SACRED VALUES, TERRORISM, AND THE LIMITS OF RATIONAL CHOICE

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A. Introduction: The Power of Faith

Writing in the last century, when the great debates between secular ideologies drove world politics, André Malraux, the legendary French resistance leader, statesman and man of letters wrote: "the next century will either be religious or it won't *be*." Up through the end of the 20th century, few in academia took religion seriously as a prime mover of international politics. In the Middle East, almost the only attention given was to the Western *isms*: colonialism, nationalism, socialism, communism, democratic liberalism and so forth. In Southeast Asia, scholars referred to Muslims as "statistical" or "nominal" Muslims. There was a general failure to appreciate the power of faith that has always colored how most people, in nearly all societies, believe that they *ought* to act towards others.

Seeking a sense of community through the power of faith is something the current US administration, and much of the public, increasingly appears to take to heart at home but not abroad. Preempting and preventing terrorism requires that U.S policymakers make a concerted effort to understand the background conditions and enlistment processes[1] that inspire people to take their own lives in the name of a greater cause. Monitoring current political and economic conditions is important, though not necessarily determinant. Rather, what may matter more is the promise of redeeming real or imagined historical grievances through a religious (or transcendent ideological) mission that empowers the militarily weak with unexpected force against much stronger enemies. This was as true for Jewish Zealots who sacrificed themselves to kill Romans two millennia ago as it is for modern jihadis.

Identifying sacred values in different cultures and how they compete for people's affections is surely a first step in learning how to prevent those values from spiraling into mortal conflict between societies (Figure 1). All religions, and many quasi-religious ideologies that make claims about laws of history or universal missions to reform humanity, are based on sacred values.[2] Such values are linked to emotions that underpin cultural identity and trust. These emotion-laden sentiments are amplified into moral obligations to strike out against perceived opponents no matter the cost when conditions of relative deprivation get to a point where terrorists actively seek alternatives because of lack of political and economic opportunity.

Although the field of judgment and decision making has made enormous progress,[3] much more is known about economic decision making than about morally-motivated decision making. There is little knowledge, study or theoretical discussion of so-called essential or sacred values, which a moral community implicitly or explicitly treats as possessing transcendental significance that precludes tradeoffs or mingling with mundane or secular values. What little research there is suggests that standard political and economic proposals (e.g., a democratic vote in favor of majority interests with just material compensation for the minority) rarely succeed in resolving conflicts of over sacred values.

B. Preliminary Research: Sacred Values in Adversarial Decision Making.

Religious behavior often seems to be motivated by *Sacred Values* (SVs). A sacred value is a value that incorporates moral and ethical beliefs that can motivate action "independently of its prospect of success." Max Weber, a leading scholar and founder of modern sociology and political economics, distinguished the non-instrumental "value rationality" of religions and transcendent political ideologies from the "instrumental rationality" of realpolitik and the

marketplace.[4] Instrumental rationality involves strict cost-benefit calculations regarding goals, and entails abandoning or adjusting goals if costs for realizing them are too high. For Immanuel Kant, one of history's great philosophers of reason, virtuous religious behavior is its own reward and any attempt to base it on utility nullifies its moral worth.[5]

High cost personal sacrifices to (non-kin) others in society seem to be typically motivated by, and framed in terms of, non-instrumental values. [6] This includes jihadi conceptions of martyrdom, which also involves moral commitment to kill enemy (*harbi*, as opposed to non-belligerent, *dhimmi*) infidels (*kuffar)*. One psychological review finds that "only a minority of human violence can be understood as rational, instrumental behavior aimed at securing or protecting material rewards."[7] Historically, religiously-motivated violence tends to underpin the most intractable and enduring conflicts within and between cultures[8] and civilizations.[9]

Political scientists and economists acknowledge the role of religious values in coordinating groups for economic, social and political activities, and in providing people with immunity that goes with action in large numbers.[10] From a rational-choice perspective, such values operate instrumentally to form convergent trust among masses of people with disparate interests and preferences, thus reducing "transaction costs" that would otherwise be needed to mobilize them.[11] Others grant the instrumental value of religion and ethnicity but ask: "why would these be preferred bases for mobilization, energizing the most enduring and intractable conflicts between groups?" [12]

Psychologists have recently developed controlled ways of testing ideas about allied notions of "protected values" and "taboo trade offs."[13] Psychologist Phil Tetlock and colleagues describe a protected value as "any value that a moral community implicitly or explicitly treats as possessing infinite… significance that precludes comparisons… with bounded…values."[14] What is clear is that sacred or protected values have a privileged link to moral outrage and other emotions, especially when a person holding a sacred value is offered a secular value or tradeoff such as selling one's child or selling futures betting on acts of terrorism.[15]

