

Dying with the enemy: Interrogating the roles of religion in social support for suicide terrorism

UNACHUKWU Ugochukwu Vitus *

Department of Defence Studies, King's College London, England.

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Abstract

Suicide terrorism seemingly employed to settled conflicts between the Shiite and the Sunnis, mixed with the Salafis ideology of violence is also seen used for demand for State of Islam, national liberation, and propagation against democracies, mis-governance, and secularism amongst others. Terror cells groups could be seen aggravating suicide terrorism by substituting suicide for martyrdom. It was against this background that this study engage religious belief hypothesis to interrogate the roles of religion in garnering social support for suicide terrorism. The study decomposes roles of religion in suicide terrorism into crises between the Shiites and the Sunnis, substitution of suicide with martyrdom. The study employed desktop research design with reliance historical and secondary data from extant literature. The study concludes that the manipulation of the religious injunctions, extremist interpretation of religious teachings, as well as advancement of religion facade for economic gains stronger motivation for people who support suicide terrorism. Finding from the study showed that there would be no successful suicide terror campaign without the support of the society where the suicide terrorists reside and whose interest they claim to be defending. The study recommends that distorted ideology driven by religion can only be countered by respected Islamic clerics and leaders, especially from the Arab world with covert Western support to circumvent the perverted narrative of martyrdom as sacrifice for the good of the land, people or God, and rather brand it as common suicide and an honourless venture.

Keywords: Martyrdom; Religious Belief Hypothesis; Social Supports; Suicide Terrorism

1. Introduction

Suicide terrorism could be thought of as belonging to an extreme subset of parochial altruism, combining a parochial act and the ultimate sacrifice for a group, wherein the attacker sacrifices self to kill out a group of enemies (Choi & Bowles, 2007). Illustratively, the lethality and high casualty ratio of suicide terrorism could be seen in its over 2,153 suicide attacks worldwide from 1980- 2009 (Pape & Feldman, 2010), to approximately one suicide per day from 2003 to 2015 (Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST), (2015). The religion nexus giving credence to suicide terrorism are situated in martyrdom, politics of jihad, al-Qaida and global jihad, crisis of Islam and Salafism, as well as Sunni and Shiite conflict (Greenland, 2020; Sieck 2011; Tosini 2010a)

Groups seeking political objectives most times bring in religion to boost their social support base, with 'for God and Ulster' slogan against Irish Republican Army (Jurgensmayer, 2003). The realization that political narratives might not resonate well and endure the test of time is also the reason why secular groups leverage on religious sentiments to give a veneer of meaning, purpose and morality to their suicide operations most times (Tosini, 2009). Worryingly, the belief that Islam is under threat was discovered to be greatest motivation for participation and support of extreme sacrifices like suicide terrorism (Fair & Shepherd, 2006). If a Muslim person lives a life of guilt and suddenly begin to live an austere Muslim lifestyle with attendance to Muslim extremist mosques, such could be a warning sign that the

*Corresponding author: UNACHUKWU Ugochukwu Vitus

person is potentially considering *istishadi* (escaping hell through martyrdom). This could be a flag raiser and intervention from intelligence organizations or police may be necessary (Rinehart, 2021).

The proponents of the religious logic identified the vision of religious renaissance, especially in Islam; the hope of greater Islamic caliphate, restoration of Islamic code as the global ruling order and the driving force behind the modern suicide terror campaigns (Berman, 2009). Nevertheless, in discounting the religious logic behind suicide terrorism, the strategic logic of removing foreign threat to local culture was however advocated (Bloom, 2006). Though, religion has been equally acknowledged as a factor in suicide terrorism, its relevance is however limited to a recruiting tool in the context of national resistance (Atran, 2006).

The marked differences between Salafist ideology and mainstream Islam, in a number of ways promote suicide bombing, including Salafist dogmatic, rigid and literal interpretation of the Quran, Sunna and hadiths (Moghadam, 2008). Whereby, the Salafists reject other forms of Islam and model themselves strictly on the pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-salih*) (Moghadam, 2006c). They adopted the Wahhabi classification of the Christians and the Jews as unbelievers (*kuffar*) instead of the traditional Islamic term of people of the book (*Ahl al-katib*), and classification of non-pious Muslims as infidels (*takfiri*). Furthermore the Salafists advocated the use of violence against non-Muslims and Muslims alike in the pursuit of an Islamist state, categorizing both near and far enemy as legitimate targets alike (Sagemen, 2006). Consequent upon the rationalization of the killing of unbelievers and impious Muslims, the support for suicide terrorism against the enemy thus becomes justified and buoyed in most Islamic communities (Ibrahim, 2007).

