses to justify their actions and believe that their struggle is divinely mandated. He states that when groups base their actions in terms of a “metaphysical struggle,” between good and evil, the usual reluctance to use brutality indiscriminately disappears. Benjamin further goes on to discuss the nature and attributes of these groups, their goals, capabilities, and *modus operandi*. These are all found as well in the works of Bruce Hoffmann, probably the best known and most cited author on the “new terrorism,” and they will be furthered highlighted there.

Hoffmann (1993, 1998, 1998b, and 1999) discusses the same topic; the rise of religious terrorist groups, their core characteristics, and how they differ from those groups of old. Hoffmann (1993) points out that mixing religion and terrorism is not a new phenomenon, tracing its origins to the ancient Zealots, a millenarian Jewish Sect who fought against the Roman occupation between 66-73 A.D.; the Assassins, an offshoot of the Muslim Shi’a who fought the Christian Crusaders between 1090-1272 A.D.; and the Thugs, an Indian religious association who strangled travelers as a sacrifice to Kali, the Hindu goddess of terror and destruction, and who lasted for approximately 600 years killing between 500,000 to a million people.

Hoffman (1993, 1998, and 1998b) believes that the main differences between these new religious groups and secular groups are the following:
1. They have radically different value systems;
2. They have different mechanisms of legitimization and justification;
3. They have different concepts of morality;
4. And, they adhere to a Manichean world view

Hoffmann states that for the religious terrorist, “violence is first and foremost a sacramental act or divine duty executed in direct response to some theological demand or imperative.” (Hoffmann, 1993, p.2) He argues that terrorism assumes a transcendental dimension, which lifts political, moral, and practical constraints from its practitioners, constraints that in the past seemed to affect other terrorists in target selection and lethality. Religious terrorists view indiscriminate violence not only as morally justified, but also as necessary to attain their goals. Secular terrorists generally consider such indiscriminate violence immoral and counter-productive. Religion as a legitimizing force for such violence, “explains why clerical sanction is so important to religious terrorists and why religious figures are often required to “bless” terrorist operations before they are executed” (Hoffmann, 1998, p.4).

Hoffmann (1993, 1998, and 1998b) also argues that religious terrorists differ in their constituencies. Whereas secular terrorists aim to send a message to the general public or government, religious terrorists have no other constituency but themselves and God. Thus, the restraints on secular groups, wishing to appeal for the support of a constituency, are not relevant to the religious terrorist. According to Hoffmann, this leads to a sanctioning of almost limitless violence and goes far to explain the increased lethality of these groups today. He points out that a sense of alienation also allows religious
terrorists to contemplate far more deadly and destructive operations than their secular counterparts. All the above, Hoffmann believes, explain the increase in lethality of terrorist incidents today.

Hoffmann (1999) discusses in more detail the increase in lethality he associates with the rise of religious terrorist groups. Hoffmann states that although the total number of terrorist incidents has declined in the 1990s, the percentage of terrorist incidents with fatalities has increased. Hoffmann points out that, “according to the RAND-St. Andrews Chronology of International Terrorism, a record 484 international terrorist incidents were recorded in 1991, the year of the Gulf War, followed by 343 incidents in 1991, 360 in 1993, 353 in 1994, falling to 278 incidents in 1995 and to only 250 in 1996…the 1996 total was the lowest annual tally in 23 years” (Hoffmann, 1999, p.11). Yet, he points out, 1996 was the one of the bloodiest years on record.

Hoffmann (1999) offers a number of reasons for this increased lethality, including the belief that terrorists are trying to come up with more devastating acts to shake a desensitized world audience; some have become more adept at killing; the active role played by certain states in supporting or sponsoring terrorism; and the proliferation of amateurs who he argues, can be more deadly than the professionals of more traditional groups. However, the one reason he devotes the most attention to is certainly the increase during the last 15 years of terrorism motivated by religious imperative, with all its connotations as mentioned earlier. In summary, the Hoffmann thesis (as it has often been referred to) is that an increase in religiously inspired terrorist groups has led to an increase in terrorist related fatalities.
Johnson (2001) however, does not fully agree with Hoffman. In his 2001 article, Johnson offers statistics based on data collected by the CIA and subsequently submitted to the State Department for its report *Significant Incidents of Political Violence Against Americans*. Johnson found that there was indeed a reduction in the number of terrorist incidents which began during the 1980s, and the 1990s saw a significant increase in the number of people injured as a result of these attacks, but argues that religiously motivated groups have not supplanted other traditional separatist groups, but rather, during the period from 1988 to 1998, a proliferation of previously unknown groups, ethnic separatists and Marxists have dominated the top 10 consistently during this 11 year period” (Johnson, 2001, p.901). This would refute Hoffman’s thesis because if there has not been such an increase in religiously inspired groups, then how could they be responsible for the increase in fatalities?