Consider religiously-motivated terrorism (making up nearly 80% of all terrorist events since 9/11). Most terrorists who have been studied - including would-be or captured suicide bombers – fail to show any psychopathology or sociopathy (at least in other parts of their lives). Such findings are often interpreted in ways that would support the idea that terrorist action – including self-destruction - derives from rational decisions to optimize strategies for attaining sociopolitical goals:[16] the religious "bargain" of mostly young men dying for a promising afterlife;[17] ultimate sacrifice as maximizing the goal of improving lives of family or compatriots, which offsets the "opportunity cost" of an educated life lost prematurely;[18] "trading life" for a social identity that is affirmed in death but devalued by continued living.[19]

These speculations are theoretically plausible; however, no empirical study involving structured interviews or experiments with religious suicide terrorists had ever put these speculations to empirical test, or even adequately to deal with the fact that suicide bombers are generally at least as educated and economically well off as their surrounding populations.[20] Rather than obey a utilitarian "logic of rational consequence" these actors perhaps more closely follow a "logic of moral appropriateness."[21] Consider, for example, our recent interviews with a number of self-identified recruits for martyr attack from the Hamas Block at al-Najah University in Nablus (which provides more suicide bombers than any other demographic group of Palestinians) as well as a number of active fighters in Indonesia from Jemaah Islamiyah, Al-Qaeda's main ally in southeast Asia, trained in Afghanistan, the southern Philippines, Sulawesi and the Mollucas. All were asked questions of the sort*, "So what if your family were to be killed in retaliation for your action?" or "What if your father were dying and your mother found out your plans for a martyrdom attack and asked you to delay until the family could get back on its feet?"* Almost to a person they answered along lines that there is duty to family but duty to God cannot be postponed. *"And what if your*

action resulted in no one's death but your own?" The typical response is, *"God will love you just the same*." For example, when I posed these questions to the alleged Emir of Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Bakr Ba'asyir, in Jakarta's Cipinang prison in August 2005, he responded that martyrdom for the sake of jihad is the ultimate *fardh 'ain*, an inescapable individual obligation that trumps all others, including four of the conventional five pillars of Islam (prayer, Ramadan fast, alms, and pilgrimage; only the fifth pillar, profession of faith in God and The Prophet, remains on a par with Jihad). [22] What matters for him, as for most would-be martyrs and their sponsors I have interviewed, is the martyr's intention and commitment to God, so that blowing up only oneself has the same value and reward regardless of how many or how few of the enemy are killed in the process. [23]

Although sacred values appear to trump instrumental values when they are in direct conflict, instrumental cost-benefit calculations often prevail when there is no apparent conflict. For example, most would-be martyrs and jihadi religious leaders we've interviewed also say that if a roadside bomb can produce the same damage as a suicide bombing without causing the deaths of the bomber(s), then it is preferable. [24] They would also agree to delay a roadside bombing to fulfill a commitment to one of the sacred pillars of Islam, such as making a first pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). But our interviewees also say it is wrong to refuse to delay a suicide operation for a first pilgrimage. Although these findings indicate that there may be a partial ordering of preferences among sacred values (*martyrdom* > *hajj*), they also suggest that there is no complete or consistent ordering of preferences across all (sacred and instrumental) values. Thus, jihadis show preference ***both*** for ***roadside bombing > suicide bombing,*** and ***pilgrimage > roadside bombing***, but ***also*** for ***suicide bombing > pilgrimage***.

This resulting "non-transitivity" in reasoning seems inconsistent with standard notions of "rationality" that drive most current political and economic theorizing. In addition, inverse instrumentalist reasoning appears in populations sympathetic to suicide bombings: the greater certain kinds of instrumental incentive to undertake a suicide bombing, the ***less*** those incentives are morally tolerable and the more likely they are to be disincentives (e.g., in increasing compensation to a martyr's family for their loss, Figure 2). Of course, one can always recast non-instrumental values in instrumental terms (just as one can always frame any perceptual or conceptual relationship in terms of "similarity"), but the issue is whether in doing so explanatory power to predict further judgments and decisions is helped or hindered.

To further test the relationship between essential or sacred values and support for political violence or peace, we recently conducted surveys of Israeli settlers *(N* = 601) and Palestinian refugees (*N* = 535) in the West Bank and Gaza on. We found that emotional outrage and support for violent opposition to compromise over sacred values is (a) not mitigated by offering instrumental incentives to compromise but (b) is decreased when the adversary makes instrumentally irrelevant compromises over their own sacred values.