Interestingly, terror cell groups leverage on the life of prophet Mohammed who faced several persecutions for his faith, and fighting battles in the defence of Islam for emulation (Kanazawa, 2007). This is cleverly done by substituting suicide for the term martyrdom to justify their operations, being that both Christianity and Islam forbid adherents from committing suicides (Israeli, 2003). While condemning suicides, terror groups promote martyrdom instead, as a new beginning for hope and deliverance, an honourable act worthy of emulation (Piazza, 2008a). Therefore, in generating social support for martyrdom, terror groups do venerate the martyrs like conferring the title of father and mother martyrs on the parents of martyrs, conducting ceremonies to honour martyrs (Bloom, 2005). The militant groups also create posters, web sites, and public exhibits to honour the martyrs, with many important infrastructures in Palestine and Tamils territory being named after martyrs (Bonney, 2004). The combined effect of these strategies is that the public has come to view martyrdom and self-immolation as an exalted status worthy of aspiration, thus transforming cruel terror into sacred missions in the mind of the public (Hafez, 2006a).

The effect of religion on the generation and sustenance of social support for suicide terrorism is situated in radical Islamic clerics and by the fact that majority of the recorded suicide terrorists are Muslims (Moghadam, 2009), though that doesn't mean that only Muslims are suicide terrorists (Bergen & Hoffman, 2010). Consequently, Al-Qaida and its affiliated groups, as well as Hamas, Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, AQIM, ISIS, Boko Haram, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) are central to the promotion of martyrdom, politics of jihad, crisis of Islam, as well as Sunni – Shiite conflict.

Concerningly, wave of revivalism became an opportunity for terror cell groups, to frame their suicide tactics as a fulfilment of sacred imperatives to fight injustice and liberation (Syed, 2010). This is done by linking self-sacrifice to Islamic identity and liberation, thus the social support for suicide terrorism (Moghadam, 2008). Accordingly Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), proclaimed Jihad as an individual obligation instead of collective one, thus every Muslim is obliged to wage a jihad in defence of Islam, its people, lands, property and institution (Sosis & Ruffle, 2003). With the active support of prominent Islamic scholars, they produced the narrative that individual obligation for jihad arises whenever Muslim lands are threatened by powerful forces in order to expel them, just as praying, fasting and giving alms are obligatory to the same Muslims (Riedel, 2008).

To fulfil the objective of this study, answers are provided to the research question below;

1.1. What is the influence of the roles of religion in social support for suicide terrorism?

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section II presents a review of the literature on Suicide terrorism, Religion, Religion Social Supports. Section III briefly discusses the empirical review in the paper. Section IV describes the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Section V presents the methodology adopted by the study. The final section provides concluding remarks and recommendations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Suicide Terrorism

Suicide terrorism involves self-destruction and killing others, and throughout history, people have killed others in the name of religion, though distinct from killing oneself (Bar, 2006). Suicide terrorism is a subset of terrorism, as a subject, has been as controversial as defining terrorism itself, and has attracted different interpretations from different practitioners and scholars alike (Moghadam, 2006b). Terms like martyrdom operations on the other hand highlights religious connotation of such attacks, thus excluding the same form of attacks by secular groups (Stern, 2003). Common grounds are shared that suicide terrorism involves the death of the attacker tied to that particular attack (Moghadam, 2006b). This therefore qualifies the 9/11 attack as a suicide terrorism as the attackers died in the attack, while the 2004 Madrid train bombings doesn't qualify as suicide terrorism as the attackers did not die in the attack, rather they committed suicide latter (Neumann, 2006).

Nevertheless, the narrow approach to defining suicide terrorism affirms the death of the attacker as a precondition for the success of the operation (Gambetta, 2005), while the attacker's death must also be concurrent with that of the targeted victim(s) (Ganor, 2002). Thus, the Bali night club bombings of 2002, the 2011 Abuja UN house bombing, and the October 2000 bombing of USS Cole in Yemen are all suicide terrorism, since the attackers died concurrently with their targeted victims (Johnson 2011). However, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the Jewish Zealots of 18th Century, and the 1994 Goldstein Baruch's attack on the Ibrahimmosque are not suicide terrorism, since the attacker did not die concurrently with their targeted victims (Glucklich 2009). This narrow definition has been under attack from the proponents of the broad definition who accuse it of excluding important incidents and occurrences while presenting data for suicide terrorism analysis (Moghadam, 2008).

