Understanding political assassinations:
A behavioural analysis

by

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Abstract

The existing research regarding political assassinations largely focuses on characteristics of assassins, for example, by identifying typologies (e.g. Clarke, 1990), and is limited by small sample sizes, restricted geographic locations and confounded research designs. The current research examines 400 incidents of political assassination, occurring between 1990 and 2008, worldwide. Data are collected from UK broadsheet newspapers (via LexisNexis) and the Mickolus series of books (Mickolus, Sander & Murdock, 1989; Mickolus, 1993; Mickolus and Simmons, 1997; Mickolus and Simmons, 2002), which provide accounts of transnational terrorism. This data is coded on a series of variables, describing aspects of the assassin (e.g. identity, weapon choice, presence at the scene, number of assassins and roles), and aspects of the victim (e.g. age, geographical region in which they are killed, location and timing in which they are targeted, their previous experiences of threats and assassination attempts, whether they have a bodyguard or not). Three models are explored. First, the Situational Vulnerability of targets of assassination is considered, incorporating the Accessibility of the target, and the Victim’s Preparedness (i.e. previous threats, previous attempts, and presence of bodyguard). Second, the Specificity of the attack is explored in terms of the collateral victims of assassinations (injuries and deaths), in relation to the type of perpetrator, the location of the attack, and the geographical region in which the attack occurred. Finally, the research models the Method of attack used by assassins, in terms of weapon Complexity, and the Proximity between victim and offender at the time of the attack. Interactions were found between Accessibility and Complexity, Proximity, and Specificity; Victim Preparedness and Complexity and Specificity; and Complexity and Proximity. The results are considered in relation to the literature and the implications and future directions for research are discussed.
Declaration

This thesis and the work to which it refers are the results of my own efforts. Any ideas, data, images or text resulting from the work of others (whether published or unpublished) are fully identified as such within the work and attributed to their originator in the text, bibliography or in footnotes. This thesis has not been submitted in whole or in part for any other academic degree or professional qualification. I agree that the University has the right to submit my work to the plagiarism detection service TurnitinUK for originality checks. Whether or not drafts have been so-assessed, the University reserves the right to require an electronic version of the final document (as submitted) for assessment as above.
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Dedication

In Memory of Michael Scholes, my Dad.

December 8\textsuperscript{th} 1953 – July 8\textsuperscript{th} 2009
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PART ONE:
DEFINING ASSASSINATIONS
1. Introduction to the thesis

Political assassinations first became the subject of research in the early 1960s, when studies began to emerge from the US, perhaps in response to the threat of presidential assassination. The existing body of research has focused largely on the assassin, creating profiles and typologies of political assassins. For example, Rothstein (1964, 1966) defined ‘Presidential Assassination Syndrome’, arguing that there are a collection of behaviours which create a desire in individuals to attack or threaten the President. Subsequently, Clarke (1990) argued for a 4-part typology of assassins, with differentiation according to seven criteria identified by Clarke. More recent research has attempted to ‘clarify’ the body of evidence, with the Exceptional Case Study Project (ECSP, Fein and Vosskeuil, 1998) debunking existing myths about political assassins, and highlighting aspects of research which appear to be more reliable. Outside of the US, European research has concentrated more on attacks on the British Royal Family, and politicians in general. Perhaps largely due to definitional differences, the findings of European research contrast with those of the US, where a higher presence of mental illness is noted in assassins and threateners in Europe.

This thesis moves away from these attempts to profile the assassin, and instead examines the observable behaviours of the assassin, and those of the victim in terms of their vulnerability at the time of their death. In addition, the current research is not restricted to one geographical region (i.e. the US, or Europe) and instead will gather data on attacks occurring worldwide. The research will analyse observable features of political assassination with the intention of developing models that account for variations in the victims’ accessibility and preparedness for an assassination, and the way that the assassinations are carried out in terms of the specificity of the attack, and the method used. Together, these models will combine to enhance understanding of political assassinations, the circumstances in which they occur, and the way that they are carried out.

The thesis is formed of two parts. Part 1 will address the issue of defining political assassinations, both as a phenomenon in its own right, and also in light of homicide
and terrorism. Chapter 2 provides a detailed discussion of the existing definitions of political assassination. Through a careful analysis of the literature, the key concepts which are included in the definitions are identified, along with the ways in which these are combined by different authors to create definitions. In addition, the way the individual concepts are defined is examined. As political assassination is, at its most basic, a form of homicide, the literature on a number of homicide sub-types and their definitions is also considered. Again, these are analysed to identify the concepts used, and the way in which these concepts are defined. Finally, chapter 2 reviews the terrorism literature, in order to establish whether this could be used to inform future political assassination research. This includes a discussion of the debate surrounding whether political assassination is a form of terrorism. As part of this, definitions of terrorism were examined, and the underlying concepts identified.

Chapter 3 provides the first in a series of empirical studies, examining how well real-life political assassination incidents meet the definitions of political assassination set out by the literature. Using concepts identified in chapter 2, accounts of political assassinations are content analysed, and Partial Order Scalogram Analysis is then used to 'scale' political assassination incidents. This enables identification of how well the definition concepts account for variation in political assassination incidents.

Similarly, chapter 4 uses the concepts underlying homicide to content analyse a sample of political assassinations and homicides. Multidimensional Scalogram Analysis (MSA) is then used to understand the similarity between political assassinations and other types of homicides. MSA also enables identification of the way they are differentiated from each other by the definitions identified in chapter 2.

The final empirical analysis in this series is found in chapter 5, and this considers whether assassination incidents meet the definition of terrorism set out by the literature. Again, the concepts identified as underlying terrorism definitions are used to content analyse accounts of both political assassination and terrorist attacks. MSA is again used, in order to establish how political assassinations and terrorism differ on the basis of these concepts, if at all. Due to the debate surrounding the inclusion of political assassinations as a form of terrorism, these results are of particular
importance, as, if political assassinations are found to be similar to other forms of terrorism, the terrorism literature can then be used to inform subsequent political assassination research.

Part 1 is concluded in chapter 6, with a discussion of the findings from the series of empirical analyses, and an explanation of how this thesis will define the term 'political assassination'.

Part 2 of the thesis moves away from definitional issues, examining the existing research on political assassinations and conducting empirical analysis of a sample of 400 political assassination incidents carried out in the last 18 years. Chapter 7 provides a review of the existing literature in the political assassination field. This begins with pre-1998 US-based research, which focuses on creating profiles and typologies of offenders. The next part of chapter 7 provides a discussion of post-1998 US-based research, which is less focused on typology or profile creation, and instead examines the behaviours observed in political assassination incidents. Finally, chapter 7 provides a discussion of European-based political assassination research. This research tends to take a broader sample of political assassination incidents, with less focus on heads of state, and more on politicians in general, and also included incidents targeted at members of the Royal Families.

Chapter 8 discusses theoretical perspectives which can be applied to the understanding of political assassinations. Theories of homicide, rational choice theory, situational crime prevention, routine activity theory, and script theory are discussed, offering various viewpoints from which to understand political assassinations.

Chapter 9 provides an overview of the methodology used in the thesis. This begins with an overview of the methods used in previous political assassination research, and an explanation of the aims of the thesis. The methodology to be used in this thesis is presented, along with a discussion of the existing databases in this area, and the database created and used for the current research. Finally, an explanation of the
content analysis technique is presented, along with an explanation of the coding scheme which is used to content analyse the data.

Chapter 10 provides an overview of the sample, in terms of place and time demographics, the characteristics of the victim and the assassin, and aspects of the attack. Demographic aspects of the immediate victims are presented, along with the number of collateral victims, and the previous experiences of the target (e.g. threats, or previous attempts). The identity of the assassin is discussed, with a focus on the terrorist groups and governments who have committed assassinations in this sample. Finally, the data relating to the weapon used, and the location and timing of the political assassinations is presented.

Chapter 11 provides an empirical analysis of the Situational Vulnerability of political assassination victims. This examines the accessibility of victims at the time of the attack, in terms of their location and the timing of the attack, and also their preparedness for an attack, by looking at whether they have received threats prior to their death, whether they survived previous attempts, and whether they were protected by a bodyguard at the time of the attack. The resulting models enable the creation of scales of Accessibility and Victim Preparedness, enabling the scoring of individual assassination incidents.

Chapter 12 continues the empirical analysis, with an examination of the level of specificity seen in political assassinations in terms of the numbers of victims (both injured and deceased) other than the target. The specificity is examined in light of the type of assassin, the location and timing of the attack, and the geographical region in which the attack took place. The Specificity of assassinations is then compared to the scales of Accessibility and Preparedness.

Chapter 13 is the final empirical analysis chapter, looking at the methods of political assassination used by assassins, in terms of the complexity of the weapons used, and the level of proximity between the target and the victim at the time of the attack. Again, these are modelled, and scales of Complexity and Proximity created. The
chapter ends with a comparison of Complexity and Proximity, along with Accessibility and Preparedness, and Specificity.

Finally, chapter 15 offers a discussion of the thesis as a whole. The findings, and the models, are compared to the existing research and the theoretical perspectives discussed in chapters 7 and 8, offering insight into how they relate to the existing literature. The limitations of the research are presented, along with suggestions for future research, and the potential implications and applications of the findings are discussed.
2. Defining Assassinations

2.1 DEFINITIONS AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

The definition of variables and concepts is an essential aspect of the theory construction which takes place in research; researchers must define what they are looking for, before the research begins (Eysenck, 1998). Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the phenomenon of political assassinations, and to unpick the inter-related concepts which comprise the definition of these acts, in order to provide better understanding of the current research domain.

Definition of variables (or concepts) is a fundamental stage of theory construction, and in defining the conceptual elements one is beginning the theory construction which underlies research. Research goes beyond the simple observation of facts or behaviours. It requires interpretation of those observations, to understand both their meaning, and the relationships between them. Via this theory creation, the way that researchers look at the facts available is altered, allowing “scientists to search in a more directed way” (Brysbaert and Rastle, 2009, p. 295). A theory is “a system of logically interrelated, specifically non-contradictory, statements, ideas, and concepts relating to an area of reality, formulated in such a way that testable hypotheses can be derived from them” (De Groot, 1966, p.40). Thus, a theory can be considered as a series of assertions, which are designed to organise and explain observations, and to predict future behaviour (Breakwell and Rose, 2006). A theory shows the relationships between behaviours under examination, and gives the researcher an idea of what can be expected in unknown conditions (Bem and de Jong, 2006). The theory created serves as a guide which allows scientists to establish those observations that should be given credence, and those that should not. This act of theory construction has three main stages: first a detailed, methodical statement of what it is the researcher is looking at is created. Second, the different aspects of the phenomena are allocated to categories, based on the commonalities they share, which mean that they can be treated as similar concepts. Once this categorisation is completed, the third stage is to link the categories and establish how they relate to
one another. It is not until the different categories are related to one another that theory construction begins (Breakwell and Rose, 2006).

Breakwell and Rose (2006) state that all researchers are guided by theory, be it implicit or explicit, with any examination of the relationship between concepts having “the attributes of a theory” (Breakwell and Rose, 2006, p.4). In the natural sciences, there was previously a belief that the world, and nature, was designed according to strict mathematical laws. These mathematical laws, and subsequent theories, were used to provide a formal structure for theories in the natural sciences. The formal structures of these theories should enable scientists to make quantifiable predictions, based on deductions from the principles of the theories. Bem and de Jong (2006) explain how Hull attempted to do the same with human behaviour. Hull believed that as psychology is a natural science, and as nature is underpinned by a “mathematical and mechanical system” (Bem and de Jong, 2006, p.11), it should therefore be possible to create a single, deductive theory of human behaviour which is based on the system/laws which underlie nature. From this, Hull believed, it should be possible to make predictions and create theories about human behaviour based on deductions from “clearly stated principles” (Bem and de Jong, 2006, p.11). However, as Leahey (2001) states, Hull’s supposition was unsuccessful. There is no single, unified comprehensive system which underlies either nature, or human behaviour. Scientific theories are susceptible to change and can and have been ‘proved wrong’. Therefore, more informal methods are often more appropriate for use in psychology, i.e. by not using structured theories, but instead using implicit theories to guide the research.

In general, psychologists rely on more informal methods of deriving predictions from theory (Bem and de Jong, 2006), i.e. they often avoid research which is designed solely for theory construction, preferring to conduct research which is intended to describe a phenomenon (e.g. the behaviours present in political assassination) rather than being explicitly designed to create a theory of that phenomenon (Breakwell and Rose, 2006). Others prefer to conduct ‘applied’ research, which is designed for use in real-world applications and decision making (e.g. how best to protect potential targets of assassination), disregarding any theory construction that may arise from
this (e.g. a theory of why and where targets are attacked) (Breakwell and Rose, 2006). In these cases, researchers tend not to acknowledge the theory underlying the research, but are nevertheless guided by implicit theory. Such researchers, who are not intending to build a theory in their research, should make a clear statement of the assumptions they make about their research. Failing to acknowledge the implicit theories guiding or underlying the research has disadvantages for the researcher. Implicit theories may lead the researcher to focus on some concepts more than others. That is, by not openly acknowledging the theory underlying the research, researchers may be guided by their own biases, either consciously or unconsciously. However, if the researcher is explicit about the underlying theory of their work, weaknesses can be identified and acknowledged. This clarity ensures others have the opportunity to evaluate the work, in light of all of the facts, and thus establish whether the research is/has been influenced by an underlying theory (Breakwell and Rose, 2006). An additional benefit of acknowledging underlying theories is that the way theories are defined, and the language used to do this, can offer new insights and ways to understand the phenomenon under examination (Breakwell and Rose, 2006). It is essential to understand the theoretical underpinnings of research, and a key element of this is to clearly define the concepts which comprise the phenomenon.

Key authors in this field include Popper and Kuhn. Popper introduced the hypothetico-deductive model of reasoning (see Figure 2.1), which bases scientific thinking on observations and inductive thought, along with educated guesswork. From these initial concepts, a theory is developed to explain the phenomenon (in this case political assassinations). Here, deductive reasoning makes a contribution, the theory is assessed for accuracy using hypotheses based on deductive reasoning. The predictions made in conjunction with the hypotheses are then falsified, offering a new set of observational data which the researcher can then use for further research (Brysbaert and Rastle, 2009).

Similarly, Kuhn argued that theory should be prioritised over observations, highlighting the relationship between the language used by the researcher and the dependence of the observations and theoretical concepts on this language (Brysbaert
and Rastle, 2009). As with Popper, and as shown in Figure 2.2, Kuhn saw science as starting with a collection of observations, facts and models, which are used to explain low level phenomena. From there, researchers must identify the guiding framework or theory, to understand the relationships between the individual concepts, and to enable researchers to identify appropriate methodologies. This is known as a paradigm: “a set of common views of what the discipline is about and how problems must be investigated” (Brysbaert and Rastle, 2009, p.311). Once the paradigm is established, ‘real’ science can begin, including falsification of the proposed theory.
Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to perform the first stages of theory construction. The phenomenon under examination is that of political assassination, and the aim is to understand what components have been used to define these acts in previous research, along with new insights that can be brought from related fields of study.