In the representative survey of Jewish settlers (*N* = 601) conducted in August 2005, days before Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, we randomly presented participants with one of several hypothetical peace deals. All involved Israeli withdrawal from 99% of the West Bank and Gaza in exchange for peace. For the 46% of participants who believed the "Greater Land of Israel" was a sacred value, this was a "taboo" trade-off. Some deals involved an added instrumental incentive, such as money ("taboo+"), while in other deals Palestinians made a "taboo" trade-off over one of their own sacred values without adding instrumental value to Israel (contextually "tragic"). From a rational cantage, the taboo+ deal is improved relative to the taboo deal, so violent opposition to the taboo+ deal should be weaker. Yet we observed the following order of support for violence: taboo+ > taboo > tragic (Figure 3a), where those evaluating the tragic deal showed less support for violence[25] than the other two conditions. An analysis of intensity of emotional outrage again found taboo+ > taboo > tragic (Figure 3c); those evaluating the tragic deal were least likely to feel angry or disgusted.

Results were replicated in a representative survey of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank (*N* = 535) conducted in late December 2005, one month before Hamas was elected to power. In this experiment, hypothetical peace deals all violated the Palestinian "right of return", a key issue in the conflict.[26] For the 80% of participants who believed this was a sacred value, we again observed the following order for violent opposition: taboo+ > taboo > tragic, where those evaluating a "tragic" deal showed lowest support for violence (Figure 3b). We found the same order for two measures ostensibly unrelated to the experiment: belief that Islam condones suicide attacks, and reports of joy at hearing of a suicide attack. [27] When compared to refugees who had earlier evaluated a taboo or taboo+ deal, those who had evaluated a tragic deal believed less that Islam condoned suicide attacks, and were less likely to report feeling of joy[7] at hearing of a suicide attack (Figure 3d). In neither the settler nor the refugee study did participants responding to the "tragic" deals regard these deals as more implementable than participants evaluating taboo or taboo+ deals.

These experiments reveal that in political disputes where sources of conflict are cultural, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or emerging clashes between the Muslim and Judeo-Christian world, violent opposition to compromise solutions may be exacerbated rather than decreased by insisting on instrumentally-driven tradeoffs, while non-instrumental symbolic compromises may reduce support for violence. For example, perhaps were France to yield on allowing Muslim women to wear headscarves in public schools, the effects would now reverberate throughout the Muslim world to the good. The problem, however, is that France, unlike, the USA considers signs pf physical and religious distinction in school an affront to the symbolically defining value of French political culture ever since the French Revolution, namely, a universal and uniform sense of social equality (however lacking in practice). "The only community is the nation," declared French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin.[28] Indeed, the American ideal of cultural diversity is perceived by the entire political spectrum in France as an attempt to force an alien notion of community and identity between the only two moral entities recognized in that country – the individual and the state.[29] But recall the results of "tragic tradeoff" experiment with Palestinian refugees and Israeli settlers: even a token sacrifice of one side's symbolically held position may weaken the other side's rigid adherence to its own adversarial position.[30]

Finally, instrumentally coercive policies may not achieve lasting relief from attacks that are motivated by sacred values and can exacerbate the problem over time. For example, in our representative survey of Palestinians, we asked the following questions:

1. What is the position of Islam in your opinion regarding the bomber who carries out the bombing attack (which some calls martyrdom attacks while others call suicide attacks) killing himself with the aim of killing his enemies as some Palestinians do. Does Islam allow such action?
2. If a chosen martyr's father became ill and his family asked him to take care of his father, would it be acceptable to delay the action indefinitely?
3. Would if be acceptable to permanently forego martyrdom if there were a significantly high chance that the chosen martyr's family would be killed in retaliation?
4. And what if the bombing attack led to the destruction of olive trees and the bombing of his home town and school and the death of the students? Would be acceptable to forgo the attack in this case?

72% of those responding "yes" to (1) and 77% of those responding "no" to (1) also responded "yes" to (2). But 43% of those who responded "yes" to (1) responded "no" to (3) and (4), whereas 72% of those who responded "no" to (1) responded "yes" to (3) and (4). In other words, Palestinians who believe that Islam supports suicide bombers are *less* likely to support abandoning extreme violence to save a whole family or village from destruction at enemy hands than merely to help out a family member. The results indicate that those who have become radicalized to Jihad (as measured by support for suicide actions) respond to

both instrumental sticks (enemy counter-violence) and to instrumental carrots (recall the results for Palestinian refugees on taboo+ tradeoffs) with even greater support for violence. Note, however, that in our interviews with actual members of action groups (e.g., Hamas activists who are members of "martyrs groups" and Jemaah Islamiyah mujahedin) there was overwhelming refusal to consider abandoning a suicide attack *either* to prevent lethal retaliation against the family *or* to help out a sick father. This suggests that *those who have joined groups committed to acting* in support of radical Jihad may *reject all tradeoffs*. To attract potential recruits away from violent Jihad, and to dry up its popular support, requires addressing basic grievances before a downward spiral sets in where core meaning in life is sought, and found, in religious networks that sanctify vengeance at any cost against stronger powers, even if it kills the avenger.

