

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.

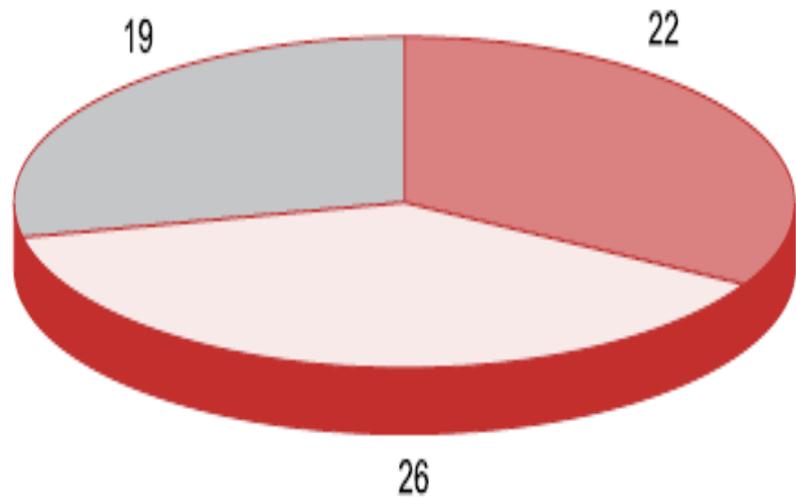
Theories on Suicide Terrorism

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

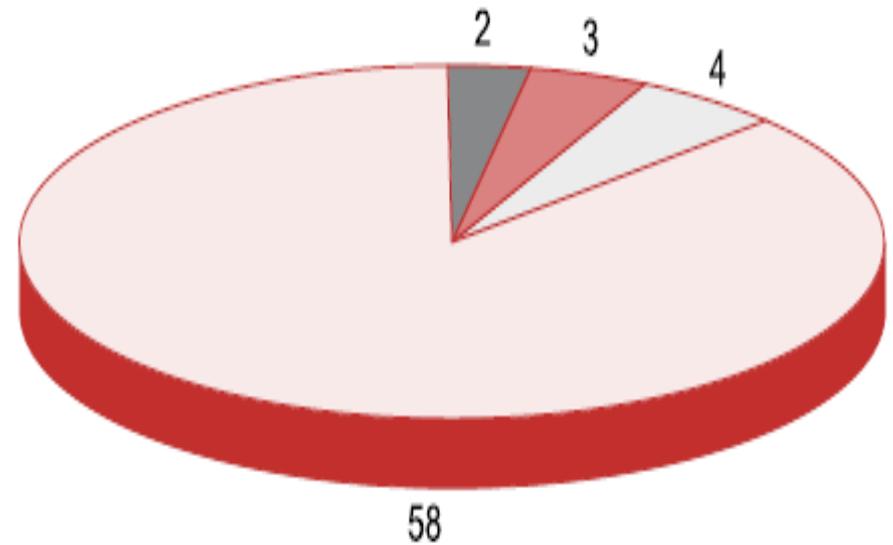
Female Suicide Terrorism

- ◉ 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.