In areas such as forensic psychology and terrorism research, where the focus is on real world actions, there is another layer of complexity to the issue of definition. Johnson (1992) highlights the need for accurate definitions in real-life, as well as in the research arena, and this is particularly true in an area such as political assassinations. Here definitions are also used to classify the legality of various crimes, amid the sometimes blurred boundaries between criminal action, terrorism, and warfare (Wilson and Lemanski, 2010). Early research in terrorism struggled to find common definitions of the phenomenon, with no commonly accepted definitions being in use across different countries and different agencies. The same has held true for assassinations and it is essential that there is a clear definition of what is an assassination, to avoid the “abusive interpretation” of the law by state actors (Johnson, 1992).

This chapter provides a discussion of the research areas, and the theories within these, that may be used to identify the concepts which comprise political assassinations, in order that the phenomenon can be better understood. Two areas which, it is suggested, may offer an underpinning to this area are that of homicide, and terrorism. These will be discussed in detail, by identifying the ways in which they are defined and the concepts which are used to do this.

2.2 DEFINITIONS OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS

The first step in understanding how to define political assassinations is to examine the ways in which others have defined them. Table 2.1 contains 13 definitions of political assassination, drawn from different fields, including the law (e.g. The Hague, 1907) and academia (e.g. Kirkham, Levy and Crotty, 1971). However, it is unclear how the authors created most of these definitions, as most give
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ben-Yehuda (2005)</td>
<td>&quot;'Assassination', and the common elements in its different manifestations, refers to a very particular form of attempt (sometimes successful) to take a person's life against his or her will&quot; (p.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pape (2002)</td>
<td>&quot;premeditated and intentional killing of a public figure accomplished violently and treacherously for a political purpose&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zengel (1991)</td>
<td>&quot;While no exact definition may prove acceptable to scholars of the subject, all definitions of the act involve the idea of an illegal killing, a murder of a specific public figure or leader for a political rather than private purpose&quot; (p.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkham, Levy and Crotty (1970)</td>
<td>&quot;there are at least three separate elements woven into the concept of 'assassination' which identify it as a particular kind of murder: (1) a target that is a prominent political figure; (2) a political motive for the killings; (3) the potential political impact of the death or escape from death, as the case may be. All three elements however, do not necessarily coexist. A murder which contains any one of the foregoing three elements should properly be considered in any investigation of the phenomenon of assassination&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatchadourian (1974)</td>
<td>&quot;Political assassination is just the killing of a person for political reasons. Victim can be a private individual, or a public figure. The assassin must be motivated by politics rather than malice against the victim. The assassination targets the political power of the victim or their office&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crotty (1971)</td>
<td>&quot;the murder of an individual, whether of public prominence or not, in an effort to achieve political gain.&quot; (p.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasher and Yadlin (2005)</td>
<td>“an assassination is an act of killing a prominent person selectively, intentionally and for political (including religious) purposes” (p.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fein, Vossekuil &amp; Holden (1995)</td>
<td>“assassination of a prominent person of public status is a discrete form of targeted violence, in which a potential assailant identifies, then attempts to harm a particular target (or targets).” (p.177)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Pickard (2001)                   | “used to signify the targeted killing of an individual, by an official agent of a nation, regardless of whether a state of war exists and will specifically exclude heads of state as potential targets” | Where  
|                                 | “an official agent...will generally either apply to a member of the military or of the intelligence committee”                                                                                           |
| O’Brien (1998)                   | “the selection and deliberate killing of an individual for political purposes within the confines of conflict or peace”                                                                               |
| Havens, Leiden & Schmitt (1970)  | “deliberate, extralegal killing of an individual for political purposes”                                                                                                                                 |
| The Hague (1907)                 | “to kill or wound treacherously individuals belonging to the hostile nation or army”                                                                                                                       |
| Fein & Vossekuil (1998)          | Use the basic definition of Fein, Vossekuil & Holden (1995), specifying the identity of a prominent person as “persons protected by the Secret Service (the president, the vice president, their families, former presidents, candidates for president, visiting heads of states); other major federal officials and office holders (cabinet secretaries, members of Congress, federal judges); important state and local public officials (governors, mayors of large cities); celebrities, such as sports figures, and movie, television, radio and entertainment notables; presidents and chief executives of major corporations” |
no explanation as to how they defined the phenomenon of political assassination, and how the concepts included in their definitions of political assassination are selected (this can be seen in, for example Khatchadourian, 1974, Pape, 2002, and Ben-Yehuda, 2005). As discussed in section 2.1, it is important to clearly define the phenomenon that is being studied (i.e. political assassination), and the concepts which make up that phenomenon. However, one paper, by Kasher and Yadlin (2005) clearly explains the way in which their definition of political assassination was created. They examined other discussions of and papers on assassinations, and found that ten features are commonly present in other definitions of political assassination:

1. “Killing a person;
2. Killing a political leader;
3. Killing a non-combatant;
4. Killing selectively;
5. Killing intentionally;
6. Killing in a premeditated manner;
7. Killing for political (including religious) purposes
8. Killing unexpectedly;
9. Killing by a person not in uniform;

However, they found that these are just things that commonly happen in assassinations, rather than being necessary components of an assassination. Through their examination of definitions, they decided what features (i.e. individual concepts) an act should contain to be classified as an assassination. Thus they use a definition which includes a prominent person, an act which is selective and intentional, for political (including religious) purposes. However, aside from Kasher and Yadlin (2005) there is no evidence of how other definitions have been created. This thesis will follow the example of Kasher and Yadlin (2005), and will examine this, and other, definitions of political assassinations to understand the concepts which are included in the literature definitions, as presented in Table 2.1.

These definitions are content analysed, and four concepts were repeatedly found in the political assassination definitions:

- Legality
- Victim Identity
- Perpetrator Identity
- Motive

These concepts underpin the definitions presented in Table 2.1, and Table 2.2 shows how each definition is made up of various combinations of the concepts.

Table 2.2

Features of Assassination Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Offender</th>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Legality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ben-Yehuda (2005)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zengel (1991)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pape (2002)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkham, Levy and Crotty (1970)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatchadourian (1974)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crotty (1971)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasher and Yadlin (2005)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fein, Vossekuil and Holden (1995)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pickard (2001)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Brien (1998)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hague (1907)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fein and Vossekuil (1998)</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The definitions vary in the number of concepts addressed by the definitions, i.e. some address all three of the concepts in defining the phenomenon of assassination, while others address fewer. However, none of the definitions address all four concepts. There are a multitude of ways in which these concepts combine to form definitions of political assassination (see Figure 2.3).
For example, Pape (2002) addresses three of the four, omitting the legality of political assassinations, while Kirkham et al. (1970) also addresses three concepts, but in this case it is the identity of the offender which is not considered. The use of these concepts as a way to define the phenomenon of assassination offers an important advantage. These definitions come from different contexts (i.e. law, academia) but nevertheless they are still based on the same set of concepts. For example, O’Brien (1998) has framed the act of political assassination as a method of killing used by state actors against their opponents, rather than as a method used by non-state actors targeting politicians, or prominent figures. As such, he has taken an entirely different viewpoint from many other definitions, but nevertheless has incorporated the
concepts of the identity of the target, and the motive. Zengel (1991) also conceptualises political assassination differently to other researchers, using a definition drawn from an analysis of the law surrounding use of political assassination as a tactic of a state actor. He also incorporates aspects of the legality of the act, and the identity of the victim and the motive. Thus although both of these definitions are rather more focused on the legality of such attacks, and view them as a possible tactic of state authorities, they nevertheless use the same concepts as others in their definitions.

Although these four main concepts underpin the definitions used to describe the phenomenon of political assassination, the concepts themselves are not always defined in the same ways across different definitions. Even where definitions address the same concepts, the concepts themselves vary in the way in which they are defined. First, although the majority of definitions do go some way to defining the variable of ‘victim’, not all do (e.g. Ben-Yehuda, 2005), leaving this particular concept undefined, and therefore not contributing to an understanding of the phenomena. At the very detailed end of the spectrum is the definition proposed by Fein and Vossekuil (1998). In this instance, a lot of attention is afforded to the potential target’s identity, including both political targets, such as presidents, senators and governors, and non-political targets, such as chief executives of companies and celebrities. The remaining definitions are rather less detailed. Kirkham et al. (1970) do address the identity of political assassination targets, and similarly to Fein and Vossekuil do not restrict this to political individuals. They are however, both less detailed and narrower in their definition, citing potential targets as any prominent public figure. Thus there is far less detail, which offers more scope for inclusion, but also offers less guidance as to who may be a target (i.e. how is ‘prominent’ or ‘public’ intended to be defined). Others do not prescribe the profession of the target, or require that they are a political figure, but do state that they must be a ‘prominent’ figure (Pape, 2002, Kasher and Yadlin, 2005, Fein, Vossekuil and Holden, 1995). Pape (2002) does however specify that the targets of political assassination are very specifically selected and targeted by the offender. Definitions which have even broader definitions of target identity include Khatchadourian (1974) and Crotty (1971), with both including private individuals as
potential political assassination targets, removing other definitions’ requirement that the target be a prominent or public person. Finally, some definitions do not make any specification regarding target identity, with Ben-Yehuda (2005) and O’Brien (1998) offering no detail on target identity. Thus, there are a wide range of potential political assassination targets to be considered, ranging from private citizens, to the most famous politicians and celebrities.

Second, the identity of the assassin is a concept included in some definitions of political assassination, although this is afforded a lower level of detail than that of the target. The majority of definitions identified here do not include any details regarding the assassin. Crotty (1971) specifies those individuals who should not be included in the concept of assassin, rather than those who should, arguing that individuals who are suffering from mental illness are incapable of committing an assassination. Pickard (2001) proposes a relatively narrow concept of assassin, suggesting that assassinations can only be perpetrated by an “official agent of a nation”, such as a member of the military or the intelligence services. Ivansky (1971) suggests that the identity of the perpetrator be that of a ‘lone wolf’, while Ben-Yehuda (2005) suggests that anyone can be the perpetrator of a political assassination. Thus, compared to the attention given to the identity of the victim of a political assassination, there is relatively little on the conceptualisation of the perpetrator of the assassination. However, here it may be possible to draw on the terrorism literature, where it has been suggested that it is the act which is the important concept, rather than the identity of the terrorist (or assassin) (e.g. Schmid, 1992) (see section 2.4).

The third concept, the motivation for an assassination, is given more attention. In terms of motivations behind political assassinations, the majority of definitions in Table 2.2 (perhaps obviously) state that the motivation for a political assassination is political. However, the concept of ‘political motivation’ is not defined and is still rather vague. However, while there may be no explicit explanation as to what political means in this context, it appears to mean that the perpetrator is motivated by their desire to make a political statement, to remove a political opponent, or to further their own political ends. Other definitions also include religious motivations
alongside the political (Kasher and Yadlin, 2005), with these functioning in the same way, i.e. the offender is motivated by their desire to make a religious statement, to further their own religion, or because of their religious beliefs. Crotty (1971) is more specific, suggesting that the motive for political assassination is the desire for political gain. In addition to describing motivation as a conceptual element of political assassinations, there is also discussion of where motivation *discounts* an act from being a political assassination. Khatchadourian (1974) states that malice against the victim is not sufficient motivation for a case to be defined as a political assassination. Pape (2002) supports this, saying that the motivation must be for political purposes rather than private reasons. However, some state that a political assassination need not be politically motivated. Kirkham et al. (1970) also include the *potential* for political impact as a motivator of perpetrators of assassinations. Although this is not acknowledged by all definitions, Kirkham et al. (1970) do state that a political motivation is only one of three components which are required in a political assassinations, i.e. it is not required. For example, a murder of a politician by a person motivated by mental illness rather than politics, would count as a political assassination because of the resulting political impact (e.g. in forcing an election to fill the deceased's seat).

The fourth and final concept is the legality of an assassination. Both Kirkham et al. (1970) and Pape (2002) classify a political assassination as a murder, while Ben-Yehuda (2005) also quantifies a political assassination as an illegal killing. Havens et al. (1970) state that political assassinations are 'extralegal'. Thus there is a clear statement in a number of definitions that political assassinations are a sub-type of murder. In fact, Kirkham et al. (1970) define it as a murder (and therefore illegal, see 2.3 for a discussion of murder and homicide) with any one of three aspects, as shown in Figure 2.4.

Taking political assassinations as the phenomena under investigation, each of the concepts which are a part of the political assassination must be clearly defined. This presents a weakness of the definitions, as identified in Table 2.2, as this selection of definitions show little consistency in the concepts they define as part of political assassinations, and the way in which they are defined.
In addition to the varying definition of the individual concepts, there is also variation in the ways the concepts overlap. As Figure 2.3 shows, it is in the overlap between the concepts that the definitions fall, with examples given where they exist.

![Figure 2.4. Combinations of features of political assassinations](image)

Even within individual definitions, there may be multiple ‘types’ of assassination. For example, in Kirkham et al.’s (1970) definition there are seven potential types of political assassination: cases where just one of the three concepts is present, cases with two of the concepts present, or cases where all three concepts are present. This suggests that there may be different ‘levels’ of assassination, depending on whether one aspect, two aspects, or three aspects are present. Thus, even within political assassinations there may be sub-types, with Scholes and Wilson (2008) arguing that political assassinations fall along a continuum, with differing degrees of ‘typicality’ between that and homicide.
As this section has shown, definitions of political assassination are comprised of various combinations of concepts, which themselves are differently defined by authors. Thus, there appears to be little agreement on how the phenomena of political assassination should be defined. As Eysenck (1998) states, when looking at phenomena it is important to use common definitions in research. None of the definitions presented here provide a sufficiently detailed description of what comprises a political assassination, therefore it is suggested that a new definition be established. Based on the information in section 2.1 it is first necessary to look at theories which may underlie the phenomena of political assassinations. As some of the existing definitions have shown, at their most basic, political assassinations are a form of homicide, or attempted homicide, in that they are a form of violence where (at least) one person’s life is taken by (at least) one other person. Therefore, it makes sense to refer to the literature on homicide and its subtypes, to guide the research into political assassinations.

2.3 HOMICIDE AND POLITICAL ASSASSINATION

Homicide is “the killing of a human being, whether the killing is lawful or unlawful” (Brookman, 2005, p.5). Like all categories of crime, homicide is largely socially constructed, with different sub-types constructed to describe the universe of unlawful homicide (Brookman, 2005). Even across countries, the law differs on what homicide is or is not. In defining homicide, the only easy aspect is establishing whether an individual (or group of individuals) has killed another person. From then on, the circumstances and public and media reaction to homicide vary hugely (Brookman, 2005).