C. Understanding Radicalization Unto Jihad

Why are so many enraptured by the jihadi message of martyrdom? Readiness to listen comes with the global media's showing of virtually infinite opportunities coupled with ubiquitous images of social injustice and political repression that much of the Muslim world's bulging immigrant and youth populations can intimately identify with. Mobilization comes when small groups of friends and family must go out in search of a sense of community that gives meaning to their lives. Radicalization comes when they find a clear message and call to action. Al-Qaeda's acolytes understand and play to this, on Al-Jazeera and countless internet sound and light shows that appeal especially to those ages most attuned to the web.

Living mostly in the diaspora, unconcerned by retaliation against original home populations, jihadis who are frequently middle class, secularly well-educated but often "born-again" radical Islamists (including converts from Christianity) embrace apocalyptic visions for humanity's violent salvation. From Paris suburbs to the jungles of Indonesia, culturally uprooted and politically restless youth I have interviewed echo a stunningly simplified and decontextualized message of martyrdom for the sake of global jihad as life's noblest cause. For the most part they do so sincerely, and increasingly many are willing, even eager, to die as they are to kill.

Global jihadism is a thoroughly modern movement filling the popular political void in Islamic communities left in the wake of discredited western ideologies co-opted by corrupt local governments, despite atavistic cultural elements including selective appeals to Muslim history and heartfelt calls for the revival of the Caliphate. It claims the role of vanguard for a massive, transnational political awakening spurred by near universal access to world media. To some extent, jihadism is a counter-movement to U.S. led economic globalization (at least in Zawahiri's view) and the political view expressed in the *National Security Strategy of the United States* that liberal democracy is the "single sustainable model of national development right and true for every person, in every society."[31] In fact, jihadism's apocalyptic yearnings and born-again vision of personal salvation through radical action are largely absent from traditional Sunni Islamic exegesis and, indeed, perhaps as much may be learned about such apocalyptic yearnings from the New Testament's *Book of Revelations* as from the *Qur'an*.[32] Nor does Islam *per se* or "Muslim civilization" have anything in particular to do with terrorism, any more than some impossibly timeless or context-free notion of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism or Buddhism can be held responsible for the dead millions these religious traditions have been blamed for.[33]

Enlistment and support for violent Jihad occur not under conditions of political repression, poverty, and unemployment or illiteracy as such, but when converging political, economic, and social trends produce diminishing opportunities relative to expectations, thus generating frustrations that radical organizations can exploit. For this purpose, relative deprivation is

more significant than absolute deprivation. Unlike poorer, less educated elements of their societies—or equally educated, well-off members of our society—many educated, middle-class Muslims increasingly experience frustration with life as their potential opportunities are less attractive than their prior expectations. Frustrated with their future, the appeal of routine national life declines and violent Jihad gives some perceived purpose to act altruistically, in the potential terrorist's mind, for the welfare of a future generation. Revolutionary terror imprints itself into history when corrupt and corroded societies choke rising aspirations into explosive frustration. To attract potential recruits away from violent Jihad, and to dry up its popular support, requires addressing basic political grievances and lack of opportunities before a downward spiral sets in where core meaning in life is sought, and found, in religious networks (increasingly internet-based) that sanctify vengeance at any cost against stronger powers, even if it kills the avenger.

D. Scared Motivations, though Necessary, do not Suffice to Predict terrorist Actions

The power of faith, stimulated by sacred values, imbue people with a sense of mission; and perceived violation of those values compels them to support actions against the perceived outrage. Commitment to sacred values is usually a necessary condition for a jihadi group to commit a terrorist act, but need not be necessary each particular individual involved (friends and family may become active members of the group – at least initially – primarily because they are friends or family, rather than because they share commitment to sacred values and perceptions of violations of those values that call for action).

But motivation and intent are not sufficient for a committing a terrorist act (most people with motivation and intent don't act). The key issue for radicalization unto action is how to get from a group's necessary commitment to the sacred, and desire to act on its behalf, to the actual individuals' that act (as opposed to supporters who share militant values but don't act, or actors who join for kinship or friendship rather than for values). Political events (e.g., the Iranian revolution, 9/11, invasion of Iraq) and general conditions that foment revolutionary discontent (denial of civil liberties, dashed expectations, perceived humiliation) are part of the landscape that canalizes (radicalizes) people towards terrorism. But, at the operational level (the one that concerns intelligence, police, dealing with a war on the ground), far more important are the contingent relationships between the individual actors themselves, and the actual and evolving cliques, cells, bridges and networks these individuals form.

There are millions of people who sympathize with aspects of the jihadi message but very, very few ever become terrorists. Understanding motivation and values alone will never predict terrorist actions, but understanding the small group dynamics of value-laden social networks may. But that is another story to tell, for another time.