High school education Higher education Unknown



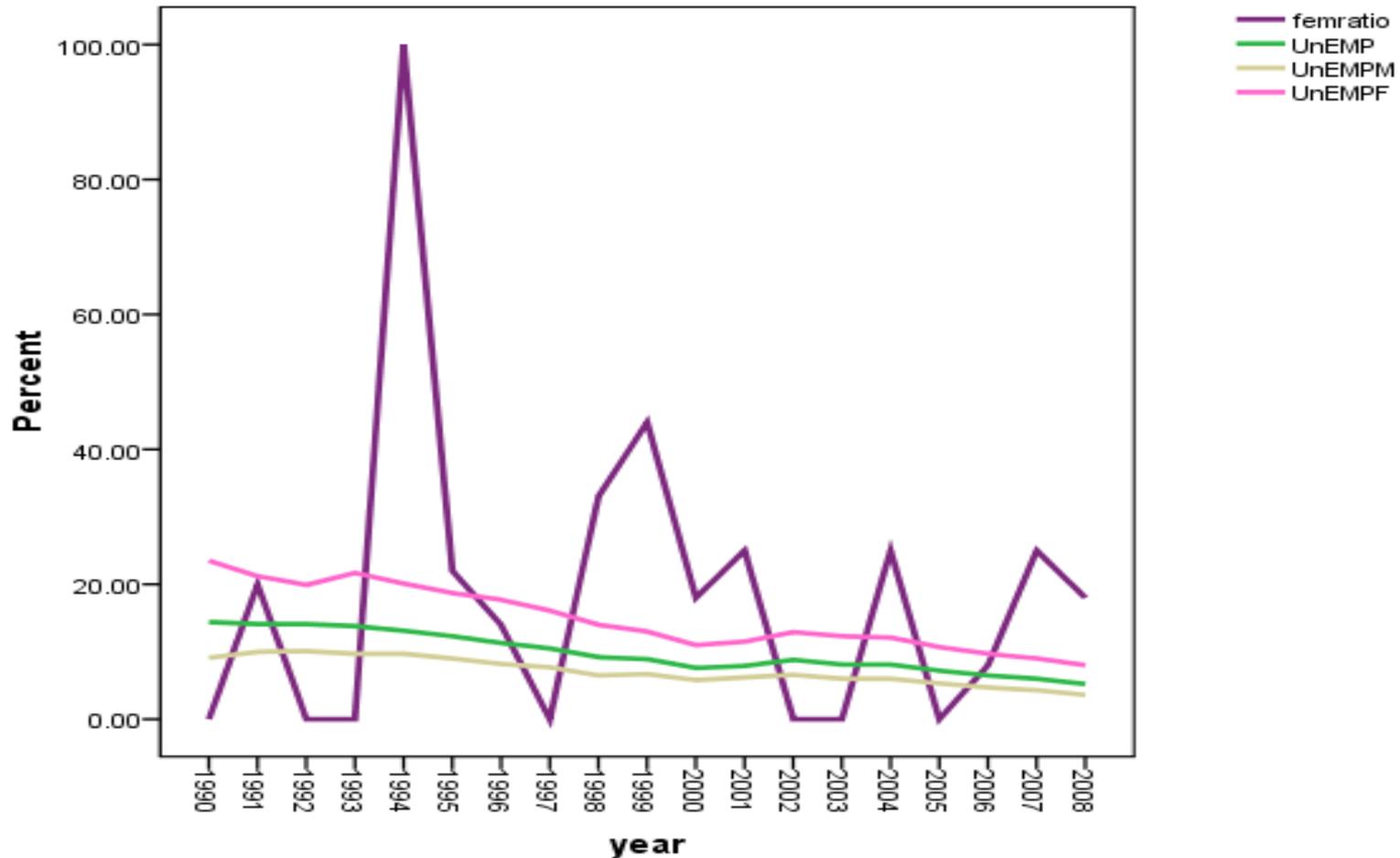
Single Divorced Married Widow

Source: Schweitzer, Yoram (2006)

