Dangerous Obscurity: A Study of Female Suicide Combatants
History of Sri Lanka Conflict

- Until 1948 Sri Lanka was a colony of the U.K. and during the colonial period preferential treatment was given to the Tamils.

- Anti-Tamil riots.
Theories on Suicide Terrorism

- Strategic Coercive Effects
- Rational Choice Theory
- Occupation, Education and Gender
- Personal or Fanatical?
Female Suicide Terrorism

- Demographics: Typically under 25, unmarried, with at least a high school education.
- Come From Societies Which Have Rigidly Defined Gender Roles.
- Do Men and Women Participate Differently?
Education Levels of Female Suicide Bombers in Palestine.

Source: Schweitzer, Yoram (2006)
Education, Employment and Social Mobility.

Women who are educated up to the secondary level: 83%, of these women, only 11.5% who are married are in paid employment.
Unemployment Rates Compared to Ratio of Female Suicide Attacks to Male
Female Specific Motivations

- In places where female chastity or marital fidelity is paramount.
- Loss of Male Relatives.
- Resentment of Social Norms.
EFFECTIVENESS OF FEMALE SUICIDE TERRORISM

Average Number of Deaths per Incident
Male 10.4
Women 12.1

Percent of Assassination Attempts by Women as a Whole of Black Tigers: 60%
Scatterplot of Average Number of Casualties by Gender

Source: O’Rourke (2009)
Methodology and Results: Macro-level

- Created Database Using a Chronology of the Incidents of Suicide Terror, by Gender.
- Ran Correlation Tests Between Female Incidents per year against GNP, GNP per capita, Unemployment Rates and several others.
Methodology and Results: Micro-level:

- Biographies of Failed Suicide Terrorists.
- Marital Status, Age, economic situation, Nature of Motivation.
- (Nationalist/Religious), sexual assault and death of a loved one
### Micro-level Analysis by Biographical Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>age</th>
<th>marital</th>
<th>economic</th>
<th>motivate</th>
<th>sexual assault</th>
<th>death of loved one</th>
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Conclusions:

- Data range 1991-2009
- 1219 total casualties
  - Female: 263 killed in 24 out of 100 incidents
  - Male: 956 killed in 76 out of 100 incidents

Although I did not find statistical significance, there is a difference between male and female participation.