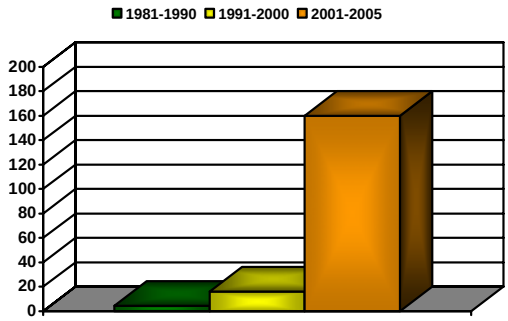
C. Conclusions: Lessons for Risk Management

Current risk management approaches to countering terrorism often assume that adversaries model the world on the basis of rational choices that are commensurable across cultures. Such assumptions prevail in risk assessment and modeling by foreign aid and international development projects run by institutions such as the World Bank and many NGOs, and by U.S. diplomatic, military and intelligence services. But recent work in psychology, anthropology, religious studies, economics, and political science relating to social conflicts show that culturally distinct value frameworks constrain preferences and choices in ways not readily translatable (fungible, substitutable) across frameworks. Planning and acting in ignorance or disregard of different value frameworks may exacerbate conflict, with grievous loss of national treasure and lives.

From interviewing members of militant religious groups (Christian, Muslim and Jewish fundamentalists), including religiously-inspired terrorists and those who inspire and care for them, our research team finds that such individuals act in ways that often appear to be motivated by non-instrumental values and small-group dynamics that trump rational, individual self-interest. Violation of such values leads to moral outrage and typically "irrational" vengeance ("get the offender, even if it kills us"). Sacred values appear to support behavior that seems motivated independently of its prospect of success. Such values do not seem very sensitive to standard calculations regarding cost and benefit, to quantity, to tradeoffs across moral categories (e.g., family vs. God), to commensuration between different cultural frames, or even to the transitive orderings of preferences that define rationality in standard choice and utility theories. This means that traditional calculations of how to defeat or deter an enemy - for example, by providing material incentives to defect or threatening massive retaliation against supporting populations - may not succeed. For negotiators, policy makers and others who must interact with unfamiliar cultures, it is important to understand sacred values and what part they play in order to know which social transgressions and offers for tradeoffs are likely to remain morally taboo (so that attempts to make them generate only further outrage rather than willingness to negotiate, as would proposals in our society to sell out family, religion or country).

Figure 1. The Exponential Growth of Martyrdom: **(A)** Suicide attacks worldwide, annualized by decade (since 9/11 about 80 % of all suicide attacks worldwide are by religiously-motivated Jihadi groups);[34] (**B)** Suicide attacks worldwide, 2001 – 2005.

A



B

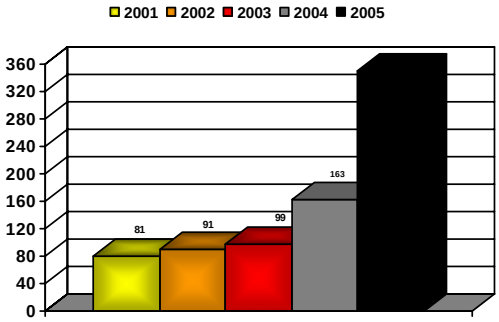
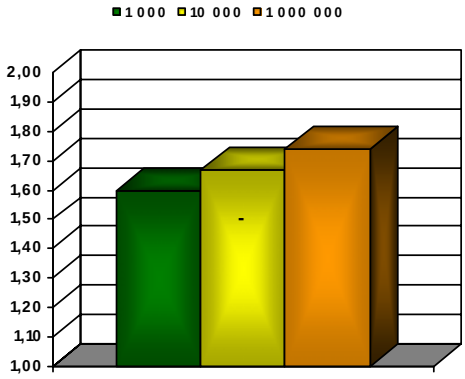


Figure 2. Palestinian judgments of acceptability for a family to request compensation for a son's martyrdom operation (Dinars 1,000; 10,000; 1,000,000). Between-subjects design for a representative West Bank and Gaza sample (*N* = 1267) shows *inverse* instrumentality (linear trend, *p* = .01). Y-axis: 1 = "acceptable"; 2 = "unacceptable"