Hoffman (1997) also followed the same line of argument as his other works. What made this piece different was that he discussed the potential use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). He argues that historically there has been an absence of serious, non-alarmist, and non-sensationalist studies in the literature when it comes to terrorists’ use of WMD. Hoffmann argues that much of the conventional wisdom about terrorism has been shattered, and that use of these weapons by one such group, is now a possibility more than ever. He references Aum Shinrikyo’s use of Sarin gas in their 1995 attack on a Japanese subway; incidents of individuals connected to various American Christian white supremacist organizations and their attempts to acquire Ricin as well as lethal quantities of the bubonic plague; and, also the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, where there is now evidence that the bombers had intended to release sodium cyanide into the damaged
tower which would have killed any survivors of the initial blast. Hoffmann offers the reader a word of caution: that we could indeed be in for an even bloodier and more destructive era of violence than before.

Quantitative work related to the “new terrorism” has been very limited. Next to Johnson (2001) the only other empirical studies of this nature are Enders and Sandler (2000, 2001). This underscores the need for more scholarly research in this very important area of study.

Enders and Sandler (2000), utilizing the ITERATE databases, applied time series techniques to investigate the current threat posed by transnational terrorist incidents. The authors find that although the actual number of transnational incidents has declined dramatically during the post-Cold War period, in more recent years, they find that, “each incident is almost 17 percentage points more likely to result in death or injuries” (Enders and Sandler, 2000, p.329). The authors investigate three alternative casualties series (acts with injuries and/or deaths, the proportion of incidents with casualties, and acts ending with death) and find that these series have increased in November 1979 with the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and again after the fourth quarter of 1991. They suggest that the growth of religious terrorism, marked by the watershed events of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, appear to account for the increase in the severity of these attacks. This adds support to Hoffmann’s hypothesis.

Enders and Sandler (2001), using alternative time series methods, investigated the patterns of transnational terrorist incidents that involved one or more deaths. Their purpose was to try to provide a better understanding of the patterns of transnational terrorism in hopes that policy-makers would derive improved policies and analysts better
predictions against future attacks like those of “9-11.” They concluded that increases in terrorist activity above the mean are not sustainable during eras of high terrorist incidents, while there is a 56% persistence for changes around the mean during eras of low terrorist activity (Enders and Sandler, 2001, p.29). This is supported when one realizes that the events of “9-11” occurred during a period of relatively low terrorist activities with actual incidents of terrorism on the decline. That suggests that piecemeal policy is ineffective and that the types of counter-terrorist actions that work best are those that reduce terrorists’ resources or lead to an increased difficulty associated with all their modes of attack. They argue that transnational terrorism after “9-11” has taken on a whole new threat level, with the resort to using WMD not an impossibility.

Juergensmeyer (2000) points out that activists from nearly all religious traditions around the world have become involved in religiously inspired terrorism today. These individuals are not only Islamic suicide bombers in the Middle East, but also Jewish assassins in Israel, a terrorist Buddhist sect in Japan, radical Hindus and Sikhs in India, and also Christian militants in the United States.

Juergensmeyer (2000) argues that to understand this “new terrorism” we need to first understand the role eschatology, and the role the idea of “cosmic war” plays in the worldviews of these individuals. He points out that many of these groups view their struggle as a battle between good and evil, and in terms of a “cosmic war.” He gives examples of the Aum sect in Japan, Rabbi Meir Kahane’s Kach party in Israel, and Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman’s circle of militant Muslims in New Jersey and Egypt as examples. These individuals, he says, believed their actions were acts of desperation in response to what they perceive as a world gone terribly awry and that theirs was a world at war.
Religious struggles in many parts of the world, he notes, even those that seem more rational because they are related to disagreements over land rights, where both sides have a legitimate claim, nonetheless have employed images of warfare on a grandiose scale. He points out that this is evident in speaking to many involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on both sides of the issue. The idea of a “cosmic struggle,” of Manichean proportions is shared by many of today’s “new breed” of terrorist and has dire consequences in terms of its lethality. As Hoffmann (1993, 1998, and 1998b) has argued, these types of worldviews limit the restraints on today’s terrorists, making them more lethal than their forebearers.

White (2002) devoted an entire chapter in his book to the role religion plays in terrorism. White argues that apocalyptic thinking (the role of eschatology) and terrorism have today become dangerous allies. According to White, eschatology is a Greek word which deals with the concept of the end of all material and purpose in time and space. In the Hebrew bible it is usually interpreted as the “day of Yahweh,” a day of final judgment and the realization of God’s purpose for creation. Mixing end of time theology with political beliefs is a prescription for violence with consequences that are indeed dramatic, or “cosmic” in proportion. Echoing Hoffman’s arguments (1993, 1998, and 1998b) about the effects these worldviews have on lifting constraints on the means of terror, White points out that, “on a cosmic battlefield, Armageddon’s warriors need no further justification to bear arms. They fight for a holy cause, and all actions are justified” (White 2002, p.54). For those in their final hours, there are no constraints.