Consequently, the broad definition of suicide terrorism relies more on the willingness of an attacker to die in the course of the attack (Pape 2005), as it de-emphasises the issue of the death of the attacker and the victim taking place concurrently. The broad definition rather emphasises the ultimate death of the attacker or the willingness of the attacker to die in the course or after the attack (Ganor, 2005). Besides the issue of the timing of the death of the attacker, other contending issues includes that of successful and unsuccessful suicide attacks, as well as those attackers who did not know that they were being used for suicide mission (Hafez 2006b). While Mintz et al. (2006) contends that a failed attack with suicide motive could pass for suicide terrorism, Pape (2010), Moghadam (2006), and Hafez (2006c) submits that a failed attacks should not be counted as suicide terrorism. These definitional contentions notwithstanding, this study supports the position of the narrow definition of suicide terrorism and adopts the suicide terrorism to mean;

'a politically motivated violent operation carried out consciously, actively, and with the premeditated intention of an individual (or a number of individuals) to kill himself or herself along with a chosen target. The planned and certain death of the perpetrator by such an act is a necessary precondition for the success of the operation' (Schweitzer 2006).

It further concurs with the postulation of Moghadam (2006a) that for suicide terrorism to occur there must be individual, group and social support, thus the three distinctive level analyses.

2.2. Individual support

The individual level is where the best analysis about the motivations of militants involved in orchestrating suicide terrorism. The relevance of individual decision in suicide terrorism is linked to the same reason why war exists, because whereas some individuals have resorted violent confrontations in the face of challenges, some others rather opt for non-violent approach to problems (Pedahzur, 2005). Thus, Waltz (1982) blames the causes of war on the nature and behaviour of man. The inability to assess successful terrorists in death to explain their motivations is a constraining factor (Sageman, 2006). However, many successful studies have relied on the analysis of martyrdom videos left behind by the individuals before their attacks, as well as information gleaned from the attackers' friends and families (Bloom 2005). Religion, revenge, humiliation, peer and family influence, as well as economics, diffusion of responsibility and dehumanization were all found to play a part (Ismayilov, 2010). Notwithstanding the various motivations, no individual according to Pedahzur (2005) carries out suicide attacks without a group sponsor and planner.

2.3. Group support

The organizational analysis is very important because although suicide terror is committed by individuals, it is normally planned and sponsored by an organization who takes credit for it (Hoffman 2006). At the organizational level, Moghadam (2003) opines that the analysis revolves on why a group may resort to suicide terrorism as their tactics. The determination of the high value target for suicide attack, the mode of the attack, the timing and who will conduct the

suicide attack are all organizational roles and responsibilities in suicide terrorism (Ismayilov 2010). An analysis of the nature of groups that have adopted suicide terrorism as their modus operandi reveals that they cut across both religious and nationalistic lines like Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Hamas, al-Qaida, PKK, Boko Haram, al-shabaab and others (Johnson, 2011). Identified drivers for these groups include; nationalism, economic, political, religious, supports and social benefits (Glucklich, 2009). Identified drivers are blamed in direct relation to the groups' environment, while religion and politics have featured prominently in most cases (Pape & Feldman, 2010).

Interestingly, research has further proven that a group might have their environmental (social) support for other forms of armed opposition and terrorism, but the application of suicide terror might be rejected by the populace owing to their aversion for such an extreme form of violence (Gunaratna, 2002). This therefore implies why the group level analysis cannot be done in isolation of the social factors (Victor, 2003). Additionally, the fact that majority of the people that carry out suicide operations on behalf of a group are sometimes not members of the group, highlights the role of the group to include that of ideologue and organizers (Merari, 2010). Consequent upon the above, the group serves as a platform for the mobilization of recruits and social support for suicide terror campaigns, without which the campaign cannot succeed (Barbalet, 2006).

2.4. Social Support

Karl Marx submits that every individual needs a societal platform to achieve a revolution (Hafez, 2006), this also applies to the high human life consuming venture like suicide terrorism. Thus, Bloom (2006) argues that the public response to the use of suicide terrorism depends on how the tactic is used, against whom, and for what purpose. If the suicide terror attacks don't resonate in the form of high enemy casualty yield and wider publicity to the plight of the people, it would fail to win the hearts and minds of the populace, and will not continue in such circumstance. Additionally, since suicide terrorism is meant to serve a community, nation or religion, it is affected much by the opinion and attitudes (social support) of the community from where they emerge (Brym, 2009).