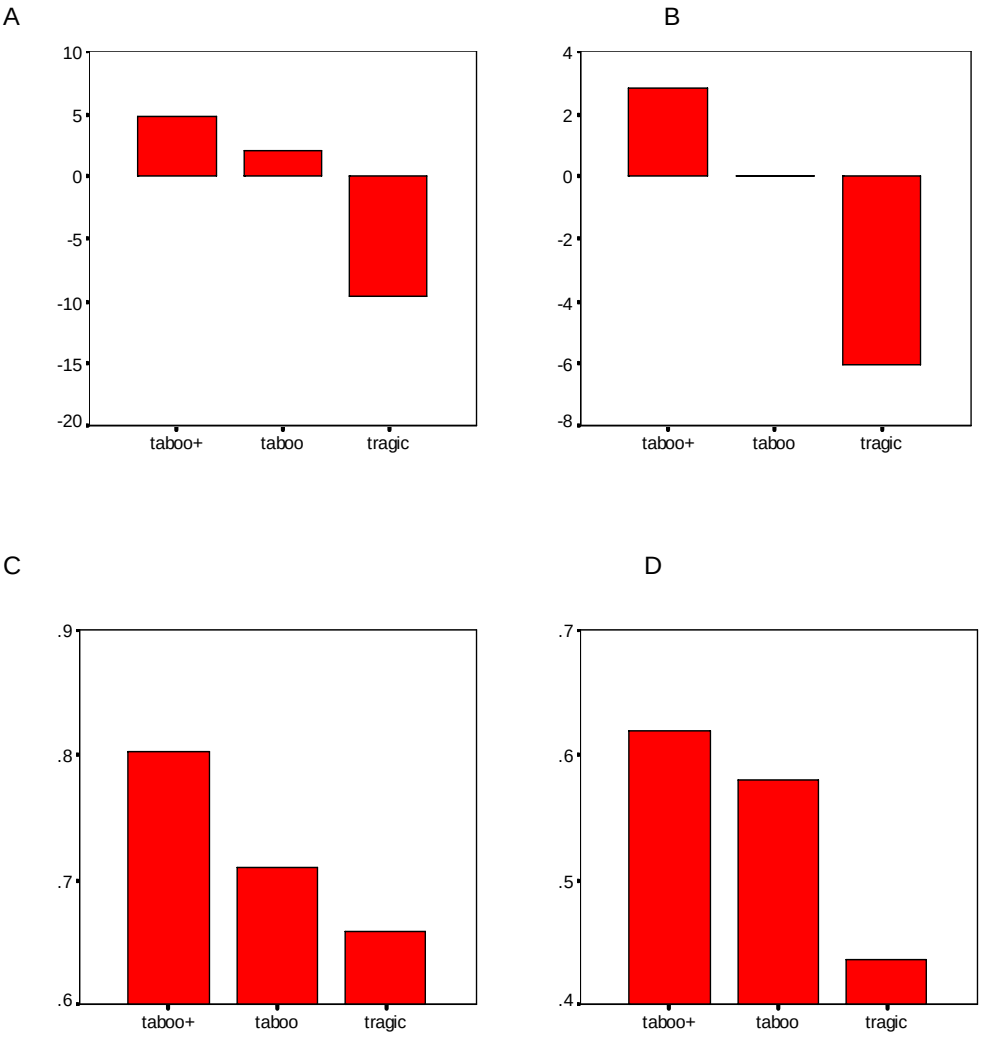


Figure 3. Predictions of the percentage of the population who would use violence to oppose: a peace deal perceived to violate a sacred value ("taboo" condition), the taboo deal plus an added instrumental incentive ("taboo+"), or the taboo deal plus a sacred value concession without instrumental value, from the adversary ("tragic") for (**A**) Israeli settlers (linear trend $F[1,195] = 5.698$, $P = .018$) and (**B**) Palestinian refugees ($F[1, 384] = 7.201$, $P = .008$). Parallel results obtained for emotional reactions by: (**C**) settlers reporting 'anger' or 'disgust' at an Israeli leader who would agree to the tradeoff being evaluated ($F[1, 260] = 4.436$, $P = .036$), and (**D**) refugees reporting 'joy' at hearing of a suicide bombing according to the type of tradeoff being evaluated ($F[1, 418] = 7.48$, $P = .007$). The trend of emotional intensity and support for violence in each case, taboo + > taboo > tragic, is not consistent with a strictly instrumental rationality account of human behavior.

[1] Direct recruitment plays only a minor role in the global jihadi expansion. Membership increases large through enlistment, that is, self-recruitment. Even in Al-Qeda's heyday, before 9/11, would-be jihadis would come knocking at Al-Qaeda's door, rather than the other way around, with Al-Qaeda accepting less than 20 percent for significant operations.

[2]. S. Atran, *In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[3] For a review, see D. Kahneman, "Maps of bounded rationality: Psychology for behavioral economics," *American Economic Review* **93**, 1449 (2003).

[4] M. Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), v. 1, p. 24.

[5] I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, originally published in 1788).