White (2002) adds that the process of “demonization”, and “dehumanization” of the enemy, equating another group with some sort of cosmic evil, makes the destruction
of this group that much easier. In a religious war, one does not destroy human beings, rather one destroys evil. These points taken together add much support for Hoffman’s view that it is the increase in religiously inspired terrorist groups that accounts for the increased lethality of today’s “new terrorism”. But, is this really the case or is there more to the explanation?
CHAPTER 4  EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The focus of this study is to provide some empirical validity to the claim of the “Hoffmann thesis.” Again, Hoffmann (1993, 1998, 1998b, and 1999) believes there to be a link between the rise of religiously based terrorist organizations and the increased lethality of contemporary terrorism. This has been supported by the work of Enders and Sandler (2000, 2001), though Johnson (2001) has found evidence to the contrary. So, where does this issue stand?

I believe there is a correlation between the rise of religious terrorism, a necessary part of the equation, but that this is not sufficient; there is more to the story. One issue that the academic literature seems almost to have ignored is the effect that this reborn phenomenon of “suicide terror” has had on the lethality of today’s terrorism. As Rapoport (1984) points out, referring to the actions of the Assassins, a Shi’a Islamic sect that between 1090 and 1275 practiced self-sacrifice in their campaigns, this is certainly not a new phenomenon. Over the last couple decades, suicide terrorism has become a more popular modus operandi for many terrorist groups. This is evidenced most recently by the large number of attacks within the confines the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by different Islamic terrorist organizations, both within Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. According to the Jewish Virtual Library website, “as of the middle of 2001, there have
been well over 300 suicide attacks carried out in 14 countries by 17 terror organizations” (J.V.L., 2001).

Defining suicide terrorism as “the readiness to sacrifice one’s life in the process of destroying or attempting to destroy a target to advance a political goal…(while) the aim …of the terrorist is to die while destroying the enemy target,” Jane’s Intelligence Review says that the threat posed by suicide terrorism is spreading around the globe and is not only limited to religious groups. (Janes Intelligence Review, 2000, p.1). For example, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) is widely recognized as one of the most lethal terrorist groups functioning today, and they are not religiously inspired. Schweitzer (2001) argues that the Kurdish PKK, a secular, secessionist-oriented group demanding Kurdish autonomy from Turkey, carried out 16 suicide attacks, plus five that were foiled between 1996 and 1999. The Al-Aqsa Martyr’s Brigades, a Palestinian nationalist group, very active in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today, is yet another example. Is it possible then that religion may not necessarily be the connecting thread in terrorism’s new lethality? Any analysis of the lethality of contemporary terrorism must first consider this caveat: that not all of the most lethal terrorist groups active today are religious. What characteristics then do these groups share which may account for the increase in lethality? I argue that it is the increasingly popular modus operandi of many of the groups active today: the willingness to sacrifice one’s life for a cause by engaging in acts of suicide terror.

It is next necessary to outline the hypotheses I wish to test to see there is support for my addition to Hoffman’s theory. They are as follows:
H1: An increase in the number of terrorist organizations based on religious ideologies (X1), has led to an increase in the number of deaths (Y1) from terrorist acts. If this is the case, it would lend support to the suggested claim by Bruce Hoffmann that this “new breed” of terrorist is more lethal than the more traditional nationalist or left-wing groups.

H2: This increase in religious groups (X2) has led to a higher number of civilian casualties (Y2) than other groups in the past. This, if true, would lend support to the claim that this “new breed” of terrorist is more indiscriminate in nature than more traditional nationalist or left-wing groups and offer more support for Hoffmann’s arguments.

H3: Terrorist groups employing “suicide terror” as a modus operandi (X3) result in more deaths (Y3) and lead to higher civilian casualties (Z3) than do other terrorist groups employing more traditional tactics. It is important to test this third hypothesis, because as stated above, the LTTE is one of the most deadly and indiscriminate terrorist groups today, and it is not religious in nature, but rather is a nationalist group. Is this group an anomaly or does the “tactic” variable lend some more explanation to the question: why has there been an increase in lethality in today’s terrorism? This would take some support away from Hoffmann’s thesis.
DATA AND MEASUREMENT

In this section, I will proceed to detail how I will go about operationalizing and measuring the concepts contained in my hypotheses. What needs to be addressed here is the way in which I will convert my hypotheses into readily testable terms and relationships; that is, how will I measure these variables and the data source I am using.

The data I am using come from The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) website. This website offers individuals a “Terror Attack Data Base” of selected international terrorist incidents for the time period of January 1, 1980 to January 1, 2002, and covers 1173 different terrorist incidents. Each incident is disaggregated into six different component parts: the date the incident took place, the organization responsible, attack type, target type, location, casualties (whether killed or injured), and the number of terrorists involved (although this final part was not included in the data base at the time this research was done). This gives the researcher a potentially useful array of variables to employ in testing different hypotheses in the study of terrorism, especially when one considers the large number of incidents the data base covers. Why then did I choose this data?