Sri Lanka's Employment and Education Indicators

- 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

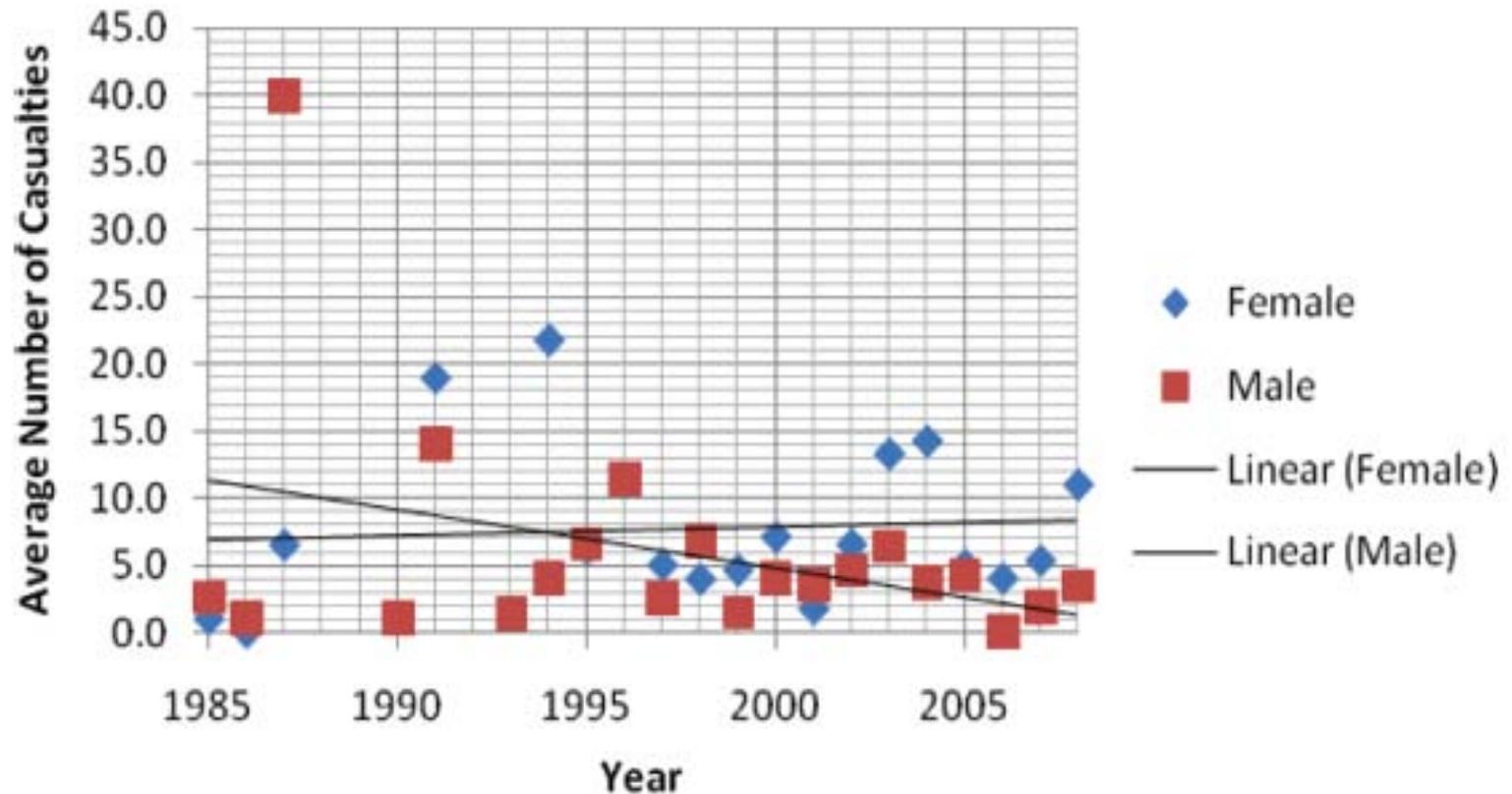
Average Number of Deaths per Incident

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.

Name	age	marital	economic	motivate	sexual assault	death of loved one	education
Abu-Aisha, Darine	25un	D	priv	R	N	Y	Secondary
Abu-Salem, Zeinab	25un	S	n/a	R	N	N	primary
Ahmed, Arin	25un	S	n/a	R	N	Y	University
Akhras, Ayat	25un	E	poor	R	N	Y	Secondary
Al-Bas, Wafa	25un	S	poor	R/N	N	N	primary
Daraghmen, Hiba	25un	S	n/a	R	Y	Y	n/a
Idris, Wafa	ov25	D	poor	R	N	Y	Primary
Jaradat, Hanadi	ov25	S	priv	R	N	Y	University
Khamour, Thouria	25un	S	n/a	R	N	N	primary
Takafka, Andaleeb	25un	S	n/a	R	N	N	n/a
Menake	ov25	S	poor	N	Y	Y	primary

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.