The reported use of captured Ulster Orangemen to drive Explosive laden cars unto military and police targets in central London and Manchester by the IRA could not continue due to its rejection by the larger Catholic community (Cole & Cole, 2007). However, the reverse is the case in Palestine, Where suicide terror is considered appropriate response to the enemy, with every successful suicide attack followed by elaborate celebrations (Shay, 2004). This explains why suicide attacks occur more in Palestine than Western Europe, apart link between civilization and social support for suicide terrorism (Stern, 2010). Conclusively, since militant groups and their members don't exist in a vacuum, social support for suicide terrorism seems mandatory, as its absence could lead to the extermination of the insurgent group, due to its implications on recruitment, security and even logistics support (Hewitt, 2008).

2.5. Religion and Social Support for Suicide Terrorism

All the three monotheistic religion of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam traditionally forbids suicide, although they all sanctified willingness to die in defence of the faith, as long as death is inflicted by the enemy rather than by the martyr himself (Korbin, 2010). The relationship between religion and support for suicide terrorism, have always been explained by the 'religious-belief hypothesis' which emphasises after-life reward, combative martyrdom, or denigration of people of the other faith (Dawkins, 2003). Religious-belief hypothesis therefore favours the notion that measures of devotion to specific beliefs should positively predict support for suicide terrorism (Alvanou, 2008).

The collective religious ritual common to mosques, churches, synagogues, temples or shrines involving ritualized collective movements are therefore seen to be enhancing collective commitment and fictive kinship (van Baaren et al., 2004). Study reveals that regular attendance of religious services positively predicted a willingness to commit or support suicide terrorism, but regular prayers don't (Argo, 2010). Coalitional-commitment hypothesis therefore advances that; the relationship between religion and support for suicide terrorism is a by-product of the positive effect of collective religious ritual on commitment, and thus the attendance to collective religious activities should positively predict support for suicide terrorism (Ginges et al., 2009).

2.6. Martyrdom and the Politics of Jihad

Militant groups employing suicide technique foster the culture of martyrdom on the populace to generate their support (Moghadam, 2008). This move is always not about brainwashing or manipulation, but framing of self-immolation as an ultimate act of redemption (Irons, 2001). The redemption in this context could mean adherence to one's avowed identity when loyalty to this identity is being questioned, and the other implies salvation of self or valued kindred from perceived dangers (Glucklich, 2009). Thus, rather than shy away, individuals choose to defend their identity when challenged through acts of heroism and sacrifice, in this instance self-sacrifice alongside the enemy (Slavicek, 2008).

Secondly, the Qua’ranic verses and hadiths supporting jihad and martyrdom has always been quoted to urge Muslims to fight fearlessly and die in the way of the lord – Martyrdom, as they would be rewarded by God (Lewinstein, 2001). Thus, Jessica Stern (2003) supports that the prophetic traditions and teachings that venerate martyrdom has always been framed and highlighted by the militant groups with the active support of Islamic clerics to the effect that:

“When a martyr meets his maker, all his sins are forgiven from the first gush of blood. He is exempted from the ‘torments of the grave’ (judgement); he sees his place in paradise, he is shielded from the great shock; and marries 72 dark eyed virgins. He is anheavenly advocate for 70 members of his family, on his head is placed a crown of honour, one stone of which is worth more than all there is in this world” (Hoffman, 2006).

Finally, religious motivation for social support for martyrdom therefore is not limited to Islam, as both the Christianity, and Judaism have their own doctrinal loopholes which extremists exploit (Bennet, 2002). The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the former Israeli Prime minister by Yigal Amir was for messianic Zionism, while the attack on the Jewish day care centre in the USA by Timothy McVeigh and Bufford Furrow, as well America’s Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski, were all for God and in God’s name (Unachukwu, 2011). Furthermore, the AunShinriko Sect subway gas attack, and preparation for a final battle with the Japanese authority were all supported by religious sentiments and framing (Abrahams, 2006).