The primary reason for choosing this data is availability. Data sources for empirical analysis on terrorism or terrorist incidents are rare, probably in part owing to the relative newness of this field of study. As a result, there has been little quantitative research in this area. When empirical studies do appear they usually base their statistical
analysis in either government sources, (i.e., State Department statistics), the RAND-St Andrews Chronology of International Terrorism which Hoffman uses, or the ITERATE data sets discussed earlier. Most academic studies employ the last.

The problems associated with these datasets primarily deal with issues of availability. Though as Mickolus (1987) states that, “terrorism can and should be studied systematically, that findings within this ‘invisible college’ should be cumulative, and that electronically retrievable data bases should be created for all to share,” (Mickolus, 1987, p.54) some data bases have been created, and yet while theoretically available to all, high costs of “sharing” these data sets, put them out of reach for many. The ICT database does not provide such a barrier as it can simply be downloaded off the World Wide Web at no cost to the user. 

The ITERATE datasets have been the most widely used by academics, but this does not mean they are without limitations as Hamilton and Hamilton (1983) point out. First of all, they argue that a necessary dependence on news-service sources for incident reports creates inherent biases towards countries with more developed and unconstrained news media sources. Secondly, the ITERATE data sets only include international terrorist incidents excluding those which happen at the domestic level. This creates a problem when examining the issue of terrorism because much of the terrorist acts occurring today, and many of the most lethal, are acts of domestic terrorism. Enders and Sandler (2001) point out that these datasets do not include much of the terrorism occurring in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, unless it harms foreigners. Considering the major role terrorism has played in this conflict and its potential impact on the volatility of this part of the world, any analysis of contemporary terrorism that does not include such incidents
would seem flawed. Enders and Sandler (2000) also point out that such dataset, including the one I utilize here, do not include incidents that were either aborted or prevented before initiation, that is, unobserved events. However, since this study focuses on lethality (deaths), this potential bias is not relevant because as they point out, aborted or prevented events cannot ex-post result in deaths.

As regards the ICT data set, there are both pros and cons to consider. The good news is that it is free to the public, so accessibility is not an issue. However, issues of validity do arise because the authors do not make available their sources or the methodology they used in case selection. How do the authors define terrorism? How did they choose the events to include in their data set? How do we know there is not an overemphasis of some groups over others? Also, most of the variables are at the nominal level of measurement thereby raising issues of data transformation (i.e. in the case of this paper, using dummy variables). This creates possible internal validity problems and biases, but with a lack of other available sources, one is forced to make due. Considering the limited nature of empirical work in this field to date, this is an issue one must attempt to work around in their endeavors.

Also worth mentioning here is the level of analysis. Efforts to categorize terrorism as a class of political violence are complicated by the fact that terrorism often occurs on different levels of analysis. For example, internal violence can often spill over borders and become transnational. This blurs the lines between domestic, national and international levels of analysis. Unfortunately, terrorism does not present a more succinct or more homogenous category of empirical events. As Crenshaw (1992) has pointed out, the tendency in the study of terrorism is to notice only the international dimension of this
aspect and thus may lead to some bias. This is evident in datasets like those of ITERATE. This thesis rather looks at terrorism on the domestic level as well, for example, including acts between the Israelis and Palestinians. Thus the level of analysis here is somewhat a blending of the international and domestic levels of analysis, in an attempt to try to avert the bias I believe many of these “international” based datasets may inadvertently contain.

The table in Appendix 1 outlines the variables I employ from the ICT data to test my hypotheses. As can be seen from the table, most of the variables used are nominal in nature and thus the use of dummy variables has become necessary. Dummy variables, or “indicator variables” measure dichotomous attributes such as white/non-white, male/female, or as an example from this paper, Religious Group/ Non-Religious Group (Achen, 1982). Further elaboration on the variables included in certain categories of these Dummy Variables (i.e., all the variables included in the Civilian variable) is listed in Appendix 2. Dummy Variables are often used as control variables in statistical analyses using multiple regression and perform the same useful function here.

The dependent variables in the two regressions are Killed and Civ2. Killed is an actual count of the number of fatalities from terrorist incidents, while Civ2 is a count of the number of civilian casualties resulting from these attacks. The independent variables of interest for these regressions are Rel, SuicideB, and Rsuic. The first variable indicates whether the attack was by a religious group, the second whether the attack was a suicide bombing, and the third denotes whether or not the incident was a suicide bombing perpetrated by a religious group or not. Variables indicating which region of the world (i.e., Reg1, Reg2, etc) the attacks take place, as well as variables denoting other types of
terrorist organizations (i.e., Nat for Nationalist groups, and LW for left-wing groups) are included in the models for control. These control variables are needed because acts of terrorism are not homogenous. That is, there will likely be more terrorism in some countries than others, and more acts by some types of groups in contrast to other types. Reg1, the Middle East variable, and LW, the variable indicating a left-wing organization, are left out of the model as means of preventing saturation of the models. These will be used as reference categories for the other independent variables; this will exclude acts of “old terrorism”, (the more familiar acts of Middle Eastern left-wing terrorism popular in the older literature) allowing for comparison with the acts of “new terrorism”, the acts of nationalist and religious groups that are more popular today. See Appendix 1 for the coding of these variables.