[6] Such sentiments are characteristic of emotionally-driven commitments, such as heartfelt romantic love and uncontrollable vengeance, which are apparently arational and may have emerged under through natural selection to override rational calculations when confronted with seemingly insurmountable obstacles to the attainment of deep-seated needs (see R. Frank, *Passions Within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions* (Norton, New York, 1988). In religiously-inspired terrorism, these sentiments are manipulated by organizational leaders, recruiters, and trainers, mostly for the organization's benefit at the expense of the individual. In times of crisis, of course, every society routinely calls upon some of its own people to sacrifice their lives for the general good of the community as a whole. One important difference is that for militant jihadis, crisis is constant and unabating, and extreme sacrifice is necessary as long as there are non-believers.

[7] R. Baumeister, L. Smart, J. Boden, "Relation of threatened egotism to violence and aggression," *Psychological Review* **103,** 5 (1996).

[8] G. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1956).

[9] S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1997).

[10] T. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1963).

[11] F. Fukuyama, *Trust* (Free Press, New York, 1995).

[12] A. Varshney, "Nationalism, ethnic conflict and rationality," *Perspectives on Politics* **1**, 85 (2003).

[13] A. Fiske, P. Tetlock, "Taboo tradeoffs: Reactions to transactions that transgress the spheres of justice," *Political Psychology* **18**, 255 (1997).

[14] P. Tetlock, 'Coping with trade-offs: Psychological constraints and political implications," in S. Lupia, M. McCubbins, S. Popkin (eds.) *Political reasoning and choice*, (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2000). As Tetlock and others have noted, although people with sacred values sometimes seem to treat them as having infinite utility (e.g., in refusing to consider trade-offs), this is something of a logical impossibility inasmuch as infinite value implies that people with such values should spend literally all their time and effort protecting and promoting that value. For this reason, these researchers hold that such values may be only pseudo sacred, further noting that people with protected values may nonetheless engage in indirect trade-offs. One may be tempted to think of protected values as self-serving posturing, but the reality of acts such as suicide bombings undermines this stance. Moreover, protected values necessary to an individual's identity may take on truly absolute value only when value-related identity seems threatened with extinction, just as food may take on absolute value only when sustenance for life is threatened.

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[15] D. Medin, H. Schwartz, S. Blok, L. Birnbaum, "The semantic side of decision making," *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* **6**, 562 (1999).

[16] See R. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (Random House, New York, 2005); M. Bloom, *Dying to KillI* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2005); J. Madsen, "The rationale of suicide attack," *Risq* (online), September 2004, available at www.risq.org/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=367.

[17] R. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000).

[18] See J.-P. Azzam, "Suicide-bombing as intergenerational investment," *Public Choice* (in press); G. Becker, "Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach," *Journal of Political Economy* **76**, 169 (1968).

[19] See M. Harrison, "An economist looks at suicide terrorism," in C. Ankersen (ed.) *Terrorism: Challenge for the 21st Century? Understandings and responses* (Polity Press, London, in press); G. Akerloff, R. Kranton, "Economics and identity," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* **115**, 715 (2000).

[20] See A. Krueger, J. Malecková, J., "Seeking the roots of terror," *Chronicle of Higher Education,* June, 6, 2003, available at http://chronicle.com/free/v49/i39/39b01001.htm; S. Atran, "Genesis of suicide terrorism," *Science* **299**, 1534 (2003); M. Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004); A. Merari, "Social, organization, and psychological factors in suicide terrorism," in T. Bjorgo (ed.) *Root causes of suicide terrorism* (Routledge, New York, ,in press).

[21] B. Hoffman, G. McCormick, "Terrorism, signaling, and suicide attack," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* **27**, 243(2004).

[22] S. Atran, "The Emir," *Spotlight on Terrorism* (Jamestown Foundation), September 15, 2005; available at http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369782.

[23] Sensitivity to quantity depends on whether the focus is on the moral impulse of the act, where there seems to be little or no sensitivity (e.g., Does God love less the martyr who dies killing 1 enemy versus the martyr who dies killing 10 of the enemy? Answer: "No") or on the consequences, which appears to heighten sensitivity ("Does God approve more a mujahid's action that kills 10 of the enemy versus a mujahid's action that kills 9 of the enemy?" Answer: "Yes").

[24] Of course, while this may be an accurate description of the value motivation that drives people to become suicide terrorists or to support terrorism, the organizations that actually direct suicide terrorism are indeed motivated by instrumental rationality to fight the policies they abhor. Al-Qaeda deputy Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri argues in his "testament," *Knights under the Prophet's Banner*, that "the method of martyrdom operations [i]s the most successful way of inflicting damage against the opponent and the least costly to the mujahidin in casualties." Jihadi leaders also point to the sacrifice of their "best and brightest" as proof of the movement's commitment to the Muslim community, which increases the organization's political market share. Furthermore, the decision of the terrorist organization to encourage suicide attacks may be driven by a military-technological calculus. In September 2004, Sheikh Hamed al-Betawi, a spiritual leader of Hamas, told me: "Our people do not own airplanes and tanks, only human bombs. Those who undertake martyrdom actions are not hopeless or poor, but are the best of our people, educated, successful. They are intelligent, advanced combat techniques for fighting enemy occupation."