The term homicide is broad, encompassing a number of different incident types. At the broadest level it includes the unlawful acts of murder and manslaughter. Murder, according to the Crown Prosecution Service (England and Wales), is committed where a sane individual, has unlawfully killed another (living) person (i.e. not self-defence or an otherwise justified killing), with the intention of killing them, or causing grievous bodily harm (The Crown Prosecution Service, 2011). Here then, the
behaviours of the offender are accounted for, but the identity of the victim and offender are not, nor is the relationship between the victim and offender, or the motivation (beyond the desire to kill or grievously harm). Manslaughter is a broad category which encompasses a wide range of acts (Brookman, 2005). Its breadth leads to difficulties in establishing a definition of manslaughter, and in particular clarifying where manslaughter should start and end. As the UK Law Commission (1996) states, manslaughter is “extremely broad and ranges in its gravity from the borders of murder right down to those of accidental death” (1996: No 237, p.1). Brookman (2005) offers a general definition of manslaughter, where “any unlawful homicide which is not classified as murder is categorised as some form of manslaughter” (p.8). Thus, individual concepts such as the identity of the victim, or the offender, or the motivation for the attack, are not defined. Instead, manslaughter is defined on the basis of what it is not, rather than what it is. However, beyond these broad categories of unlawful homicide, as set out in law, there are many other subtypes of homicide, which divide the universe of homicides and which are defined in various ways. Ten sub-types of homicide have been identified from the literature, providing a range of definitions. These are content analysed, in order to identify the concepts which underlie homicide definitions. The purpose of this is to understand the concepts which are considered important in differentiating between sub-types, and to improve understanding of the way political assassinations are differentiated from other types of homicide. A total of six concepts were found to underlie these definitions:

- Motivation
- Victim Identity/Relationship to Offender
- Timing
- Geographic Location
- Method
- Number of victims

Table 2.3 shows the concepts which are used to define sub-types of homicide.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtype</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Victim Identity/ Relationship to Offender</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Geographic location</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number of victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death by dangerous driving (Brookman, 2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate killing (Brookman, 2005)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual homicide (Burgess, Hartman, Ressler, Douglas, and McCormack, 1986)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infanticide (Infanticide Act, 1938)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial killing (Brookman, 2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Assassination (Kirkham et al, 1970)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse-serial-killing (Field and Pearson, 1970)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event Type</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Mass killing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brookman, 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spree killing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brookman, 2005</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
As Table 2.3 shows, the sub-types of homicide can be defined by varying combinations of the underlying concepts, with combinations of between one and four concepts being used to describe the sub-types. One of the broadest of all the definitions, as it is defined by just one concept, is that of death by dangerous driving. This is defined by the method, i.e. a person driving a car. No other concepts are addressed by this definition. Also described by one concept is corporate homicide, which is the death of a person as a result of negligence, or deliberate decisions made by a corporate body. Thus this describes the relationship between the victim and the offender, with no reference to motivation, number of victims, geographic location, timing, or method. Finally, sexual homicide is also defined by one concept. Sexual homicide is an act which is defined as “one person killing another in the context of power, control, sexuality and aggressive brutality” (Burgess et al., 1986, p.252), thus the motivation for the attack is the underlying concept. There is no reference to number of victims, geographic location, timing, method, victim-offender relationship.

Other sub-types of homicide are defined by two of the concepts listed in Table 2.3. Infanticide is defined by the concepts of motivation, and victim/offender relationship. This is a particular form of homicide where a mother kills her biological child while the child is under 12 months. The motivation for this act is the mother’s mental illness, with the definition stating that “the balance of her [the mother] mind was disturbed by reason of her not having fully recovered from the effects of having given birth to the child, or by reason of the effects of lactation consequent upon the birth of the child” (Infanticide Act, 1938, p.1), and the victim-offender relationship is of course parent-child. Also defined by two concepts is serial killing, defined by the timing of incidents (attacks take place over an extended time period, generally specified as over 30 days, Holmes and Holmes, 1998), and the number of victims (three or more victims, Ressler, Burgess and Douglas, 1988). Political assassination is also defined by two concepts: the motivation for the attack (the presence of a political motivation), and victim identity (as a political individual). Unlike many homicide sub-types, no detail on temporal or geographic characteristics are defined, therefore presumably this is not considered an important aspect of this type of homicide. Finally, nurse-serial-killing is comprised of the victim/offender
relationship, and the method used to commit the homicide. These are incidents where nurses kill their patients (victim-offender relationship) without consent from the patient (Field and Pearson, 2010), using methods such as lethal injections, suffocation, or long term abuse. This definition does not incorporate the concept of motivation, but it does go some way to identifying the victim/offender relationship.

Mass killings and spree killings are both comprised of the same three concepts (timing, geographic location, number of victims), although they differ in the way the concepts themselves are defined. Incidents classified as mass killings are expected to include four or more victims (Ressler et al., 1988), in the same temporal period, and in similar geographical locations (Brookman, 2005). Spree killings are defined as incidents with two or more victims (Ressler et al., 1988), who are usually killed in different geographical locations, and over an extended temporal period (Brookman, 2005) (suggested by Holmes and Holmes, 1998, to be up to 30 days long). Looking at these two subtypes, it is clear that these are largely defined in terms of the number of victims, the geographic location and timing, with little attention afforded to the victim-offender relationship or victim identity, the method used, or the motivation for the attack.

Finally, at the most prescriptive end of the spectrum are school/campus murders. Here, similar to multiple murders, the geographic and temporal characteristics are important, as is the victim/offender relationship, and the method. Leary et al. (2003) require that a school murder (and they specifically discuss shootings), must have occurred during school hours, at a school. Incidents at a school outside of the school day, such as an orchestra rehearsal, would not be included. In addition, the perpetrator(s) must be a student(s), and the incident must result in the death or injury of at least one student. Where there are multiple victims it is also possible that a school shooting could be classified as a spree or mass murder, depending on which criteria the act meets.

Thus, there are numerous sub types of homicide, and it appears that political assassinations do indeed fall in this category. Definitions of political assassination appear to be underpinned by three of the six concepts, with no reference to
geographic location, timing, or number of victims. However, when considering political assassinations in more detail these aspects may be important, therefore these notions will be used to explore assassinations further, for example the time and place of assassinations should be investigated, along with the number of victims in political assassination incidents. In addition to considering whether or not assassinations are a sub-type of homicide, it may also be that political assassinations are a sub-type of assassination (see Figure 2.5), in the same way that school shootings are a sub-type of multiple murders. By removing the 'political' aspect, in the concepts of motivation and victim identity, an assassination becomes the targeted killing of a specific person. This does not seem very different to a murder, although it does specify that the victim is selected and specifically targeted.

*Figure 2.5. Political Assassination as a sub-type of homicide*

Thus the concepts included in definitions of homicide show some similarity with those included in definitions of political assassinations. It is plausible therefore, that the literature on homicide, and understanding the sub-types, may be appropriate to underpin research on political assassinations. In addition to assisting in
understanding more about how homicides (including political assassinations) are defined, these concepts also offer a starting point for further research into the definition of political assassinations. These are the concepts which underlie incidents of homicide, and if political assassination is such a phenomenon, these are also likely to underlie political assassinations. For example, the geographic location refers to the place and time at which victims of assassination are targeted, and the method describes how victims are killed. As will be discussed further in Part 2 of this thesis, more research regarding these areas is required in order to further understanding of political assassinations. However, it should be noted that there is a large body of research examining homicide in terms of behavioural typologies, and while this is relevant to the thesis (and will be discussed in chapter 7), the current section is intended to only discuss definitions of homicide, rather than the broader behavioural aspects.

*Figure 2.6. Interaction between homicide, assassination, and terrorism*

There may also be other areas of research which can be used to inform the current research. For example, political assassinations have also been considered in the
literature on terrorism, therefore this is an area which may be worthy of further examination. As Figure 2.5 shows, assassinations may be a homicide sub-type, and political assassinations an assassination sub-type. It is possible that these are (at least in part) those perpetrated by terrorist groups, as shown in Figure 2.6.

### 2.4 TERRORISM AND POLITICAL ASSASSINATION

As with homicide, the decision as to whether or not political assassinations are a sub-type of terrorism depends on how terrorism is defined, which in itself is not simple. According to Schmid and Jongman (1988) there are over 100 separate definitions of terrorism. Of course, in the intervening 22 years since publication of this paper, this number is likely to have increased hugely, particularly in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent proliferation of terrorism research (Wilson and Lemanski, 2010). Definitions of terrorism vary hugely, with debate over aspects such as the identity of the victim, identity of the perpetrator, motivation, and the political views of the commentator. Here then there appear to be similarities with political assassination research. Table 2.4 shows a sample of definitions of terrorism which have been drawn from the literature. There are also a number of legal and governmental definitions, to show the range of definitions.

A content analysis of these definitions shows that there are seven underlying concepts which appear to underpin them:

- Premeditation
- Motivation
- Target Identity
- Type of violence
- Perpetrator Identity
- Intention
- Legality

These concepts of terrorism definitions are set out in Table 2.5, with an indication of which definitions incorporate which concepts. Two of the 13 definitions explicitly state that for an act to be classified as terrorism there should be evidence that it was
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| US Code (2000a)                             | “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”  
[FOOTNOTE]: “For purposes of this definition the term ‘noncombatant’ is interpreted to include, in addition to civilians, military personnel who at the time of the incident are unarmed and/or not on duty... We also consider as acts of terrorism attacks on military installations or on armed military personnel when a state of military hostilities does not exist at the site, such as bombings against US bases in Europe, the Phillipines, or elsewhere” |
<p>| Schmid, Jongman and Stohl (1988), p.2       | “an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassinations – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human targets of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organisation) (imperilled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion or propaganda is primarily sought” |
| Counterterrorism Threat Assessment and Warning Unit (2000) | “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” |
| US Department of Defence (1988)             | “The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to incalculable fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological objectives.” |
| US Department of Homeland Security          | “any activity that involves an act that: is dangerous to human life or potentially destructive of critical infrastructure or key resources; and...must also appear to be intended, (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian...” |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2002)</td>
<td>population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Pickard, 2001                               | "Used to describe violence, whether actual or threatened, for a political/religious objective, in order to affect an intended audience, and thereby to alter an issue of public policy."
| Office of Combating Terrorism (1982)        | "the threat or use of violence for political purposes by individuals or groups, whether acting for, or in opposition to, established governmental authority, when such actions are intended to shock, stun, or intimidate a target from wider than the immediate victims"
| US Code (2000b)                             | "a) involves a violent act or an act dangerous to human life that is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any state; and b) appears to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by assassination or kidnapping"
| Arend & Beck, (1994)                        | "The threat or use of violence with the intent of causing fear in a target group in order to achieve political objectives"
| Hoffman and Claridge (1998)                 | International terrorism: "Incidents in which terrorists go abroad to strike their targets, select victims or targets that have connections with a foreign state (such as diplomats, foreign businessmen, and offices of foreign corporations) or create international incidents by attacking airline passengers, personnel and equipment." The definition excludes "violence carried out by terrorists within their own country against their own nationals, and terrorism perpetrated by governments against their own citizens. For example, Irish terrorists blowing up other Irishmen in Belfast would not be counted, nor would Italian terrorists kidnapping Italian officials in Italy"
| German Federal Republic, Office for the Protection of the Constitution, 1985, (cited in Schmid & Crelinsten, 1992) | "The enduringly constructed struggle for political goals, which are intended to be achieved by means of assaults on the life and property of other persons, especially by means of severe crimes as detailed in article 129a, section 1 of the penal code (above all: murder, homicide, extortionist kidnapping, arson, setting off a blast by explosives) or by means of other acts of violence which serve as preparation of such criminal acts"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (1974)</th>
<th>&quot;For the purposes of the legislation, terrorism is the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism and Political Violence (TREVI) Group (cited in Schmid &amp; Crelinsten, 1992)</td>
<td>&quot;The use, or the threatened use, by a cohesive group of persons of violence (short of warfare) to effect political claims&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Premeditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Code (2000a)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schmid, Jongman and Stohl (1988)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterterrorism Threat Assessment and Warning Unit (2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Department of Defence (1988)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickard, 2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Combating Terrorism (1982)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Code (2000b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoffman and Claridge (1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism and Political Violence (TREVI) Group (cited in Schmid &amp; Crelinsten, 1992)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
premeditated, while four definitions address the (il)legality of terrorism, with four defining it as unlawful, in varying levels of detail. Other aspects of definitions which were more commonly addressed in these definitions are the identity of the perpetrator and the victim, the motivation for the attack, the intention of the perpetrator, and the presence of violence in the attack. The definitions here present a relative consensus on the identity of the perpetrator, with agreement that the perpetrators of terrorism are not just groups, but are also individuals working alone. State actors are included as terrorists in some definitions (e.g. Schmid, Jongman and Stohl, 1988).

There is more variation amongst the definitions of targets of terrorism. Underlying the definitions there is an apparent consensus that targets are noncombatants, with this covering civilians/the general public. Others also include off-duty military personnel, unarmed military personnel, or armed military personnel in peacetime, governments or societies, in this group. Some suggest that both property and people can be the targets, and in this military installations are included, if they are based in a non-hostile country (e.g. attacks on US military bases in Europe). Different ‘types’ of target are identified, with suggestions that targets can be randomly or selectively targeted, meaning that the targets of terrorism are either targets of opportunity or representative/symbolic targets, respectively. Targets are contrasted by some with assassinations, as in terrorism it is argued that direct targets of violence are not main targets, i.e. there are the immediate victims and also wider targets. The targets, it is suggested, serve as message generators, and are used a communication tool by the terrorists, to manipulate those in authority.

Similarly to the identity of the perpetrator, the definitions clearly state that the motivation for terrorism is political, with some also adding social, religious or ideological motives to this. However, there is little in the way of explanation as to what a political motive looks like in practice, so although the consensus simplifies the area, in practical terms it is still not clear cut. Closely linked to the motivation for terrorism is the intention of the perpetrators. The general intention highlighted by definitions of terrorism is the desire to influence an audience, and more specifically to inspire anxiety or fear in a target group. Descriptions of terrorist intentions
highlight that the audience which should be affected is wider than the immediate victims, for example while a government may not be the direct target, the ultimate intention is to affect the behaviour of the government, or to intimidate or coerce them in order to achieve the group/individual’s political or social objectives.

The final aspect which is incorporated in the definitions of terrorism is that of violence. There appears to be agreement that terrorism must be either an act or threat of violence, which is often repeated. The violence can be targeted at individuals or property, critical infrastructure or key resources. Some suggest that this violence can be either mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping, while others explicitly state that terrorism is any violence short of warfare.

Wilson and Lemanski (2010), amongst many others, highlight the pejorative nature of the term ‘terrorism’ and the way in which the perception of terrorism can be affected by the individual’s support for the terrorists’ cause, with some researchers preferring to use terms such as ‘war’, ‘resistance’, and ‘freedom-fighting’ to describe terrorism. Labels such as ‘insurgents’, ‘activists’ or ‘combatants’ have been put forward as more appropriate ways of describing terrorism, although there is no consensus on this. Heskin (1984) argues that such terms are used where the general public have sympathy for the terrorist cause, with people less likely to make harsh judgements if (a) the cause is perceived as just, and (b) if they and their friends or family are unlikely to be the targets of violence. Others, for example Horgan (2005), have considered the relationship between terrorism and state-sponsored violence, such as war, arguing that the differences are merely ‘surface dissimilarities’. War is an act of violence which occurs between two states, who are relatively evenly matched. Conversely, terrorists are less evenly matched with their opponents (the power-holding democracy/state/government), and their lack of resources forces the terrorists to employ alternative tactics.