MODELS

To test the three hypotheses I outlined above, I employ two Ordinary Least Squares regressions. Multiple regression is used in statistical analyses so that the researcher can incorporate more than one independent variable into an equation for testing. This is useful because it can aid in providing a fuller explanation of the dependent variables since very few phenomenon are the result of only one factor, and further, the effects of particular independent variables can be made more certain. For example, in my first model, both Religion and Suicide Bombing can be included as independent variables in a single equation to measure the effects they both independently have on the dependent variable Killed. According to Lewis-Beck (1980), the separate effects of each of these
independent variables can be measured because the possibility of distorting influences from other independent variables in the equation (control variables) are removed.

Testing of the three hypotheses can be done through the estimation of two different OLS models. Two different equations, the first employing the number of people killed (Killed) as the dependent variable and the second the number of civilian casualties (Civ2) will be used testing the effects that both religion and suicide bombing have on each respectively. Also included in these equations is another variable RSUIC (religious suicide bombing), an interaction variable that takes into account the effects, if any, that religiously inspired suicide bombngs may have on either of the dependent variables. This is added to account for the possibility that it is not only the effects that one of these independent variables has on the dependent which accounts for its variation, but rather there is the possibility that it is a combination of variables (here, the intermingling of religion and suicide bombing), which may better explain the variance in the dependent variables. Again, other types of terrorist organizations (nationalist and left-wing) as well the various regions these incidents occur in, are used as control variables. Reg1 and LW are dropped to prevent saturation in the models, thus becoming reference points for the other independent variables, as they are accounted for in the constant. This in effect provides a method to compare “old terrorism” (mostly left-wing and Middle Eastern in Origin) to “new terrorism”, nationalist and religious groups which often use suicide terror as their main form of attack.

To measure the effects of religion, suicide bombing and the intermingling of the two, on the number or terrorist related deaths and civilian casualties, is in effect an attempt to test Hoffmann’s hypothesis that religious terrorism has led to an increase in
related fatalities and indiscriminate casualties, while hopefully adding some support for my supposition that suicide bombing may have a role to play in the equation. I offer the following two models as tests of these hypotheses.

MODEL ONE

\[ \text{Killed} = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{Rel}) + \beta_2(\text{Nat}) + \beta_3(\text{Reg2}) + \beta_4(\text{Reg3}) + \beta_5(\text{Reg4}) + \beta_6(\text{Reg5}) + \]
\[ \beta_7(\text{Reg6}) + \beta_8(\text{SuicideB}) + \beta_9(\text{RSUIC}) + \varepsilon_i. \]

MODEL TWO

\[ \text{Civ2} = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{Rel}) + \beta_2(\text{Nat}) + \beta_3(\text{Reg2}) + \beta_4(\text{Reg3}) + \beta_5(\text{Reg4}) + \beta_6(\text{Reg5}) + \]
\[ \beta_7(\text{Reg6}) + \beta_8(\text{SuicideB}) + \beta_9(\text{RSUIC}) + \varepsilon_i. \]

Again, see Appendices One and Two for descriptions of the coding of the relevant variables employed in the above two OLS models.
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings from the empirical analysis lend mixed support for Hoffmann’s hypothesis tying religiously motivated terrorist groups to an increase in lethality and indiscriminate violence towards civilians. However, considerable support is found for the hypotheses I offer, that suicide bombing as a tool of terror is highly significant in trying to explain the increase in today’s lethality. There is support in both cases for adding an interaction variable for religiously motivated suicide bombings: when one mixes suicide terror with religion, it does lead to an increase in fatalities, and it is also much more likely to lead to acts of terrorist violence, more indiscriminate in nature, with high civilian casualties a likely outcome.

The table in Appendix 3 summarizes the results from the regression analysis in which KILLED was used as the dependent variable. Overall, the variables included in the model can account for 3.55% of the variation in the dependent variable. While it is true that this is not a very high percentage, when one considers all the possible factors that could be involved in trying to explain the variation of this phenomenon, while at the same time trying to keep the model parsimonious, this becomes less of an issue. Nonetheless, the model provides the reader though with useful information on the relationships between the dependent variable and other independent variables employed in its attempted explanation.
As for the number of terrorist related fatalities, the most important finding in Appendix 3 is that non-religious suicide bombing, is highly significant (with a coefficient of 10.823 at the 0.05 level of significance (one-tailed test). and exerts on strong influence on the number of terrorist related fatalities. From looking at its coefficient, when other variables are held constant, it can be inferred that each non-religious suicide bombing attack is associated with close to 11 (10.79) more deaths than older style groups that did not use such a tactic. This supports my hypothesis that groups employing suicide terror are more deadly than their older counterparts. At the same time, one finds that religion comes up statistically significant with a coefficient of 2.888 at the 0.5 level of significance (one tailed test). This means that religiously motivated terror attacks are responsible for 2.888 more deaths, on average, than the reference category: left-wing Middle Eastern groups, in effect, “old terrorism”. This adds support to Hoffman’s hypothesis as well as mine: that groups using suicide terror as their modus operandi result in more fatalities than their more traditional counterparts.