2.7. Crisis of Islam and Salafism

Salafist ideology promotes suicide terror in its trail (Sieck, 2011), even as longing for purity and or strong commitment to religion, especially Islam may drive individuals to give their life as a suicide terrorist, with their respective communities supporting them (Bloom, 2006). The Salafs have identified what they term Western war on Islam which is linked to Western arrogance, military incursions, Western hegemony, as well as the imposition of Western ideology with the collusion of Arab governments. On the other hand, their jihad support includes Muslim faith, self-sacrifice, Muslim honour, leadership legitimacy, the Islamic caliphate and finally Islamic glory, all of which are under threat from the Western war on Islam (Atwan, 2006). The global Salafism therefore was born out of the belief that Islam has fallen from its prominent position in the world, because Muslims have strayed from the righteous path (Gerges, 2007). The revivalist version of Islam advocating a return to the old version of Islam is therefore called Salafi (Riedel 2008).

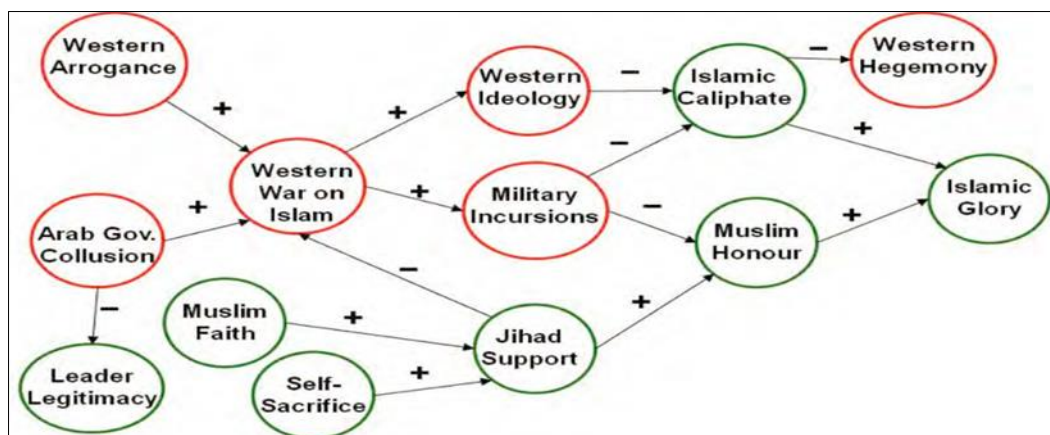


Figure 1 Perception of Western World on Islam (Sieck, 2011)

The soviet invasion of Afghanistan therefore provided an opportunity for the Salafists to launch jihad against the soviets under Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, who has been advocating the liberation of all Muslim lands dating back to fifteenth century stretching from Philippines to Spain (Gabriel 2006). The withdrawal of the soviets kept the group focussed on liberating the Muslim lands described by Azzam, which was why the jihadist group formed al-Qaida to achieve this wide dream (Sageman, 2006). Correspondingly, Osama Bin laden declared that the al-Qaida crusade is fundamentally religious, underlining the enmity between Islam and the infidels based on Salafist creed (Moghadam, 2009). Consistent with the broad plan therefore, fatwas (Islamic injunctions) for the jihad against the American, Jews and the crusaders was issued in the late 1990s (Mintz et al., 2006).

The emergence of suicide terrorism as the tactics of choice for al-Qaida and its cohorts could be traced to Abdullah Azzam who succeeded in turning martyrdom and self-sacrifice into a moral code signifying a true Muslim (Wright, 2007). Salafi jihadist groups have conducted the highest number of suicide terror attacks tactics from 1981-2008,

followed by nationalist-separatist groups (Moghadam, 2009). The promotion of martyrdom operations by al-Qaida is thus blamed for the unprecedented spread of the tactics, to the extent that when a fighter is martyred in Afghanistan, other fighters weep for not being the martyr instead (Wright, 2007). The spread of the martyrdom ideology by bin Laden and his co-travellers was mostly by video tapes and statements on the internet (Moghadam, 2009).

Shiite groups were the dominant groups that perpetrated suicide terrorism in the 1980s, while in the 1990s, nationalist-separatist groups dominated the scene. The clear gap between other motivations and that of Salafi jihadist clearly demonstrates the overwhelming support it has enjoyed worldwide, and the potency of its ideologies, which has resulted in the high lethality. This belief is reinforced by the fact that other Salafist groups are even springing up and employing the suicide terror tactics like the Boko Haram in Nigeria (Johnson 2011; IRIN 2011).