To avoid this problem of the inherent judgement in definitions of terrorism it has been argued that terrorism should be defined by the actions and behaviours of the terrorists (Schmid, 1992). For example, a key concept in the definition of terrorism is the identity of the target(s), and the intended behavioural outcome from attacking
these individuals. Research tends to divide the (potential) targets of terrorism into three categories: first the ‘direct’ targets of terrorism. These are defined by Schmid (1992) as those who are physically harmed in terrorist violence, where the intended behavioural outcome is their death or injury. Second, there are the ‘main’ targets, or the general public, who must be distinct from the direct target in order to achieve the aim of creating fear in a wide audience. This is supported by Pickard’s (2001) argument that a specific quality of terrorism is that it typically has a wide audience. The intended behavioural outcome from the main target is fear induced in the public by terrorist violence. Third is the ‘authority’ target, who is the government/state that the terrorists are challenging, with the intended behavioural outcome of achieving political change (Wilson and Lemanski, 2010).

The concept of different types of victims and the interactions between these are the focus of many definitions of terrorism. For example, Schmid and Jongman (1988) argue that it is possible that the direct target of terrorism is a single person, for example a soldier or police officer. While some argue that a single individual is not a sufficient direct target (e.g. Schmid, 1992), Schmid and Jongman (1988) suggest that where a solitary direct target is a police officer or soldier and thus symbolic of a nation, such an attack can be categorised as efficient terrorism. Killing the symbolic target can weaken the opponent, and thus achieve the aim of also affecting the main target: the induction of fear in the general public.

It is because of these ‘requirements’ relating to the targets of terrorism that some argue political assassinations should not be considered as a sub-type of terrorism. Schmid (1992) argues that political assassinations, which typically have just one direct target, are less likely to induce fear in the general population (or main target) than other subtypes of terrorism. Assassinations have also been rejected as a sub-type of terrorism on the basis that the behavioural outcomes are different. Post-assassination, the wider population/general public are likely to feel anger or sadness, whereas after a terrorist incident the public is more likely to feel fear, in particular that they may be the next victim (Schmid and Jongman, 1988). Schmid and Jongman (1988) suggest that it is possible for solo direct targets to have an impact where the main targets can relate to the direct target. However, it seems that the general public
would find it harder to relate to a political assassination victim, rather than a soldier or police officer (as discussed previously). As the majority of the population are unlikely to be targeted by political assassinations, this fear will not come from an assassination.

However, there is the third target of terrorism, the authority target, where the desired behavioural outcome is change of some kind. ‘Traditional’ terrorism can attempt to influence this change through bombing campaigns etc, but there is still a gap between the direct target, the main target and the authority target. Assassinations offer a way to bridge this gap, as a type of terrorist violence where the direct target and the influential target are one and the same. Thus in political assassinations, terrorist violence targeted at the direct victim is also guaranteed to target the authority victim. The use of a political assassination removes the level of ‘main target’, and acts directly on the authority target. It also can ensure a behavioural outcome of political change (as specified by Schmid) as this is likely to also be an outcome of a political assassination. There is evidence that assassinations are used as a tactic by terrorist groups, as shown by Wilson, Scholes and Brocklehurst’s (2010) analysis of assassinations as a tactic used by ETA. In addition, Horgan (2005) has argued that smaller terrorist groups, who are limited in terms of their manpower and resources, are more likely to turn to assassinations, as a way to draw attention to themselves and their cause.

However, the motivation, methods and organisation of terrorism can change. Recent developments in research into terrorism have focused on the concept of a ‘new’ terrorism. The underlying assumption of this model is that terrorist motivations have changed (Benjamin and Simon, 2000, Benjamin and Simon, 2002, Bremer, 2001, Laqueur, 1999, Lesser, Hoffman, Arquilla, Ronfeldt, and Zanini, 1999, Morgan, 2004). This new terrorism is fundamentally and qualitatively different from that seen in the 1990s. The ‘new’ terrorism is argued to be different in three ways: the organisational structure, the motivations and goals, and the methods used.

The organisational structures in new terrorism tend to be ‘flatter’, decentralised, and international, compared to the hierarchical and ‘top-down’ structures of ‘old’
terrorism. This flattened structure is, at least in part, derived from the assumptions about the underlying psychology of terrorist motivations. The new terrorist groups have less contact between group members than old terrorism. The members' beliefs are so strong that they compensate for this lack of interaction, and help to build group identity, cohesion and collective behaviour. The shared beliefs encourage solidarity amongst group members (Crenshaw, 2006). Thus in this terrorism, group solidarity can be inspired by "inspiration and imitation" (Crenshaw, 2006, p.53) rather than via a direct instruction from an authority figure. Any isolation or distrust that may ordinarily come from such remoteness are countered by adherence and devotion to doctrine. The increase in internationality is in part enabled by this decentralised structure, but is also because of new terrorism's desire to challenge the power of the US and its allies.

In the model of new terrorism, the motivation and method are inextricably linked. Unlike old terrorism, where the terrorists were motivated by (and reacted to) political situations (Crenshaw, 2006), the new terrorists are motivated by hatred and a desire for death and violence. A central belief of new terrorism is violence, with new terrorists being driven to violence by their hatred of the US and its allies (Bremer, 2001). Laqueur (1999) has stated that the new terrorists have a mindset of "rage, aggression, sadism and paranoia" (Crenshaw, 2006, p.52), and the perception is that they enjoy killing their target(s) (Lesser et al., 1999). Jenkins is often quoted as saying that terrorists do not want a lot of people dead, but do want a lot of people watching. It is argued that in the new model of terrorism this statement is inverted: terrorists want a lot of people dead, and are unconcerned with how many people will be watching. These new models also tend to merge the group and the individual, with little attempt to distinguish between "personal aspirations and collective goals" (Crenshaw, 2006, p.53). As a group, the members all share the fundamental hatred which underlies new terrorism, further motivating the group and fostering the "culture of violence" (Crenshaw, 2006, p.53) which permeates throughout new terrorism.

Thus, new terrorists are said to be driven by hatred and a desire to kill others. In contrast to old terrorism, where methods were selected on the basis of opportunity,
and violence served as a means to an end, in the new terrorism, violence serves as both a means and an end in itself. The new terrorists are argued to prefer to use suicide attacks because of the increased lethality these methods offer, and in addition, new terrorists are also willing to die themselves. It is also argued that new terrorists are drawn towards weapons of mass destruction (WMD) because of their increased lethality. However, as Crenshaw (2006) points out, the attacks of 9/11 are seen as the pinnacle of new terrorism, but in these attacks, WMDs were not used. Instead, traditional weapons (explosives) were used in innovative ways (via hijacking planes).

Despite the changes which, it is argued, have been observed in modern-day terrorism, Crenshaw (2006) maintains that the existing psychological research is still relevant. The underlying theme of new terrorism is that the change in terrorist motivation has led to an increased lethality, and a change of methods. However, the psychological research shows no evidence for this. As with ‘old’ terrorism, terrorists still look for support from their audience and community (Crenshaw, 2006). There is no conclusive evidence to show an increase in the lethality of terrorist attacks compared to the lethality of ‘old’ terrorism. Finally, the suicide terrorism said to be characteristic of new terrorism is actually still relatively rare compared to the incidence of other forms of terrorism, and has been used by ‘old’ terrorism (e.g. the Tamil Tigers). Therefore, Crenshaw (2006) argues against dismissing the knowledge we already have.

The issue then, in viewing assassinations as a form of terrorism, is based on the identity of the target(s), and the behavioural outcome of the violence. It is argued that for violence to be terrorism, multiple direct targets must be killed or wounded, resulting in a fearful general public and an authority target who is willing to change. In terms of victim numbers, in political assassinations there is typically one direct target, but there are often other victims caught up in the attack. Of the 275 ETA-perpetrated assassinations identified by Wilson et al. (2010), 60 resulted in victims other than the target (approximately 22%). Thus it is possible that political assassinations could fulfil this criteria for terrorism. Scholes and Wilson (2008) also
found that it may be possible to ‘scale’ assassination incidents depending on the level of similarity with terrorist incidents.

Crenshaw (2006) highlights the differing target selection techniques used by new and old terrorism. In ‘old’ terrorism, which was discriminatory and selective, with carefully selected targets, the terrorists aimed to be measured in their violence, rather than indulging in all-out violence and lethality. The new model suggests that terrorists do not go through any of the process of target selection, but instead kill wantonly (Crenshaw, 2006). However, as Wilson and Lemanski (2010) highlight, although the number of injuries and fatalities per terrorist incident appear to be increasing over time, it seems likely that in fact this is a result of the increased ease of manufacturing explosives, and the prevalence of suicide bombings, rather than a conscious decision by the terrorists.

2.5 TOWARD A SYSTEMATIC DEFINITION OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS

This chapter began with an examination of how theories are constructed, identifying three stages: first a detailed examination of the area of research, second, the identification of commonalities between aspects of the phenomenon, and grouping of these into similar categories, and third, the identification of links between these categories to establish the relationships between them. As part of this research, three different areas related to political assassinations have been examined; the existing research on political assassinations, research on homicide, and research on terrorism. In each area, definitions of the phenomenon have been identified, and then analysed to establish the commonly occurring concepts, which are subsequently grouped into categories. From the political assassination literature, 13 definitions were found, providing four concept categories: the identity of the victim, the identity of the offender, the motivation for the attack, and the legality of the attack. From the homicide literature, ten sub-types were identified. These provided six concepts which underlie homicide definitions: the motivation, the victim identity/relationship to the offender, the timing, the geographic location, the method, and the number of victims.
Finally, from the area of terrorism 13 definitions were drawn, with a content analysis showing that there are seven concepts underlying these definitions: the presence of premeditation, the type of motivation, the type of target, whether violence was used, the identity of the perpetrator, the intention for the attack, and the legality.

Having examined the research areas, and identified the commonalities between the definitions, the next step is to test these categories against real data. With the literature suggesting that there are different subsets of homicide and terrorism, it is possible that there are also different subsets of political assassinations. Analysis of cases of political assassination incidents on the basis of the identified categories will allow identification of the relationships between concept categories found in the literature. It will offer a way to better understand both the various types of political assassination, and the way in which these can be identified by the literature.

Similarly, the concepts identified in definitions of homicide will be used in an analysis of different types of homicides, including political assassinations. The purpose here is to compare the political assassination incidents to other types of homicide, thereby enabling an understanding of the relationship between subtypes. This will also clarify whether or not political assassination research should be informed by homicide.

Finally, the categories of concepts identified in the terrorism literature will be used in an analysis of terrorist incidents, again including political assassination as a subtype. As with the previously discussed homicide analysis, this will offer an understanding of relationships between terrorism and political assassination incidents, and confirm whether or not terrorism research should be used to inform political assassination research.
3. Defining Assassinations: Political Assassinations as defined by the Political Assassination Literature

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 has outlined the ways in which political assassinations have been defined in the existing literature. The present chapter will use the literature's definitions of political assassination to analyse a sample of incidents of political assassination, to establish how the existing definitions relate to potential instances, and to suggest different types of assassination.

This study will use definitions of political assassination to evaluate empirically how well the real-world incidents of assassination fit the existing definitions of assassination. There are no previous attempts to define assassination empirically, thus this will offer the first steps, with the intention of enhancing the understanding of what constitutes a political assassination, and how they should best be studied.

3.2 METHOD

3.2.1 The Data

Incidents reported as political assassinations were identified via searches of the Mickolus series of books and the Nexis database. The Mickolus books (Mickolus, Sander & Murdock, 1989; Mickolus, 1993; Mickolus and Simmons, 1997; Mickolus and Simmons, 2002) comprise accounts of all transnational terrorist attacks, with the information drawn from worldwide news sources (see chapter 9 for more detail). However, since incidents reported in this source are already defined as terrorism and transnational it was considered important to broaden the sample. Nexis is an online database which offers access to UK broadsheet newspapers, which provided a further source of data. Victims of political assassinations were identified, in the years 1990-2008 inclusive. Name-specific searches were then conducted to gather data on the set of political assassination cases. In total 400 cases were identified, occurring
internationally, and committed both by terrorist groups and others. The incidents identified are not solely targeted at politicians, but at a range of figures (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

*Profession of Victim*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politician</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Terrorist Group</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business person</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activist</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Leader</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic/Historian</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Official</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Professional</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to a politician</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously a politician</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Industry worker</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Leader</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader/Prime Minister/President</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exile/Refugee</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Diplomat</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity Worker</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Negotiator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>479</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in Table 3.1 sum to more than 400, as in some cases the victim was allocated to two or more categories. The profession of ‘politician’ was most common in this sample (24%), with terrorist group members (9%) and military individuals (9%) occupying the second and third most common professions. Business people,
journalists and political activists were present with similar frequency, being 8%, 7%, and 6% of the sample respectively. In fewer cases the victim of the political assassination was a religious leader (4%), or an academic (4%), or a government official (4%). Politicians' relatives were targets in 3% of the cases sampled, and a similar number of cases targeted those who were politicians in the past (3%), who were in the print industry (e.g. editors, publishers, 3%), community leaders (3%), and current heads of state/country leaders (3%). A further 2% of the sample were exiles or refugees, and foreign diplomats and writers each account for 1% of the cases. Finally, each of civil servants, charity workers, and UN workers, account for less than 1% of the sample.

3.2.2 Content Analysis

In quantitative content analysis, the method used in this study, the descriptive text is reduced into numerical values by way of a coding scheme (Millward, 2006). In this study, newspaper, and other reports will be content analysed according to the definitions created by the researcher. However, as highlighted by Wilson (2000), it is important to note that not all features of attacks will be reported in the newspaper articles from which the data are derived. Thus, the coding scheme has been created to code the presence of a variable, rather than the absence. This means that while something coded as present definitely did happen, items coded as absent are not necessarily absent, and it is possible that, actually, they did happen but were not reported.

As discussed in chapter 2, there are a number of concepts which commonly feature in definitions of political assassination:

- Legality
- Victim Identity
- Perpetrator Identity
- Motive

These were used to content analyse the data collected. The following definition of political assassination was used:

*The intentional, premeditated [specific/unspecific] killing of a [public/private/both] figure by an offender who is a [repeat/first time]*
offender, [known/unknown] to the victim who has a [political/other] motivation.