Appendix Three further shows that religion and suicide bombing make a deadly combination. Religiously inspired suicide attacks result in 5.6 more deaths than attacks by old style terrorist groups. However, of more importance is the finding above, that suicide bombing that is not religiously based (i.e. performed by nationalist groups like the LTTE or PKK) lead to almost 11 more deaths on average than those associated with religion. This is contrary to Hoffmann’s thesis because it suggests that other groups, not religious in nature, are more violent than some of their religious counterparts.

Also of significance in this model were the region variables for Eurasia (Reg3), Africa (Reg4), and South/Central America (Reg6). The first shows that terrorist attacks
taking place in Eurasia lead to just over 5 (5.130) more deaths than those in the Middle East, while those transpiring in Africa and South/Central America generally result just over 9 and 2.6 more deaths, respectively per terror attack, than those occurring in the Middle Eastern region.

Appendix Four summarizes the results of the regression analysis in which civilian casualties was used as the dependent variable. This second model, like the first, does not account for a large amount of the variance in the dependent variable, in this case 3.25%, but as mentioned before, this is not much of an issue here. What is of most interest here is that the interaction variable, taking into account the intermingling of religion and suicide bombing as a tactic, is significant with a coefficient of .483 at the 0.001 level of significance (one-tailed test). Calculating the appropriate expected value, this means that each incident of religious suicide bombing results in 0.236 more civilian casualties, than those attacks by old style groups. This provides some more evidence (however small in magnitude) in support of the notion that religion and suicide bombing are a volatile mixture.

Suicide bombing also came up statistically significant, -0.206 at the 0.05 level (one-tailed test), which means that non-religious suicide bombing leads to 0.206 fewer civilian casualties than those suicide bombings by religious groups. This makes intuitive sense: if it is true that non-religious suicide bombings (i.e., those by the LTTE) are more lethal than its religious counterparts, then it also makes sense that there would be less civilian casualties because these other groups have better perfected this modus operandi increasing its lethality and decreasing the probability of people escaping only injured.
This undermines Hoffmann’s thesis that religious groups are more indiscriminate in nature and lead to more civilian casualties.

The Reg2 variable, indicating attacks that occurred in Europe, also came up statistically significant in this model with a coefficient of –0.144 with a p value of less than 0.001 (one-tailed test). This indicates that there are approximately 0.144 fewer civilian casualties per terrorist incident in Europe as compared to the Middle East. This also makes sense because most of the groups active in Europe have been mostly left-wing/secular groups of the older type, generally more interested in political targets rather than indiscriminate violence, for these types of groups generally consider such indiscriminate violence immoral and counter-productive.

Religion (as it pertains to Hoffman’s hypothesis) did not come up highly significant in this model, adding little support for his hypothesis about the indiscriminate nature of religious groups’ attacks while adding more tacit support to my hypothesized relationship between suicide bombing and the increase in fatalities today from terrorism. According to the model, attacks by religious organizations are responsible for 0.041 fewer civilian casualties per incident than more traditional type terrorist groups, thus not supporting his hypothesis that these groups are more indiscriminate, but could imply that since they are injuring less civilian casualties. They are actually killing more in turn, in effect, validating his thesis as concerns religious groups and increased fatalities.

As mentioned above, suicide bombing and religiously inspired suicide bombing do seem to be part of the equation, adding support for the notion that suicide terrorism as a modus operandi does merit analysis in the study of terrorism and its increased lethality. While suicide terrorism itself does not appear to increase civilian casualties, when it is
coupled with religion, this becomes a different story. This supports my suggestion that religion itself may be a necessary part of the explanation, but not a sufficient one, and that the willingness of an individual to sacrifice themselves for their cause may be part of the larger explanation and needs further analysis in the literature.
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

To date, the study of terrorism has suffered from a focus on only remedies to the problem and less on understanding the phenomenon itself, and its only when we gain a better understanding of the roots of this problem that any headway will be made against this threat.

I do feel that such a study indeed makes a valuable contribution towards theory building. Within the wider field of political violence, there should be a greater appreciation of the heterogeneity of this phenomenon. According to Crenshaw (1992), researchers should concentrate on developing explanations of categories of political violence, such as terrorism itself, rather than general theories. She observes that analyses combining disparate phenomena can only lead to confused results, and what is needed is a focused comparison of cases that are fundamentally similar. (Crenshaw, 1992). This study meets this need and constitutes an addition to the scholarly work on political violence and terrorism in particular. Though this analysis cannot provide a definitive solution to the problem of terrorism, it seeks to point others in the right direction.