[25] G. Marks, M. Miller, "10 Years of research on the False-Consensus Effect: An empirical and theoretical review," *Psychological Bullettin* **102** (1987).

[26] J. Shamir, K. Shikaki, "Public opinion in the Israeli-Palestinian two-level game," *Journal of Peace Research* **42**, 311 (2005).

[27] On joy as a neurophysiological correlate of revenge, see D. de Quervain, et al., "The neural basis of altruistic punishment," *Science* **305**, 1254 (2004).

[28] Interview with Dominique de Villepin in *La Vie* (Paris), no. 314, February 24, 2005, p. 16 : « Il n'y a de communauté que nationale ». But arguably the greatest potential terrorist threat in the world today lies with uprooted and egalitarian Muslim young adults in European cities, who provided the manpower for the 9/11, Madrid and London attacks. Immigrant integration into European societies has always been more difficult than in America, being more state-driven and top down than community-based and bottom up. There is no indication that any rival to Jihadism's uncompromising vision of a fair and just society is being conveyed to would-be jihadi youth in Europe. Secular education and open elections do not by themselves speak sufficiently to the spiritual and cultural needs their rootlessness generates. The European Union's increasingly open society is currently more favorable to far-flung networking among jihadis than to an efficient coordination among different government services that remain hidebound to national territories and politics, and to professional hierarchies and traditional languages. Rejection of the European constitution and its idea of further political integration will fix these trends into the foreseeable future. The steep decline in birth rate among native Europeans, which is highest in southern European countries most accessible to immigration from North Africa and the Middle East, and rising need for immigrant labor can only aggravate the problem. Neither Europe nor the U.S. can deal with this alone.

[29] O. Roy, *Globalized Islam* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2004).

[30] Sacred values not only present strong barriers to negotiation, but also opportunities. Consider the well-known case of "ping-pong" diplomacy between the USA and China. The sacrifice of something of marginal value to one side (losing a ping-pong match where, ping-pong was considered a "basement sport" by most of the U.S. population) was amplified by its value-differential into producing something of great symbolic value for the other side (ping-pong was a sport of national prestige to China). This exchange contributed to a world-historic breakthrough during the Cold War. (Note that cricket matches between India and Pakistan are not likely to have such an effect because cricket has more or less equal value for both countries, so that game becomes zero-sum, with only a loser and a winner.) See R. Eckstein, "Ping Pong Diplomacy: A View from Behind the Scenes," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* **2**, 327 (1993). Contrast this with the efforts of Japan to conciliate China in 2005, which were destroyed by the Japanese Prime Minister's symbolic attendance at a World War II shrine. Also, much of the back-and-forth between the American colonies and Britain in the lead up to the revolutionary war concerned the validity of a tax that Britain set deliberately at a low level to make the symbolic point that it had the right to tax the colonies as it chose.

[31] George W. Bush, Introduction to *National Security Strategy of the United States*, White House, Washington, D.C., September 2003, www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html.

[32] For an extreme example of convergence, compare Ayman Al-Zawahiri's *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner* (trans. Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, London, December 2, 2001, www.fas.org/irp/world/para/ayman_bk.html) and the works of White Supremacist ideologue William Pierce: for example, *The Turner Diaries* (Washington DC: National Alliance, 1978), which ends with the hero ploughing his jet into the Pentagon on a successful suicide mission; also Pierce's analysis of the 9/11 attacks being carried out for the right reasons by the wrong people, *Free Speech* 7, November 2001, www.natvan.com/free-speech/fs0111c.html. After the closing of the Aryan Nation compound in Idaho and several recent leadership changes, these people have begun calling their new mission "Aryan Jihad." Before opening up a bit to other races that oppose Judaism, it is necessary that ''the System'' be disrupted and broken down. This is the same 'System' that not only oppresses Aryans but is also responsible for oppressing all persons of whatever race or nationality who oppose the erroneous, Judaic-based authority which is the premise for System-rule, available at www.aryan-nations.org/about.htm.

[33] Arguments by outsiders that militant Islam can be undermined by showing it doesn't reflect the religion's "truth" or "essence" are likewise vacuous, for there is no "essence" or fixed content to *any* religion: S. Atran, A. Norenzayan, "Religion's Evolutionary Landscape: Counterintuition, Commitment, Compassion, Communion," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 27, 713 (2004). Nevertheless, debates among Muslims about – for example – whether killing children is acceptable, are critical to how their religion will be interpreted and applied.

[34] S. Atran, "The moral logic of suicide terrorism," *The Washington Quarterly* **29**, 127 (2006).