This was drawn from common aspects present in literature definitions of political assassinations (see chapter 2). The assumption is that all assassinations are intentional and premeditated (to a more or less degree). The specificity of the attack is part of a number of definitions (e.g. Pape, 2002, and Pickard, 2001), who each state that assassinations are specific, rather than non-specific, thus a specific attack is more ‘typical’ of an assassination than a non-specific attack. The fact that public figures are targets is common to the definitions, and is therefore also more ‘typical’ of an assassination. However, private individuals are incorporated in some definitions of political assassination, and so are also included in the sample. A repeat offender is considered to be more ‘typical’ of an assassination as it implies that the attack has been more ‘thought through’, and possibly represents part of a campaign, rather than the spontaneous attack which may be perpetrated by a first-time offender. Definitions of political assassination tend to suggest that the perpetrator and victim of assassination are strangers (and this is more ‘typical’ of assassination), although this is not the case in all incidents. Finally, definitions suggest that assassinations tend to be driven by a political motive, although this is not always the case. The five aspects presented in square brackets provide variables which are used to content analyse the news reports, transforming them from qualitative information into numerical data. A higher number indicates that that feature is considered to be more typical of an assassination:

1. The target was either specific (2) or unspecific (1), with specific attacks killing only the intended target, and unspecific attacks killing individuals other than the target, e.g. bystanders.

2. The target was either a public figure (3), had more than one target which was a combination of both public and private individuals (2), or was a private individual (1).

3. The offender was a first time offender (1) or a repeat offender (2).

4. The offender was either known (1) or unknown to the victim (2).
5. The offender has either a non-political motive (1), or a political motive (2) (identified via their own statement, or conclusions drawn by law enforcement officials, and to include religious motivations as well).

The data on each of the 400 assassinations cases were content analysed using these five variables, in order to transform the qualitative news reports into quantitative data which can be further analysed. The (numbers) assigned to the variables in the list above indicate how cases are coded on each variable. For example, a case where the attack was specific would be coded ‘2’, while an unspecific attack would be coded as ‘1’. Each case is coded this way on all variables, to create a data matrix, an example of which is shown in Figure 3.1. Thus, the killing of Lord Mountbatten (‘23222’) would be considered most typical of an assassination, and the killing of Mikel Uribe (‘21111’) is less typical. Of the 400 cases, 398 were included in this analysis, with two excluded due to missing data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Specific/Unspecific</th>
<th>Public/Private Victim</th>
<th>First time/Repeat Offender</th>
<th>Known/Unknown Offender</th>
<th>Political/Other Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord Mountbatten</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Gow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbi Meir Kahane</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvo Lima</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikel Uribe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3.1. Example of the Data Matrix coding*

### 3.3 A DEFINITIONAL ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS

The results of this content analysis will be analysed using Partial Order Scalogram Analysis (POSA). The intention of this is to analyse various political assassination incidents in light of definitions of assassination. The results of this will show a) whether or not incidents commonly defined as political assassination meet the
definition of political assassination, and b) demonstrate the underlying structure in
the definition of political assassination incidents.

POSA is a type of analysis designed to identify the underlying structural properties
of profiles of data (Dancer, 1990a), and in this case profiles of political assassination
incidents. In order for the use of a POSA to be appropriate, two conditions must be
met. First, the variables used to create the profiles must have a common range, which
is the case when the scores given to each incident on each variable have a “common
direction” (Dancer, 1990b, p.482) (e.g. the score given to each behaviour must run
from high to low). Thus, a score of ‘2’ must represent ‘more’ of something than a
score of ‘1’. Second, the items must all measure a common construct, such as
intelligence (Dancer, 1990b). If these two things can be established, it can be said
that the variables have a common range, and therefore measure one common
construct (Dancer, 1990a). Once this has been established, it can be said that there is
a “rationale” (Dancer, 1990b, p.482) to look at the structural relationships that are
present among the incidents (Dancer, 1990b). In this analysis, the common construct
is how ‘typical’ of assassination the case is, based on the definitions discussed
previously. A low score (1) means low typicality, and a high score (2 or 3) means
high typicality. All variables have two levels, except that of victim identity, which
has three levels. The scores on the five variables are added to create a profile or
measure of how ‘assassinistic’ an incident is. Most ‘assassinistic’ would have a
profile of ‘23222’ (sum = 11), while the least ‘assassinistic’ would have a profile of
‘11111’ (sum = 5). However, this quantitative variation is not all that POSA shows;
it also shows qualitative variation (Wilson and Leith, 2001). For example, an incident
which has a sum of 7 may have a profile of ‘12121’ or ‘11212’. Both are mid-way on
the scale of typicality, but they are actually rather different types of assassination.
Thus POSA (Shye, 1978, 1985) was used to demonstrate how assassination incidents
can vary qualitatively and quantitatively, across the 398 cases, according to the five
variables.

In POSA incidents can share the same profile, and these profiles are represented by a
‘point’ in a geometric space. The quantitative variation in the incidents is represented
along the ‘joint axis’ of the POSA (i.e. that which runs northeast to southwest), while
the qualitative variation is then represented along the ‘lateral axis’ (i.e. running from northwest to southeast) (Wilson and Leith, 2001) (see Figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2. Axes of a POSA output**

![Joint axis indicates quantitative variation](image)

**Figure 3.2a. Joint axis indicates quantitative variation**

![Lateral axis indicates qualitative variation](image)

**Figure 3.2b. Lateral axis indicates qualitative variation**

In the current analysis, each variable is a quality of the definition of what makes a homicide a political assassination, according to the current definitions within the published literature. Each variable is scored such that a higher score is indicative of being more typically representative of an assassination, which forms the common range. In this way, POSA will be used to examine the relationships which exist between both the different variables used to describe the political assassination incidents, and the incidents themselves (Dancer, 1990b), and to explore a ‘scale’ of ‘representativeness’ of assassination incidents. Figure 3.3 shows how the scale could
run in theory, with the most ‘assassinistic’ cases in the top right, and the least ‘assassinistic’ in the bottom left.

Most Assassinistic:
32222

Least Assassinistic:
11111

Figure 3.3. Scaling Properties of POSA

POSA also provides item plots for each variable. It should be noted that although there are 14 profiles in this analysis, there are 15 points. This is because, as there are no cases with the ‘lowest’ profile (i.e. 11111), the analysis software inputs this automatically as a ‘dummy point’, which ‘anchors’ the analysis. The points are presented in the same configuration as on the main plot, and this allows the space to be partitioned according to the categories of each variable. A comparison of where the regions overlap enables understanding of the relationship between these variables and how they contribute to the underlying ‘typicality’ of an assassination.
Figure 3.4 shows the type of victim killed in the political assassination. The incidents where only public figures were killed are in the darkest section at the top of the plot (n =173). In the middle of the plot are incidents where the victims were a combination of both public figures and private individuals (n = 58). At the bottom of the plot in the lightest section are cases where only private individuals were killed (n = 167). Private individuals targeted in political assassination incidents are those such as journalists or business people, who were not widely known by the general public.

Figure 3.5 shows the relationship between the victim and the offender. The few cases where the victim was known to the offender fall to the left of the plot (n = 7), while the cases where there was no relationship between perpetrator and offender are at the right of the plot (n = 391).

Figure 3.6 shows these two variables combined onto one plot. The relationship between the victim and offender works on a different dimension to the type of victim, cutting vertically across the three victim types. The only cases where the victim and offender are known to each other are at the top of the plot, where a public figure is targeted. The killing of a private individual by a person known to them is unlikely to be reported as a political assassination, and therefore would not be sampled in this analysis. Public figures who are killed by people they know tend to be those killed by individuals working for or with them, i.e. conspirators who were placed close to the target with the intention of killing them. There were no cases where offenders known to the victim killed both public figures and private individuals, presumably because they had sufficient access to their target to only kill their target, or because their only targets were public figures.

Figure 3.7 shows the specificity of the attack, that is it shows which attacks were specific enough to only kill the intended victim (n = 303), and which were not specific, and resulted in the deaths of others (n = 95). The specific attacks fall in the three grey bands across the whole plot, starting at the very right, towards the middle, and towards the left.
Figure 3.4. Identity of the victim

Figure 3.5. Victim-Offender relationship
Figure 3.6. Victim Identity combined with Victim-Offender relationship

Figure 3.7. Specificity of the attack
Figure 3.8 shows the combination of Figure 3.7 with Figure 3.6. However, due to the nature of the partitions, it is best understood when presented schematically, as shown in Figure 3.9. The schematic version is used to simplify interpretation of the results. Together, these three variables divide the plot into 12 regions, six of which contain one or more points. At the top right of the plot, and thus as the most ‘assassinistic’, are cases where the target was a public figure, the victim and offender are not known to one another, and the attack was specific, only harming the target. Moving down this column, attacks against public figures may also be perpetrated by an unknown offender and non-specific, resulting in victims other than the target, or specific, but with an offender known to the target. The second column, in the centre of Figure 3.9, shows incidents in which both public figures and private individuals are the victims of an attack. In this sample, these individuals are only attacked by perpetrators not known to them, in non-specific incidents, although this is perhaps obvious as there are two types of victim.

The third column, on the left of Figure 3.9, contains incidents where the victim of the attack was a private individual. There are two regions in this column containing incidents, first at the top, where the victim and offender are not known to each other and the attack is specific, and then further down, where again the victim and offender are not known to each other but the attack is non-specific.

Figure 3.10 shows the incidents in which the perpetrator had a history of offending previous to the political assassination (n = 13) overlaid onto Figure 3.9. These fall across the plot, present in four of the six populated regions. Assassins with an offending history target all victim types, killing public figures, private individuals, and the two together. Repeat offenders perpetrate both specific and non-specific attacks, and may be known or unknown to the victim. Thus, repeat offenders appear to fall across most of the ‘types’ of assassination. However, in the majority of cases (n = 385) there is no evidence of previous offending behaviour.
Figure 3.8. Victim Identity combined with Victim-Offender relationship and Specificity

Figure 3.9. Schematic diagram of Victim Identity combined with Victim-Offender relationship and Specificity
Figure 3.10. Victim Identity + Victim-Offender relationship + Specificity with previous offending overlaid.

Similarly, Figure 3.11 shows those incidents which were politically motivated overlaid onto Figure 3.10. Presence of political motivation was assessed on a case by case basis, and was coded as present in all instances where there was evidence of political motivation, e.g. a statement made by the perpetrator, or a belief by the police or criminal justice authorities of that country. Politically motivated individuals fall across the plot, in all six populated regions (n = 374). The non-politically motivated attacks however, fall in four regions (n = 24). They can be targeted at all victim types, and are both specific, and non-specific, but are only carried by offenders who do not know their victim. In addition, there is some overlap between the political motivation of the attack, and the type of offender (repeat or first time offender). All of the incident types perpetrated by repeat offenders were also politically motivated.
As Figure 3.11 shows, there are a six types of assassination which are theoretically possible, but are not populated by the cases in this sample, i.e. there are gaps. First, in the central column it is not possible for specific cases to be perpetrated against both public figures and private individuals: where there are two victims, the attack by definition is not specific. However, there are no cases in the region depicting public figure and private individual victim, which are non-specific, and where the victim and offender are known to one another.

![Figure 3.11](image)

*Figure 3.11. Victim Identity + Victim-Offender relationship + Specificity with previous offending and political motivation overlaid*

Second, in the right hand column there are no cases of attacks on public figures, where there were other victims, and the victim and offender were known to one another. It is likely that in instances where a public figure was attacked by a person known to them, they would be able to target them in locations with few witnesses or bystanders, which would be beneficial as it would reduce likelihood of capture or identification. Therefore there would be no other victims in such attacks.
Third, attacks where private individuals were targeted by people known to them were also not present in this sample. Although it is possible that this would be a political assassination, particularly if the attack was politically motivated, this would be rare. Typically, the killing of a private individual by a person known to them would be considered a traditional homicide, as private individuals are less likely to cause political impact than public figures, particularly if the attack was not politically motivated.

As previously, in the top right corner are the most ‘assassinistic’ incidents, while in the bottom left are the least ‘assassinistic’ cases. Figure 3.12 shows the POSA output with the points labelled with names of assassination targets. Towards the top right of the plot is the political assassination of Ian Gow, a British MP killed by the IRA in 1990. The attack was politically motivated, and carried out by offenders not known to Gow. He was obviously a public figure, and the attack was specific. Here, the perpetrator was classed as a first time offender as while the IRA had committed offences previously, there was no evidence that the specific individual responsible for the attack had offended previously. The attack on Rabbi Meir Kahane is in the same region of the plot, but is differentiated in that there is no evidence of political motive. However, it is classified as a political assassination as his death caused a political impact, in that following his death his ideas grew in influence in Israel.

The attack on Sergei Markidonov, a Russian MP killed in 1995, falls towards the middle/bottom of Figure 3.12. He was a public individual, killed by an individual known to him who was politically motivated. The attack was specific, and the assassin was a first time offender. Similarly, towards the other side of the plot is the attack on Ahmed Balousha, killed in a non-specific attack along with his two siblings. They were private individuals, the children of a prominent politician, who were killed together by a politically motivated individual previously unknown to them. Finally, towards the middle of the POSA is the case of Cetin Emec, a Turkish journalist killed in 1990. There was no evidence that the attack was politically motivated, the perpetrator was a first time offender, and the attack was not specific, resulting in other victims.
Thus, as Figure 3.12 shows, political assassination incidents come in a number of forms, creating a scale of different ‘types’ of assassination.

![Schematic Plot of Assassination](image)

*Figure 3.12. Schematic Plot of Assassination*

### 3.4 SUMMARY

As discussed in section 3.1, there is much written in the literature about how political assassinations are defined, in various fields such as academia, politics, and the law. These definitions tend to focus on a combination of three aspects of assassination, first who the victim is, second who the assassin is, and third, what the motive is for the attack. However, there is no definitive consensus on what political assassinations are. In particular, the majority of the definitions are of little practical use, as they are largely abstract, rather than designed for research.
Therefore, this chapter was designed to evaluate empirically how well the literature definitions of political assassination fit real-life political assassinations. Using Partial Order Scalogram Analysis, individual assassination events were analysed, and scaled for how far they meet the literature’s definitions. It was found that even when looking solely at events termed as political assassinations, there is a lot of differentiation between attacks, with attacks falling across the whole scale of ‘assassination’. It is suggested that for the purposes of research, definitions of assassination should attempt to encompass the whole range of potential assassination events. Definitions should take into account possible variations in incidents, in order that research can be based on the whole universe of political assassination incidents, rather than being narrowly focused on a small proportion of the available events.

Subsequent chapters will look at the ways in which political assassination incidents meet the definitions of homicide, and terrorism, exploring further how they should and could be defined.
4. Defining Assassinations: Assassinations as defined by the
Homicide Literature

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the links and similarities between political
assassinations and homicide, and whether political assassination shares enough
features with homicide to be considered in the same way, or whether assassination
should instead be considered as a phenomena in its own right (see chapter 3) or in
light of another phenomena (e.g. terrorism, see chapter 5). Currently, there is a great
deal of literature discussing ways to define political assassinations, but there is little
research which attempts to define political assassinations empirically. The literature
shows that while some researchers are happy to use homicide as a way to define
political assassinations, others draw attention to the differences between acts of
homicide and acts of political assassination.

The next step then, is to examine political assassinations empirically and homicides
together. As discussed in chapter 2.3, definitions of homicide distinguish between
types of homicide on the basis of concepts such as victim identity, and motivation. A
set of political assassinations are used as a representative sample of the universe of
political assassinations. In addition, a number of ‘traditional’ homicides are also
used, to serve as an ‘anchor’ in the analysis, against which the political assassinations
can be compared. In addition, some ‘questionable’ political assassinations are
included, such as the case of John Lennon, in order to help tease out subtle
distinctions between assassinations and homicides.