This study has provided some insight on the lethality of today’s terrorism. It has provided some mixed support for Bruce Hoffmann’s hypotheses. On the one hand, it does provide evidence that religious groups do have a significant effect on the number or terrorist related fatalities, but does not provide empirical support that these types of groups are more indiscriminate and lead to higher numbers of civilian casualties. On the
other hand, this study has provided considerable support for the hypothesis I offered; that is, that the advent of the use of suicide terrorism as a tactic, has had a significant effect on the number of people killed from terrorist attacks. It seems that a willingness to sacrifice one’s self for their cause, has reintroduced a very deadly modus operandi for many terrorist groups acting today, and not only those religious in nature as this study has pointed out. This contradicts Hoffmann’s hypothesis stating that today’s lethality is due primarily to an increase in religious based groups.

The significance of this study is threefold. Firstly, it provides evidence that further to Hoffmann’s hypothesis, there is more to the story of this “new terrorism’s” lethality than the type of group involved. I have shown that in such an explanation, it is necessary to look at the type of terror tactic these groups employ. Suicide terrorism as a tactic has been shown to account for much of this increased lethality, and this has been shown to not only be with religious groups, but it is even more deadly in the hands of other groups, like the Tamil Tigers and Kurdistan Worker’s Party, both nationalist organizations.

Secondly, this analysis has shown that any study of the lethality of terrorism, and attempts to create new data bases for such studies, must include groups other than those only transnational in character (i.e. domestic groups like those mentioned above, as well as those involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) as they are some of the most lethal terrorist organizations active today. Many of these groups are not included in such datasets, though they are mentioned in the news on a daily basis. Any study on the lethality of terrorism that does not include such groups would seem flawed. Considering the lethality of these groups and the effects they can have on politics in often volatile
regions of the world, more study of these groups and the tools of their trade, like suicide terrorism, are necessary.

Finally, this study helps point policy-makers in the right direction. Now that it has been shown that suicide terrorism has a significant effect on the increase in the lethality of today’s terrorism, this should prod scholars and policy-makers into seeking creative solutions to this problem. They need to focus on the following question: what is it that leads a person to sacrifice him/herself for a cause? They need to try to discover the root causes of this phenomenon so that an attempt to alleviate it can be made.

Where does one go from here is the next question. What are some possible avenues for further research? Firstly, more research needs to be done on suicide terrorism. Suicide terrorism has become a widely popular tactic with many different terrorist organizations active today, especially in the Middle East. Given the volatility of the situation between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and the role suicide bombing has played in the conflict by such groups as Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, more understanding of the phenomenon and its root causes are necessary if the situation is to be remedied. Terrorism literature is nearly void of discussion on this topic, especially as regards quantitative analysis of the subject, which is widely acknowledged to be lacking at best. Given the results of this study, and especially in the aftermath of September 11th (essentially was a suicide mission, just on a very large scale), this type of research is indeed both timely and policy-relevant, and as well necessary if we are to comprehend much of what comprises modern day terrorism and if we are to find a solution to the problems it creates.
APPENDIX 1

OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES
APPENDIX 1

OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables (DV=Dep Var, IV=Ind Var)</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People Killed (Killed) = DV</td>
<td>Actual Number of Deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Casualties (Civ2) = DV</td>
<td>Actual Number of Civilian Casualties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Group (Rel) = IV</td>
<td>Dummy Variable (0=Not Religious, 1=Religious)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist Group (Nat) = IV</td>
<td>Dummy Variable (0=Not Nationalist, 1=Nationalist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-Wing Group (LW) = IV</td>
<td>Dummy Variable (0=Not Left-Wing, 1=Left-Wing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region Attack Took Place (Reg1, Reg2, etc) = IV</td>
<td>Dummy Variables coded by region (i.e., 0=Not Middle East, 1=Middle East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide Bombing (SuicideB) = IV</td>
<td>Dummy Variable (0=Not a Suicide Bombing, 1=Suicide Bombing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Suicide Bombing (RSUIC) = IV</td>
<td>Dummy “Interaction” Variable Coding interaction between SuicideB and RSUIC (0=Not a Religious Suicide Bombing, 1=Religious Suicide Bombing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2

CODING OF DUMMY VARIABLES
APPENDIX 2
CODING OF DUMMY VARIABLES

REGION

Region 1 = Middle East North Africa (MENA).
This region includes the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Cyprus, Gaza, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkey, West Bank, Yemen, and “enroute to London from Jedda, Saudi Arabia,” and “over the Arabian Sea, Saudi Arabia.”

Region 2 = Europe.
This region includes the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Serbia and Montenegro, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and “Six Western European Countries, Europe.”

Region 3 = Eurasia
This region includes the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chechnya, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Latvia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Tajikistan, Thailand, and “Kashmir, India”.

Region 4 = Africa
This region includes the following countries: Angola, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Rhodesia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Region 5 = North America
This region includes the following countries: U.S.A.