This extreme views garner popularity for Osama bin Laden among Nigerian Muslims expressing most confidence in Osama bin Laden (Gunaratna & Jayasena, 2011). The rise of Osama bin Laden's popularity in Nigeria is a likely indication of the spread of his Salafist jihad ideology in the country. Not surprising therefore that suicide terror attacks has been introduced in Nigeria by the Boko Haram sect, demanding an Islamist state (Gambrell, 2011). Additionally, the fact that Osama bin Laden's popularity was on the decline in most countries like Indonesia, Morocco and Turkey, might also have been responsible for the decline in the number of suicide attacks in those countries since 2009 (Gunaratna & Jayasena, 2011).

In summarizing the effect of the Salafi jihadist ideology in mobilizing support for suicide terrorism, the speed with which it has outpaced other ideologies in motivating both the number of attacks and casualties is phenomenal. These successes could not be achieved without a broad social support of its teachings (Korbin, 2010). It might be said therefore that social support and conduct of suicide terrorism might be directly related to the popularity or other wise of the Salafi jihadist ideology (Moghaddam, 2009). The Salafist ideology alone could not however be blamed for the crisis in Islam, as the Sunni versus Shiite antagonism is equally potent in mobilizing support for the suicides (Moghadam, 2007).

2.8. Sunni and Shiite Conflict

The crisis in Islam could be said to be most manifest in the divide between the Sunnis and Shiites, where the Sunnis see the Shiites as heretics and must be forced to adopt the Sunni version of Islam or perish (Lawrence, 2005). This schism reportedly originated in a dispute 1,400 years ago over how Prophet Mohammed's successor would be chosen, and since then the two dominations have been at each other's throat (Nasr, 2006). This divide is witnessed everywhere the Sunnis meet the Shiites, irrespective of which one is in the majority. In Pakistan where the Sunnis constitute the ruling majority, however militant Sunni groups have continuously launched Suicide attacks against the minority Shiites (Bloom, 2010). This same phenomenon exists in Iraq where the Sunni militant groups mainly AQI, apart from targeting the coalition forces and the Shiite led government and its security forces, launched over 160 suicide attacks against Shiite civilian targets between 2004 and 2008 (Merari, 2010). The targets in most of these attacks against the Shiites ranges from mosques, funeral mourners, weddings, pilgrims, Shiite community facilities, political leaders, and Shiite neighbourhoods (Michael & Scolnick 2006).

The Sunnis on the other hand has come to justify their attacks on fellow Muslims in the line of Jihad in the sense that Secularism, nationalism, and Shiism are all instruments of Western conspiracy to divide and conquer Muslim lands (Hafez, 2007). In their opinion, secularism divides the world into religious and non-religious spheres, which to them is anti-ethical to Islam, and instead of religion regulating matters of faith and State, secularism allows humans other than God to legislate right and wrong, even the permissible and forbidden. Continuing, they see nationalism as fostering narrow identifications with language, colour, borders and land, but not the broader community of the faithful and brotherhood of the Muslim ummah (Michael & Scolnick, 2006).

The Sunnis see Shiites as the most dangerous tools against true believers, as according to them, they appear authentically Islamic, but they loathe the people of the 'Sunna' and wait for opportunities to betray them (Hafez 2007). These arguments and contentions therefore garner the requisite social support for the suicide terrorists among their adherents and sympathizers.

2.9. Empirical Review

Rinehart (2021) investigated the link between escaping atonement in Sunni Islam Death by Jihad for Deliverance. The study employed qualitative research design with reliance on the the Islamic hadith corpus and Quran. Findings revealed that Jihadist terrorist organizations use primarily Quranic scripture to recruit and employ suicide bombers who may have a guilty conscience for their past sins. It is said that martyrdom, or *istishadi*, will automatically save Muslims from

hell and grant access to paradise no matter the sin committed. This study is relevant to the impact of religion for suicide terrorism recruitment.

Greenland (2020) explored the rationality of martyrs, self-immolators, and suicide bombers in dying for causes in exchange for an infinite afterlife. The study engaged a simplified expected utility-based model to include variations of infinitely rewarding afterlife's and explore how this may impact the expected utility and rationality of earthly actions and decisions of individuals when the expected utility payoff is infinite. Findings from the study submit that the decision process for suicide and euthanasia is closely linked to martyrs, suicide bombers and self-immolators, which guides the individuals make rational decisions to regards to the end of their own life.