4.2 METHOD

4.2.1 The Data
A sample of assassinations were drawn from the sample used in the previous chapter
(see 3.2). These were selected to provide a range of assassinations, covering a variety
of ‘types’ of assassination. In addition, a number of non-assassination homicides were selected to give variation to the analysis. These homicide cases were identified via the use of online news sources (e.g. news.bbc.co.uk), Mickolus books (Mickolus et al., 1989; Mickolus, 1993; Mickolus and Simmons, 1997; Mickolus and Simmons, 2002), and the researchers own knowledge of cases. Cases were identified by the name of the victim, and data on each case were collected via Nexis and searches of the Mickolus series of books. Nexis is a database which allows for searches of UK broadsheet newspapers, including The Independent, The Independent on Sunday, The Observer, The Guardian, The Times, The Sunday Times, The Telegraph and The Sunday Telegraph. The Mickolus series of books provide a comprehensive account of transnational terrorism incidents, based also on newspaper coverage. The sample consisted of 57 homicide incidents, with 6 different types of homicide included (see Table 4.1).

### Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Homicide Incident</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Assassination</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known killing (e.g. infanticide)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial killing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger killing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass killing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School shooting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of cases included in the sample were assassinations (n = 43), as the purpose of the analysis is chiefly to understand what possible different types of assassination there are, while there were also six incidents in which the victim and offender were known to one another (e.g. infanticide), four serial killing incidents, three stranger killings, one mass murder and one school shooting.

#### 4.2.2 Content Analysis

As in chapter 3, content analysis was used to transform the qualitative reports into quantitative data. As shown in chapter 2, literature definitions of homicide were
content analysed to identify the concepts underlying definitions of homicide. This led to the identification of six concepts:

- Victim Identity/Relationship to Offender
- Number of victims
- Timing
- Geographic Location
- Motivation
- Method

Of these six concepts, two were present in the definition of political assassination (motivation, and victim identity), but in order to understand the relationship between homicides in general and political assassinations all concepts are utilised, because, as mentioned in chapter 2.3, the other concepts may be important in future assassination research. Thus the following definition of homicide was created for the purpose of this chapter, on the basis of these concepts:

_The killing of a [stranger/acquaintance/relative] which results in [more than one victim/one victim] in [serial attacks/non serial attacks] where the offender has [mental illness/no mental illness] and is motivated by [political/personal/instrumental] reasons._

Unlike the analysis in chapter 3, these concepts were not directional: there are no cases which are more or less typical of homicide, but instead all concepts simply describe different concepts found in sub-types of homicides. The first set of square brackets broadly describe the victim-offender relationship, using three levels to describe this: they are either strangers, with no relationship prior to the homicide, acquaintances, and so known to one another prior to the homicide, or relatives, and so are family members. The second square brackets describe the number of victims. There may be one victim of the homicide incident, or there may be more than one, depending on the type of killing (e.g. a spree killing will have more than one victim, but a serial killing is likely to have one killing (per incident)). Serial attacks are largely believed to differentiate between serial killings and other types of homicide, and so it is interesting to see whether this concept is also important in differentiating between political assassination and homicides. The inclusion of mental illness is considered an important factor in some types of homicide (e.g. infanticide, a form of familicide) and therefore is included here. Finally, the motive is included, as either
political (obviously a feature of political assassination definitions), instrumental, or personal.

The five aspects identified in square brackets are used as variables to content analyse the cases of homicide selected for this chapter:

1. The relationship between the victim and the offender could be quantified in one of three ways: they were related to one another (1), they were not related but were acquaintances (2), or they were strangers to one another (3).

2. There was just one victim (1) or there was more than one victim (2).

3. Where there was more than one victim, these victims were killed in non-serial attacks (i.e. all at the same time) (1), or in a series of attacks (2).

4. The offender either does not suffer from any mental illness (1), or does suffer from some form of mental illness (2).

5. The offender’s motivation is political (1), personal (2), or instrumental (i.e. they kill to achieve a particular goal) (3). Incidents were judged to have a political motivation if one of three criteria were met:
   
   i. The assassin stated they were politically motivated, or a terrorist group claimed responsibility for the incident.
   
   ii. A court case ruled that the incident was politically motivated.
   
   iii. The security services or police reported evidence that the incident was politically motivated.

The data on each of the 57 homicide cases were content analysed using these five variables. The (numbers) assigned to the variables in the list above indicate how cases are coded on each variable. For example, a case where there was more than one victim would be coded ‘2’, while attacks with just one victim would be coded as ‘1’. Each case is coded this way on all variables, to create a data matrix, an example of which is shown in Figure 4.1. There was no missing data in this sample.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Related (3)/ Acquaintance (2)/ Stranger (1) Relationship</th>
<th>One Victim (2)/ Multiple Victims (1)</th>
<th>Serial Attacks (2)/ Non-serial Attacks (1)</th>
<th>Offender Mental Illness (2)/ No Mental Illness (1)</th>
<th>Political (2)/ Personal (1)/ Instrumental (3) Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord Mountbatten</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John F. Kennedy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon Tate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Bundy's victims</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.1. Example of the Data Matrix coding*

4.3 A MODEL OF ASSASSINATIONS BY HOMICIDE DEFINITIONS

In contrast to the analysis in chapter 3, the data in this chapter are analysed using another form of multidimensional scaling, known as Multidimensional Scalogram Analysis (MSA). Like POSA, MSA offers a way in which to examine the relationship between both the cases across all variables, as well as looking at the relationships between variables. However, there is an important difference between POSA and MSA. In the analysis reported in section 3.3, the coding for each variable contains a direction or a quantity. Thus a '2' on a variable represented 'more' than a '1'. The quantity (common range) shared by the variables was more typical of an assassination. In the current analysis, the variables that distinguish between homicides do not contain a quantitative or directional quality, they simply define qualitatively different types of incident. MSA is used here because it allows the same examination of the structure of the data without assuming directionality or requiring a common range.

MSA enables the researcher to identify the overlaps between the variables under analysis, and their relation to specific cases. Cases are analysed on the basis of the profiles created in the data matrix (see Fig. 4.1), i.e. the sequence of 1s and 2s which
describe the aspects of an attack via the presence or absence of a particular variable. MSA plots points in a geometric space, in this case each point representing an attack. The closer together the points are, the more similar their profiles. If there are two or more attacks with the same profile, the points will be in the same place in the space, so one point can represent more than one case. The aim of the MSA is to plot the cases in such a way that the space can be divided into regions on the basis of the categories present for each variable (Wilson, 2000). If the solution is a good fit, it will be easy to draw a clear line between, for example, those attacks targeted at public individuals, and those targeted at private individuals. This should continue so that the plot can be subdivided into regions on the basis of all variables.

MSA tries to find the best way to arrange the cases in the space, so that all categories of all variables can be represented by clear regions. It uses the Coefficient of Contiguity to measure the 'goodness of fit' of the plot. The closer to 1 the Coefficient of Contiguity is, the closer the plot is to a perfect representation. When the coefficient reaches 1, all variables fit into clear regions in the space. However, a coefficient of 0.9 is typically accepted, provided there are not a large number of variables (Wilson, 2000).

The output of the MSA provides one plot with the final configuration of points, marked with the case numbers. It also provides individual plots for each variable. These have the same configuration of points, but instead of being marked by the case numbers, they are marked by the category code for each case of that variable (e.g. 2 for Private and 1 for Public). Each plot is divided into regions according to the category codes, and overlapping areas are then identified on the main plot. The solution summarises the similarity of cases, and illustrates why those cases are similar. From this plot, the researcher interprets the meaning of the regions identified, and the relationship the regions have to the cases (Wilson, 2000). There are no axes, as MSA works without any a priori coordinate system (Wilson, 2000). The important aspect of an MSA is the relationship between the cases, and how the researcher subsequently interprets that (Wilson, 2000).
In this section, the plots representing the variables will be presented initially, and then presented together to show their interaction. The coefficient of contiguity for this analysis is 0.918.

Figure 4.2 shows how the plot can be partitioned according to the relationship between the victim and the offender. Incidents falling in the bottom, darkest segment, are those where the victim and offender were related, i.e. they were family members (n = 3). The two lightest bands, which include seven points in total, represent the incidents where the victim and offender were strangers, i.e. did not know one another (n = 48). The mid-grey bands, at the top and middle of the plot, contain cases where the victim and offender were acquaintances, i.e. they knew one another, but were not related (n = 6).

Figure 4.2. MSA plot of killings partitioned according to Victim-Offender relationship

Figure 4.3 demonstrates the number of victims in the incident. The shaded region on the left of the plot represents the 21 incidents in this sample where more than one
person was killed in the attack. The unshaded area on the right represents the 36 incidents where there was just one individual killed in the attack.

Figure 4.4 shows whether or not the offender in the incidents was a serial offender, i.e. they committed more than one homicide, spread over a series of time periods. The two points in the shaded region to the right of the plot represent those incidents were the offender was a serial offender (n = 4), while the remaining points in the unshaded region represent the incidents where the perpetrator was not a serial offender (n = 53).

Taking Figures 4.3 and 4.4 together, it can be seen that there are no incidents where a serial killer also killed multiple victims in one incident. The ‘serial’ variable refers to the fact that the perpetrator of the offence committed a series of attacks across different time periods, while the ‘multiple victims’ variable refers to the number of victims in a single episode, or time period. Thus it is theoretically possible for a serial offender to carry out attacks with multiple victims, but there are no such cases in this sample, as seen from Figures 4.3 and 4.4, where these cases are present on opposite sides of the plot, with no overlap. Figure 4.5 shows these variables combined onto one plot, along with the relationship between the victim and offender. This creates a total of 15 combinations, each of which is labelled with the number of cases in each region. The most frequently occurring region contains cases where the offender is not a serial offender, where there is just one victim, and the victim and offender are strangers to one another (n = 23). The next most frequently occurring region contains cases where there is no serial offender, but there are multiple victims, and again the victim and offender are strangers to one another (n = 17). Not all regions contain cases: there are four with no cases at all, although three of these are ‘duplicated’ regions. Thus although it initially appears that there are no serial killings between strangers (2nd row, right column) these cases actually fall in the second such region (4th row, right column). The one region with no cases at all is in the bottom right of Figure 4.5, where a serial offender would kill one person, who they are related to. So in this sample at least, offenders do not serial kill their relatives.
Figure 4.3. MSA plot partitioned according to whether there was more than one victim per incident

Figure 4.4. Plot indicates whether or not the perpetrator was a serial offender
Figure 4.5. Victim-Offender relationship + Specificity + Serial Offender

Figure 4.5 can also be presented schematically, as in Figure 4.6. This removes the duplicated areas shown in Figure 4.5, resulting in a total of nine possible profiles (or regions), through the combination of the five variables. Variables can work along horizontal and vertical axes, with the variables describing the victim—offender relationship along the horizontal axis, while along the vertical axis are the variables describing whether or not the offender was a serial offender, and the number of victims in the incident. Of these nine regions, eight contain cases (or points), representing the 57 homicide cases. As mentioned above, there are no cases where serial killers attack their relatives, and this is the only ‘gap’ in the sample. It is possible that this is an artefact of the sampling, and that with a larger sample there would be cases of serial killers targeting their families. However, Figure 4.6 also shows that there are no instances of serial killers also committing mass murders. It is less likely that this is an artefact of sampling: individuals committing mass murders are likely to be apprehended after their attacks, thus removing the potential for a series of attacks, and preventing them. However, there are some types of incident where it may be possible. For example, bomb attacks often kill multiple people, and
Figure 4.6. Schematic MSA diagram
it is possible for an individual to commit a series (campaign) of such attacks, without apprehension, as they are less likely to be at the scene of the crime (due to the possibility of using remote-detonation or timed bombs). Thus it is possible, but such attacks are more likely to be considered as terrorism rather than homicide, and therefore are not present in this sample. Interestingly, in all cases where there were multiple victims the offender was a one-time offender, rather than a serial offender. It is possible that incidents where the offender committed multiple homicides also ended with the offender being apprehended by the authorities, or being killed themselves. For example, the Columbine school massacre falls in this region, and the perpetrators of that incident did indeed commit suicide.

There are still two further variables to consider. Figure 4.7 shows whether or not the perpetrator of the homicide was suffering from mental illness. The shaded region on the right of the plot contains those incidents in which the offender was suffering from mental illness (n = 4), while the remainder of the points in the unshaded left region were not suffering from mental illness (n = 53). Careful comparison with the other plots shown in Figures 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 reveals that in this sample, those considered to be mentally ill did not attack acquaintances. The profiles representing these cases are circled in the schematic model in Figure 4.8. It seems likely that if a large enough sample was taken, it would be possible to identify incidents in each of the nine regions that were conducted by someone suffering from mental illness, as well as someone who was not.

Finally, Figure 4.9 shows how the motivation for the attack partitions the plot. The region towards the right of the plot, contains those cases where the offender was motivated by personal reasons (e.g. hatred of a family member) (n = 14). The region in the top left contains cases where the motivation was political (n = 41), while the region in the bottom left contains cases where the offender had an instrumental motivation (i.e. killing their target for material gain) (n = 2). Figure 4.10 shows these cases overlaid onto Figure 4.6, to show where the overlaps between motivations and other variables fall. Personally motivated attacks fall across all regions with cases, highlighted by a green circle. Personally motivated offenders kill strangers, acquaintances, and relatives, and can be serial offenders or non-serial offenders,
Figure 4.7. MSA plot partitioned according to the presence of offender mental illness.

Figure 4.8. Overall Homicide MSA.
Political Motivation

Personal Motivation

Instrumental Motivation

Figure 4.9. MSA plot showing the motivation for the attack

Non-serial Offender + Multiple Victims

Non-serial Offender + Single Victim

Serial Offender + Single Victim

Acquaintance

Stranger

Related

Figure 4.10. Schematic MSA showing motivation of offender
resulting in multiple victims, or single victims. In addition, all incidents where the offender was suffering from mental illness were personally motivated. The instrumentally motivated attacks are highlighted by a blue circle, and occur in just two regions. These are only perpetrated against strangers and relatives, and not against acquaintances. Only non-serial offenders are instrumentally motivated, and they result in both multiple and single victims. They also show no sign of mental illness. Finally, politically motivated attacks are highlighted by a yellow circle. These occur in four regions of the MSA. Politically motivated attacks are only carried out against strangers and acquaintances, and never against relatives. There are no incidents where serial offenders are politically motivated, although they can incur both multiple and single victims. There are no instances where a politically motivated offender also suffered from mental illness in this sample.

On the basis of this, it is proposed that the motivation for homicides act as a third dimension, as shown in Figure 4.11. Figure 4.11 shows how this dimension works, cutting across all other variables.