Region 6 = South / Central America
This region includes the following countries: Argentina, Bermuda, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.
RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Includes:

Abu-Sayyaf Group, Al-Gama-a al Islamiyya (The Islamic Group, IG), Al-Qa’ida, Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Aum Shinrikyo, Dukhtaran-E-Millat, HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement), Harakat ul-Mujahedin (HUM), Hizballah (Party of God), Hizb-ul Mujahideen, International Justice Group (al-Jihad), Islamic Movement for Change, Jihad Group, Kach and Kahane Chai, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO), Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Qibla and People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), Sipah-e-Shahaba (SSP), and The Islamic Great Eastern Raiders/Front.

NATIONALIST GROUPS

Includes:

Al Faran, Algeti Wolves, Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA), Breton Revolutionary Army (ARB), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Fatah Revolutionary Council (Abu Nidal Organization), Fatah Tanzim, Force 17, Irish Republican Army (IRA), Jammu and Kashmir, Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK), Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE), Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF), Martyrs of al-Aqsa, National Liberation Front of Corsica (FLNC), National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Palestine Liberation Front, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Real IRA, United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), and Sikh terrorism.

LEFT-WING GROUPS

Includes:

Bavarian Liberation Army, Chukaka-Ha (Nucleus of Middle Core Faction), Ejercito Popular de Liberation, Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), First of October Antifacist Resistance Groups (GRAPO), Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR), Morazanist Patriotic Front, National Liberation Army (ELN), Nestor Paz Zamora Commission (CNPZ), New People’s Army, Party of Democratic Kampuchea, People’s Liberation Army, Red Army Faction (RAF), Red Brigades (BR), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front (DHCP/F), Revolutionary Organization 17 November, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), Tupac Katari Guerilla Army (EGTK), Turkish Worker’s and Peasant’s Liberation Army (TIKKO), and the United Popular Action Movement (Mapu Lautaro Group),
CIVILIAN TARGETS

Includes from the ICT data base the following listed targets:

Beach / Waterfront, Bus, Businessperson, Bus Stop, Celebrity / Personality, Civilian, Entertainment Facility, Garage, Marketplace, Place of Worship, Restaurant, School / University, Shopping Center, Store, Student, Hotel, Tourist, and Tourist Site.

Those targets included in the ICT data base but not included here as “civilian” targets include the following:

Aircraft, Building, Cargo Transport, Checkpoint/Border Crossing, Convoy, Dissident, Bank, Embassy, Government Personnel, Military Personnel, Office, Peace-Keeping Mission, Pipeline/Power-line, Plant/Factory, Police Facility/Personnel, Religious Figure, Train/Railway, Ship, and Vehicle.

These targets were not included because they can be categorized as political, military, or religiously significant in nature, or they were infrastructural targets. Secondly, it is not readily discernable as to whether or not the prime motive is actually civilian casualties with many of these target choices, and thus their inclusion in the model would be problematic.
APPENDIX 3

REGRESSION MODEL ONE (DEP VAR = Killed)
APPENDIX 3

REGRESSION MODEL ONE (DEP VAR = Killed, ONE-TAILED TEST)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Group</td>
<td>2.888*</td>
<td>1.447</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist Group</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>1.265</td>
<td>0.401</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 2 (Europe)</td>
<td>1.330</td>
<td>1.395</td>
<td>0.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 3 (Eurasia)</td>
<td>5.130***</td>
<td>1.323</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4 (Africa)</td>
<td>9.431***</td>
<td>2.330</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5 (N.A.)</td>
<td>0.160</td>
<td>6.500</td>
<td>0.490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6 (S/C America)</td>
<td>2.630*</td>
<td>1.580</td>
<td>0.048</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suicide Bombing</td>
<td>10.823**</td>
<td>3.793</td>
<td>0.002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Suicide Bombing</td>
<td>-8.100*</td>
<td>4.758</td>
<td>0.045</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.028</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>0.130</td>
</tr>
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</table>

R^2                             .0355

Adjusted R^2                    .0279

F (9, 1145)                     4.69

N=1155

*significant at .05.
**significant at .01.
***significant at .001.
APPENDIX 4

REGRESSION MODEL TWO (DEP VAR = Civ2, ONE-TAILED TEST)
### APPENDIX 4

**REGRESSION MODEL TWO (DEP VAR = Civ2, ONE-TAILED TESTS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>P-value</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Nationalist Group</td>
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<td>Region 2 (Europe)</td>
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<td>0.044</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 3 (Eurasia)</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.374</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 4 (Africa)</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.073</td>
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<td>Region 5 (N.A.)</td>
<td>0.167</td>
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<td>Region 6 (S/C America)</td>
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<td>0.049</td>
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<td>Suicide Bombing</td>
<td>-0.206*</td>
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<td>Religious Suicide Bombing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
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<tr>
<td>$F(9, 1147)$</td>
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<tr>
<td>N=1157</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

*significant at .05.

**significant at .01.

***significant at .001.
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The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism: [www.ict.org.il/](http://www.ict.org.il/)