Harmon et al. (2018) empirically examined the nexus between individual organizational, and societal motivations behind engagement in suicide terrorism. The study leveraged on research articles in peer-reviewed journals and grey literature, excluding published books by single authors. Findings from the study opine that policy makers should see suicide terror as resulting from interacting factors at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. That there may be one factor that has the greatest impact for an individual or an organization to engage in suicide terrorism, however, it is unlikely that this factor is the same in every situation. The most effective reactive and preventative policies will address suicide terrorism from multiple directions in order to ensure the greatest level of applicability to the situation. This does not limit the value of understanding individual aspects of specific groups and societies. Study also submit that policies that attempt to address poverty, collective humiliation, religious fanaticism, and community support may be an effective combination of efforts within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In comparison, those that address exploitation, coerced participation and reciprocal violence may be more effective in situations similar to the LTTE's struggle against the Sri Lankan government.

2.10. Theoretical Framework

2.10.1. Religious Belief Hypothesis

The Religious-Belief Hypothesis (Harris 2005; Liddle et al. 2010) is leveraged upon in attempts to unravel all the coding of religious injunctions into the greater movement of militant groups (Ginges et al., 2009). The religious belief hypothesis emphasises the ability of religious explanation and promise of a better after-life, especially in extreme sacrifice exercise like suicide terrorism (Rogers et al., 2007; Hoffman 2006). Thus the rigid messianic and redemptive logic of religious appeal makes it more appealing than politics' and social reward only in generating support for suicide terrorism (Brym 2008). The coalition commitment hypothesis also highlights the potency of religious framing over politics as it provides the platform for regular meeting, large scale mimickery and solidarity (Brym and Araj 2008; Rogers et al. 2007). This feature is observed to be lacking in political framing where only social and peer-group influence is available, which appears relatively weaker to that offered by religious framing in mobilizing social support and solidarity for suicide terrorism (Thorton, 2007).



Figure 2 Global suicide attacks map (Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism 2011)

The potency of religious framing is blamed for the wider mobilization of suicide terrorists and supporters courtesy of trans-national loyalty and fictive kin syndrome, responsible for the proliferation of suicide terrorism (Sageman 2008; Neuman, 2006). The mobilization across tribes, races, and civilizations for jihad in places like Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Somalia are all evidences of the potency of the religious appeal over political boundaries with spill over in African

nations (Noton-Taylor, 2011; Kron, 2011). Furthermore, Henne (2011) in his analysis based on social movement theory affirmed religion as a stronger motivation of social support for suicide terrorism, including the drive for more casualties.

3. Methodology

This study adopts desktop research design; it examines the nexus between religiously defined social supports for suicide terrorism. The study relies solely on secondary data. The research is conducted by examining literature concerning the suicide terrorism, Jihadism, martyrdom, and terror cells groups. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. Literature from non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences has been included particularly if they have been cited by other references.

4. Discussion of Findings

The result gotten from empirical literature in religion violence and social movements has reportedly shown that terror cells group and other terror organizers need to draw on some values very dear to populace to engender their support for extreme violence like religion, culture, nationalism, politics, or identity. Consequently, militant groups colour their ideological appeals with cultural, religious and identity norms and expectations to draw the wide social support necessary for sustainability (Poletta & Jasper, 2001).

This study aligns with Horowitz's (2009) postulation that religiously motivated support for crusading last longer than that of political ideology, as the immaterial nature of the reward system adds in prolonging a religiously motivated campaign. Though these nationalistic motivations are credited with some of these suicide terror campaigns, some elements of religion has been brought into it to generate more social support, especially in places like Palestine, Chechnya and Kashmir (Moghadam, 2007; Speckhard, 2006; and Hussein 2007). Finally this study aligns with the reviewed works of Rinehart (2021), Greenland (2020); Harmon et al. (2018).

5. Conclusion

The study conclude that the manipulation of the religious injunctions, extremist interpretation of religious teachings, as well as advancement of religion facade for economic gains stronger motivation for people who support suicide terrorism. Finding from the study showed that there would be no successful suicide terror campaign without the support of the society where the suicide terrorists reside and whose interest they claim to be defending.

Recommendation

The study recommends that distorted ideology driven by religion can only be countered by respected Islamic clerics and leaders, especially from the Arab world with covert Western support to circumvent the perverted narrative of martyrdom as sacrifice for the good of the land, people or god, and rather brand it as common suicide and an honourless venture.

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