In Figure 4.11 the two dimensional plot is seen on the top ‘face’ of the box, again with the victim-offender relationship represented across the horizontal axis, and the number of victims and the offenders previous behaviour across the vertical axis. In the third dimension are the three different motivations – whether the attack was personal, instrumental, or political. The dark shaded region in the bottom right, where there are no cases, cuts across all three dimensions. In order to study the other gaps in more detail, this third dimension can be split apart, as in Figure 4.12. Figure 4.12a shows the layer with the personally motivated incidents highlighted by a green square. This shows that personally motivated attacks fall in all regions, with the only region with no personally motivated incidents being that where there are no attacks at all. Personally motivated offenders may be serial offenders, or non-serial offenders, they may have multiple victims or just one victim, and they may be a stranger to their victim, an acquaintance, or related to their victim. In addition, all incidents where the offender was suffering from mental illness were personally motivated, in this sample.
Non-serial Offender + Multiple Victims
Non-serial Offender + Single Victim
Serial Offender + Single Victim

Acquaintance
Stranger
Related

PERSONAL MOTIVATION
INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION
POLITICAL MOTIVATION

Figure 4.11. Three dimensional plot showing motivations for attacks
Figure 4.12a. Personal Motivation

Figure 4.12b. Instrumental Motivation

Figure 4.12c. Political Motivation

Figure 4.12. Motivation plots, in separate dimensions
Figure 4.12b shows the layer of the plot where incidents are driven by an instrumental motive, this time highlighted by a blue square. There are two ‘types’ of instrumental homicide in this analysis. Instrumental offenders are either strangers or relations of their victims, and within this sample are always non-serial offenders.

Finally, Figure 4.12c shows the third layer where incidents are driven by a political motivation, highlighted by a yellow square. These fall in a third part of the plot, towards the top left, with four different ‘types’ of politically motivated homicide in this sample. Politically motivated offences are, in this sample, committed by non-serial offenders, where the victim-offender relationship is that of stranger or acquaintance. There are no instances in this sample of politically-motivated homicide where the victim and offender were related to one another. In addition, these types of homicides result in both one victim, or multiple victims.

However, these gaps may be a sampling artefact. As discussed above, there is one region of the MSA which has no cases at all, and it is possible that this would be filled with a larger sample. The variation in motivations is also likely be an artefact of sampling. For example, instrumentally motivated homicides occur in just two regions. However, it is possible that with a larger sample they could be present in all regions: across attacks on acquaintances, and certainly in attacks perpetrated by serial offenders. Although it seems less likely that instrumentally motivated offenders would kill multiple victims in one attack, in an instance of, for example a bank robbery, it is possible. In addition, it is very likely that instrumentally motivated offenders would kill a single relative. Thus it seems that with a larger sample, instrumentally motivated homicides would occur in all regions.

There are four types of politically motivated homicides in this sample, and again it is possible that the ‘missing’ cases are artefacts of the sampling technique. Although politically motivated homicides seem to be rare against relatives, a person could, for example, kill their brother in order to assume the presidency. This could result in multiple victims if others are also killed, either at the same time or across more than one occasion. In addition, a politically motivated series of homicides is likely to take
the form of a terrorist campaign, for example the Unabomber's campaign killed two individuals on separate occasions.

Figure 4.13 shows the MSA with the points labelled with the names of some of the homicide cases used in this analysis.

In the top left region falls the Columbine school shooting, where the targets were acquaintances of the offenders, the offenders were not serial offenders, and they were personally motivated. The incident resulted in multiple victims. In the same region, but with a political rather than personal motivation the victims include the killing of Martin Hyland, who was killed by the IRA. Moving down the plot, to attacks where
the victim and offender were strangers, but there were still multiple victims and a non-serial offender, include the deaths of Pierre Gemayel and Sharon Tate. Pierre Gemayel was a Lebanese politician, shot to death, while Sharon Tate was an actress killed by Charles Manson and his accomplices. Thus here it is the motivation behind the otherwise similar attacks which distinguish between them, with Gemayel’s killing being politically motivated, and Tate’s killing personally motivated. In the bottom region of this column are incidents where the victim and offender are related. John List killed his family for personal reasons, while the Menendez brothers killed their parents in order to inherit their wealth (i.e. they had an instrumental motive).

In the next column, where the offender was again a non-serial offender, are attacks where there was just one victim. In the top region is the death of Ray Smallwoods who was killed in a politically motivated attack by the IRA. In the same region is the case of Nancy Spungen, killed by her boyfriend in a personally motivated attack. In both cases the victim and offender were acquaintances, but again the motivation distinguished between them. Moving down the column, in the central region, are attacks perpetrated by a stranger. Anna Lindh was a politician killed by a man working alone, while John Lennon was also killed by a man working alone. At the bottom of this column, still with a non-serial offender who kills just one victim, are cases where victim and offender are related. An example of this type of killing is that of Marvin Gaye, who was killed by his father, meaning that the victim and offender were related, and the attack was personally motivated.

The third column contains cases where the offender committed multiple offences, but only killed one person in each offence. In the top right region are the offences of Harold Shipman, a GP who killed his patients. His motivation was personal, rather than instrumental or political. In the mid-right region are cases where the serial offender killed one person at a time, but was a stranger to the victim. Representative cases in this region are the victims of Ted Bundy, who was personally motivated. The final region, in the bottom right of the plot, contains no cases in this sample.

While Figure 4.13 gives examples of specific homicide cases, Figure 4.14 is the same analytical diagram, showing the location of the political assassinations in this
analysis. Represented by a green highlight, they are clustered in the top left of the plot, in this sample occurring in just four of the nine possible regions. Although there is (obviously) some overlap between the political assassinations and the politically motivated attacks, not all assassinations were politically motivated (e.g. the killing of Anna Lindh) (these cases are classified as political assassinations due to the fact that the target was a political figure, and thus the killing was likely to have some kind of political impact, e.g. an election). However, there were no instances where political assassinations were perpetrated by serial offenders in this sample. It is possible that terrorist groups (or specific individuals within or without a terrorist group) may be responsible for a series of assassinations, for example the Greek group November 17 perpetrated a number of assassinations. However, such cases were not present in this sample, as there was no evidence in the data that multiple attacks were committed by the same perpetrators.

In terms of comparing political assassinations to homicide, from this analysis it is clear that while political assassinations appear to form a subset of homicides, it is also clear that there are similarities between assassinations, and homicides more generally. The main difference is in the motivation for the attack, and the fact that, within this sample, there are no assassinations where the victim and offender are related. However, there are cases where the victim and offender are acquaintances, or strangers, as with homicides. Another key difference is that there appear to be no serial offenders who commit political assassinations, whereas there are serial homicide offenders.
Figure 4.14. Location of assassinations
4.4 SUMMARY

This section has analysed various types of homicide (including political assassinations) according to the concepts which underlie the definitions of these sub-types of homicide. There is a large body of research regarding the behavioural features of homicide, and the purpose of this chapter is to establish whether political assassinations should be considered as a sub-type of homicide in order that the existing homicide research can be drawn upon to inform political assassination research.

The use of MSA in this research offers an opportunity to compare different types of homicide on a case by case basis, and also provides an understanding of the way in which the variables relate to one another. This research suggests that political assassinations appear to be a subset of homicide overall, sharing features with other types of homicides, but typically being distinguished by the motivation for the attack. However, without a much larger sample it has not been possible to establish whether political assassinations are really differentiated from other homicides, except on the basis of motivation (i.e. political assassinations could theoretically occur in all regions of the MSA, so they are not that different from other homicide sub-types). Nevertheless, it has highlighted the importance of conducting more research into political assassination, considering the existence of serial attackers, and the role of terrorist groups in assassinations. In addition, it highlights the need to consider other concepts of homicide, such as the presence of multiple victims, issues regarding targeting, and the specificity of assassinations.
5. Defining Assassinations: Terrorism and Political Assassinations as defined by the Terrorism Literature

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided a discussion of the ways in which terrorism has been defined, and worked towards establishing the concept categories which combine to form these definitions. This chapter is designed to test these definitions using different types of terrorism, including political assassinations, in order to establish whether political assassinations can or should be considered as a form of terrorist behaviour.

Assassinations are undeniably used by terrorist groups, for example in the case of Marco Biagi, who was killed by the Red Brigades in Italy. Nevertheless, some researchers do argue that political assassinations should not be considered as a form of terrorism (e.g. Schmid, 2003). This is on the basis that the victim(s) of political assassination are more specific and particular than the victim(s) targeted by terrorism, who tend to be more representative of a wider target. In addition, the intention of terrorism is to instil ‘terror’ in the general public, but it is argued that a political assassination is unable to have the same effect on the feelings of the public at large. Therefore, from an academic or theoretical point of view, it has been argued that political assassinations should not be included in terrorism research.

This chapter is intended to provide an empirical analysis of whether political assassinations meet the definition of terrorism. Although there may be theoretical differences between political assassinations and terrorism, no research has looked at the actual differences as seen in incidents of both. In this chapter, definitions of terrorism will be drawn from the literature, and used to analyse incidents deemed as political assassination and terrorism. Conclusions will be drawn about whether terrorism research should be used to inform further research on political assassinations, based on how well assassination incidents meet the definition of terrorism.
5.2 METHOD

5.2.1 The Data
A number of well-known terrorist incidents were identified, and searches were conducted in both the Mickolus books (Mickolus, Sander & Murdock, 1989; Mickolus, 1993; Mickolus and Simmons, 1997; Mickolus and Simmons, 2002) and the Nexis database to gather data on these incidents. Data on the terrorist incidents were collected from the Mickolus series of books, and newspaper reports on Nexis (The Observer, The Guardian, The Times, The Sunday Times, The Independent, The Independent on Sunday, The Telegraph and The Sunday Telegraph). The sample consists of 82 cases, including five assassinations. The most commonly occurring type of incident was bombings, with 17 in this sample (see Table 5.1). The least common types were aerial hijacks, exotic pollution, letter bombing, and shoot out with police, of which there were four each.

Table 5.1
Types of Terrorism Incident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident Type</th>
<th>N =</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombing</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat/Hoax</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conspiracy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barricade-hostage</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-aerial takeover</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabotage</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assassination</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerial hijack</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exotic pollution</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter bombing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoot out with police</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of these 82 incidents, 60 were perpetrated by a terrorist group, and the remaining 22 were the responsibility of individuals. These are included to assist in ‘teasing out’ distinctions between different types of incident classified as ‘terrorism’.

5.2.2 Content Analysis
Similarly to the method used in chapters 3 and 4, the data collected were content analysed, to create quantitative data from the qualitative news reports. As discussed in chapter 2, a content analysis of definitions of terrorism found that there are seven concepts which underlie these definitions:

- Premeditation
- Motivation
- Target Identity
- Type of violence
- Perpetrator Identity
- Intention
- Legality

However, not all of the aspects identified in the literature are explicitly dealt with by these variables. Legality is not included, as all definitions of terrorism which address legality state that it is an illegal act, and further that it is given that an act of terrorism is likely to break the law. The motivation for the attack is not included, as, similar to the legality of attack, there is a consensus that this would be political (including religious). Thus these two aspects would offer no differentiation between terrorist incidents. Premeditation and intention were also present in literature definitions, but not included here, as these are difficult to glean from the data available, and as Schmid (1993) has argued, it is the act itself which is important to consider. Thus the definition used here draws on three concepts: the target, the violence used, and the perpetrator. These have been used to provide this definition of terrorism:

A [threat/act] targeted at individual(s) who are [randomly selected/representative of a larger target/specifically targeted] which results in [deaths/no deaths] and [financial losses/no financial losses], perpetrated by a [terrorist group/individual].

In this definition, the type of target is split across two variables. First, the literature suggests that both property and persons can be the targets of terrorist incidents, and
this is quantified according to whether or not the terrorist attack directly caused financial losses. Second, the type of target of terrorism can be divided into three categories, depending on whether the target is selected at random, whether they are selected because they are a representative of a larger target, or whether they are targeted specifically because of their identity. The identity of the perpetrator is considered simply as either a terrorist group, or an individual, both of which are cited as possible terrorists in the literature. Literature also suggests that terrorism may or may not incorporate violence, and this is dealt with in the last two variables, which consider whether the incident is a threat or an actual attack, and whether the attack results in deaths or not.

From this definition then, a series of variables can be established which are used to content analyse descriptive accounts of terrorist incidents:

1. The incident is either a threat (1) or an act (2).
2. The victim was either randomly selected (1), selected because they are representative of a larger target (2), or specifically targeted because of who they are (3).
3. The incident may (2) or may not (1) result in deaths.
4. The incident may (2) or may not (1) result in financial losses.
5. The perpetrator may be a terrorist group (2), or an individual (1).

For three variables, the data on terrorist incidents is coded according to the presence (2) or absence (1) of the variable. For example, cases where the incident resulted in financial losses would be coded as (2) on that variable. Where there were no financial losses the case would be coded as (1). The remaining two variables describe dichotomous choices, rather than the presence or absence of a particular feature. An ‘act’ is coded as a (2), while a threat is coded as a (1). Similarly, a specific target is coded as a (3), while a representative target is a (2), and a randomly selected target is a (1). Each incident is coded on the five variables, creating a data matrix, which shows each incident’s particular profile according to the features of that attack (see Figure 5.1).
Case | Threat (1)/Act (2) | Randomly Selected V (1)/Representative V (2)/Specific V (3) | Deaths (2)/No deaths (1) | Financial losses (2)/No financial losses (1) | Terrorist Group (2)/Not Terrorist Group (1)
---|---|---|---|---|---
Aldo Moro | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2
Sarin Attacks (Japanese Underground) | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2
Terry Waite | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2
NFL bomb threat | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1
Contaminated Mars Bars | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2

**Figure 5.1. Example of the Data Matrix coding**

### 5.3 TERRORISM AND POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS AS DEFINED BY TERRORISM LITERATURE

As in chapter 4, Multi-Dimensional Scalogram Analysis (MSA) is used to analyse the data provided by the content analysis. Again, individual variables are presented first, followed by the combined plot.

Figure 5.2 shows whether incidents were acts or threats. The seven points shown in the unshaded region at the top right of the plot represent threats of violence \((n = 16)\) and the remaining points which are in the shaded region are acts of violence \((n = 66)\). Threats are classed as incidents where nothing actually happened, such as hoax calls claiming that a bomb has been planted, or claims to have contaminated an area with a radioactive substance when in actual fact the substance is harmless.

The 8 points which are in shaded region at the bottom left of Figure 5.3 represent the cases where the terrorist incident resulted in deaths of individuals other than the perpetrators \((n = 39)\). In the remaining 43 incidents, there were no bystander deaths.
Figure 5.2. MSA plot partitioned based on whether the incident is an act or threat of violence.

Figure 5.3. MSA plot partitioned dependent on whether there was loss of life.
Figure 5.4 shows these two variables combined onto one plot, with the overlaps showing that there are acts of violence which result in deaths, and acts of violence which result in no deaths, and in all cases with threats of violence there are no deaths.

The shaded area towards the top left of Figure 5.5 shows which incidents were designed to cause financial losses (n = 24). These are incidents such as the sabotage of Lufthansa offices in New York, where the intention was to cause damage and financial losses for the company. This also includes incidents of kidnap where the perpetrator is motivated by the ransom that they expect to receive. In the unshaded areas towards the bottom and right are the remaining 58 cases where there were no financial losses. In Figure 5.6 this plot is combined with Figure 5.4, to show the combination of the type of violence, the loss of life, and financial losses. This results in six regions, all of which contain cases, with the variable showing financial losses cutting across the other two variables. Thus, an act of violence may result in both deaths and financial losses, deaths but no financial losses, no deaths and financial losses deaths, and no deaths and no financial losses. As before, threats do not result in deaths, but do result in financial losses, or no financial losses.

In Figure 5.7 the perpetrator of the incident is overlaid onto Figure 5.6. The perpetrator was classified as either an ‘Individual’ (in the yellow region) or a ‘Group’ (the non-yellow region). ‘Individual’ refers to incidents committed by lone individuals or groups of individuals, who are not affiliated to any terrorist group. Incidents classified as being committed by ‘Group’ are those where the perpetrator was a member of a terrorist group. The incidents in the shaded region on the right are those which were committed by individuals (n = 22), while the incidents committed by groups are in the unshaded region on the left (n = 60). As the figure shows, the incidents perpetrated by individuals fall in the opposite corner to the incidents resulting in financial losses, i.e. no cases perpetrated by individuals cause financial losses. Figure 5.8 shows this more clearly, with these four variables combined onto a schematic plot. There are nine regions, with incidents in each. The variables work on two different axes. Along the horizontal axis are the variables describing whether the
Figure 5.4. Type of violence + Loss of life

Figure 5.5. MSA plot partitioned according to presence of financial losses
Figure 5.6. Type of violence + Loss of life + Financial losses

Figure 5.7. MSA plot partitioned according to the identity of the perpetrator
incident was an act or a threat and whether or not there were deaths, while the Group/Individual and Financial Losses variables work along the vertical axis. There are three important interactions shown in this plot. First, looking at the top of Figure 5.8, financial losses are only incurred when the incident is carried out by a member(s) of a terrorist group, although not all incidents carried out by terrorist groups incur financial losses. Second, and perhaps obviously, deaths are only incurred as a result of acts, rather than threats. Third, threats can incur financial losses, therefore it could be said that minimal action is needed to have an impact.

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Act} + \text{Deaths} & \text{Act} + \text{No Deaths} & \text{Threat} + \text{No Deaths} \\
\text{Financial Losses + Group} & \text{No Financial Losses + Group} & \text{No Financial Losses + Individual}
\end{array}
\]

*Figure 5.8. Overall POSA*

The fifth, and final variable, describes the identity of the immediate victim of the attack. A specifically targeted victim is one who is selected for the attack, by name,
for example Aldo Moro, who was kidnapped and assassinated by the Red Brigades, in Italy (n = 19). There are also incidents where the victims were targeted because they represent a larger organisation, such as a government or country (n = 15). An example of such an attack is the 9/11 attacks in New York. The World Trade Centre was targeted because it was seen as representative of the US. Finally, there are incidents in which victims are selected randomly (n = 48). These victims are not specifically targeted, nor are they representative of any organisation. They become involved in the incident solely because they happened to be at the scene at the time, such as in the case of ETA detonating bombs on public beaches. It is suggested that these represent a third dimension, as shown in Figure 5.9.

*Figure 5.9. Three dimensional plot showing type of victim in terrorist incidents*
As with the analysis in chapter 4, this victim identity variable cuts across the other four variables. The two dimensional plot is shown on the ‘top’ of the box, again with the respective variables shown on the horizontal and vertical axes. In the third dimension are the different types of target, and these are shown split into individual ‘layers’ in Figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10 shows the plot with the identity of the target overlaid. Figure 5.10a shows those incidents targeting a specific victim (highlighted with a green square), Figure 5.10b shows incidents targeted at representative victims (highlighted in purple), while Figure 5.10c shows the incidents targeted at randomly selected individuals (highlighted in blue).

Figure 5.10a shows that there are five types of attacks in which the targets are specific individuals. These work across the horizontal axis, and are both threats and acts, and both result in deaths, and result in no deaths. However, although incidents targeted at specific individuals are committed by both groups and individuals, in no instances do they result in financial losses. It is likely that this is because the specific purpose of an incident targeted at a specific person is to kill/injure that person, rather than to cause other kinds of harm. Incidents targeted at specific individuals are most commonly acts which are perpetrated by groups, but that result in no deaths and no financial losses (n = 5) and threats made by individuals, which also result in no deaths and no financial losses (n = 5).

Figure 5.10b highlights those incidents which were targeted at individuals representative of a larger target. There are seven such types of terrorist incident. Similar to those incidents targeted at specific people, both threats and acts are aimed at representative targets, and these instances do sometimes result in the deaths of the targets. Similarly, attacks targeted at representative individuals may result in financial losses, and are perpetrated by both individuals and groups. The two voids in Figure 5.10b are interesting. First, there are no instances where groups make threats against representative people, which do not result in deaths but do result in financial losses. Second, there are no instances where groups commit a terrorist act, which do not result in financial losses or deaths. Incidents aimed at a people who are
Figure 5.10. Target type plots, in separate dimensions
representative of a wider target are likely to be intended to cause a lot of disruption: the purpose of them is to harm a broad target and so they need to have some impact to send the message to the broad target. An act with no deaths and no financial losses is ‘unsuccessful’, and it seems likely that terrorist groups would be more successful in their attacks, because of their experience and resources. The most common types of incident targeted at representative groups are acts perpetrated by groups, which result in deaths but no financial losses (n = 8). The other types of incident perpetrated against representative targets all have the same frequency (n = 1), with the exception of acts, perpetrated by groups, resulting in deaths and financial losses (n = 2).

Finally, Figure 5.10c shows that incidents targeted at random individuals occur in all regions of the plot. Thus where random individuals are targeted the perpetrator does not discriminate between the type of attack used. The most common type of incident targeted at random individuals involves an act perpetrated by a group, where there are no deaths but there are financial losses (n = 15). The least common type of attack targeted at random individuals is a threat, made by a group, involving no deaths, but resulting in financial losses (n = 1).

Looking at Figure 5.10 as a whole, it shows that both individuals and groups target victims at all levels: both will aim attacks or threats at random victims, representative victims, and specific victims. In addition, financial losses can be incurred across all targets. The two remaining variables (Act/Threat, and Deaths/No Deaths) show that each is targeted at all levels of victim, are perpetrated by both groups and individuals, and can result in financial losses. It is possible to see that incidents resulting in deaths are targeted at all levels of victim, are perpetrated by both groups and individuals, and in some cases do result in financial losses. Threats and acts can each result in financial losses, but in no case did a threat result in a death, which is perhaps common sense.

Figure 5.11 shows the MSA output with each point labelled with the name of a terrorist incident which was included in the analysis, in order to provide a more applied understanding of the incidents. The analysis shows that there are two types of
assassination within this analysis, both falling in the bottom/centre left of the plot, shown in Figure 5.11 by a green highlight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act + Deaths</th>
<th>Act + No Deaths</th>
<th>Threat + No Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USS Cole</td>
<td>OPEC Meeting siege</td>
<td>Mars Bar contamination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWA Flight 847</td>
<td>Israeli orange contamination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarin attack Japanese Underground</td>
<td>ETA beach bomb</td>
<td>Plot to bomb Yugoslav reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stadium bomb, Montreal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GRAPO safe house plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma bombing</td>
<td>Columbian Eagle hijack</td>
<td>UN bomb threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lufthansa bomb hoax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plot to kill President Marcos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unabomber</td>
<td>Iodine 131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.11. Specific Assassination cases**

For the purpose of this research, an assassination is defined as:

"A targeted attack with a specific victim. They need not be a politician, but their death must have some impact on the political scene, either because of who they are, or the position they hold"
The first point (in the bottom left region) represents assassinations in which an *individual* has targeted a *specific victim*, where the incident has resulted in *no financial losses*. This is exemplified by the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the US President killed by an individual. The second point (in the centre left region) represents incidents where an individual has been *specifically targeted by a terrorist group*, and again there were *no financial losses*. An example of such an assassination is the kidnap and killing of Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades, an Italian terrorist group. The assassination incidents in the sample are distinguished from other terrorist incidents by the type of target, being specific individuals rather than randomly selected or representative of a wider target, and the fact that none result in financial losses. Otherwise, they do appear to be similar to other types of terrorism.

5.4 SUMMARY

As discussed, the research literature is somewhat divided on whether or not political assassinations should be considered as a form of terrorism. This study has used the literature's definitions of terrorism to compare 'traditional' terrorism and political assassinations empirically.

Having content analysed the political assassination incidents according to the terrorism variables, it was found that there were two distinct types of political assassination. In terms of the definition used, all political assassination incidents were acts rather than threats, they all resulted in a loss of life, none of the incidents caused financial losses, and all were victims selected because of who they were. The only difference between political assassination incidents was whether they were committed by a terrorist group, or an individual. It is possible to suggest that the political assassination incidents present in this sample are able to be classified as terrorism, according to the literature. All incidents met at least three of the 'criteria' of terrorism, as specified in the literature, while one incident met four of the five 'conditions'.
This chapter, along with chapters 3 and 4, has examined political assassinations, using the literature to consider how well they meet existing definitions of political assassination, homicide, and terrorism, and by comparing real-life political assassinations incidents to each other, and to cases of homicide and terrorism. The next step is to draw these findings together, to establish how future research should be informed.
6. Defining Political Assassinations: Discussion

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The first part of this thesis has examined the ways in which political assassinations have been defined in the literature, and tested these against real-life assassination incidents to establish how well they account for the variation in attacks. In addition, definitions of homicide and terrorism were examined, to see if these could be used to inform research on political assassinations. Chapter 2 provided a discussion of the ways in which political assassinations have been defined in the literature on political assassinations, homicide, and terrorism, while chapters 3, 4, and 5 subsequently endeavoured to provide further understanding of how well these definitions describe real-life political assassination incidents, via an analysis of these incidents. This chapter provides a discussion of the findings of Part 1 of the thesis, explaining how the findings can inform further research.

6.2 DEFINITIONS OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATION

As discussed in chapter 2, there is much written in the literature about the way in which acts of political assassination should be defined. Together these definitions provide four concepts by which assassinations can be defined: the victim identity, the offender identity, the motivation for the act, and the legality of the act. As chapter 2 demonstrated, definitions of political assassinations fall in the overlaps between these categories. In chapter 3 these concepts were used to analyse real-life political assassination incidents, in order to establish how well the literature definitions do in fact describe real-life political assassinations. However, the concept of legality was omitted, as all incidents in this analysis could be considered illegal, and therefore the concept offers no differentiation between incidents. Thus the incidents of political assassination were analysed according to their specificity, the identity of the victim, the offending history of the perpetrator, the victim-offender relationship, and the motivation for the attack.
Chapter 3 identified thirteen different types of political assassination, differentiated according to these concepts. This suggests that far from there being just one type of assassination, and therefore one type of definition which could encompass all cases, definitions need to be broader. None of the existing definitions of political assassination address all of these concepts. Instead, they each use one, two, or three of the concepts, creating rather narrow definitions, which are also of little practical use in differentiating political assassinations from non-political assassinations. For example, Ben-Yehuda (2005) merely defines political assassination as the illegal killing of a person against their will. However, this offers no way of distinguishing between political assassination and a more traditional homicide. Others are somewhat restrictive, for example Kirkham et al. (1970) argue that only political individuals who are killed by a politically motivated offender can be political assassinations. However, the analysis in chapter 3 demonstrated that incidents commonly viewed and accepted as political assassinations are not covered by these definitions, therefore reinforcing the view that a broad definition should be used, which incorporates the elements identified in an analysis of literature definitions.

6.3 COMPARISON OF HOMICIDES AND POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS

At their most fundamental, political assassinations are a form of illegal killing. Therefore it is important to understand the relationship between ‘traditional’ homicide incidents (e.g. serial killings, school shootings) and political assassination incidents. Existing research on political assassination tends to view them more as a form of stalking which can result in homicide, whereas it may be more useful to view political assassinations as a homicide which in some cases may be preceded by stalking. Thus chapter 4 compared homicide incidents (including political assassinations) using the distinguishing features of homicide definitions set out by the literature. Incidents were analysed on the basis of the victim-offender relationship, the number of victims in the incident, the type of offender (serial or not, mentally ill or not) and the motive behind the attack (personal, instrumental, or political). The results of the analysis found that, amongst this sample at least, incidents of political assassination show a number of similarities with other types of
homicide incidents. They appear to be mainly distinguishable by the motivation for the attack, with all the politically motivated homicides in the sample being political assassinations. Of course there is an element of circularity here. As discussed in chapter 3, and section 6.2 of this chapter, a key aspect of political assassinations is that they are politically motivated. However, not all political assassinations are politically motivated. Chapter 4 demonstrated that in a number of cases, the political assassinations were actually personally motivated (e.g. the killing of Anna Lindh). Thus although in some instances the motivation distinguishes assassinations from other homicides, this does not hold for all instances. Other aspects where political assassinations differ from traditional homicides include the type of offender, with no serial offenders committing political assassinations. It is possible that this is because the perpetrators of political assassinations are apprehended before they offend again. Equally it is possible that perpetrators of political assassinations are only motivated by their desire to kill that particular individual and therefore do not feel the need to go on and offend again. Another difference between political assassinations and other homicides is the type of victim-offender relationship. Political assassinations appear to rarely be committed by an individual who is related to the victim. This is likely to be related to the motivation for the incident. All incidents where the victim and offender were related were driven by a personal or instrumental motive. It is suggested that this is due to the nature of the relationship; perhaps it is unlikely that within close relationships politics would be the motivating factor to drive an individual to murder, over personal or even instrumental reasons.

Aside from these distinguishing features, there are certainly similarities between homicides and political assassinations. Four types of assassination were identified in this sample, and for each ‘type’ there was at least one case of ‘traditional’ homicide with the same profile, with the exception of the motive for the attack. That is, the cases of political assassination were the same on the Serial/Non-serial Offender, Multiple/Single Victim, and Victim-Offender Relationship variables as homicide cases, but were differentiated from them by the Motive variable. Therefore this thesis suggests that political assassinations should be considered as a sub-type of homicide, at least for research purposes. The existing research and knowledge focused on homicides could be valuable in furthering the understanding of political assassination.
incidents. In chapter 8 this will be discussed, with suggestions offered on particular aspects which could be drawn on to inform research.

6.4 COMPARISON OF TERRORISM AND POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS

In chapter 2, there was a discussion of how political assassinations may or may not be a form of terrorism. A key issue in this debate for many terrorism researchers (e.g. Schmid, 1992) is the differing target populations in terrorism and political assassinations: terrorism is usually targeted at the general public, with the intention of harming or killing individuals who are randomly selected, or representative of a larger body. Political assassinations however are seen as more ‘personal’ and tend to be targeted at specific, named individuals, rather than groups. However, it is an indisputable fact that terrorist groups do use political assassinations as a tactic, and so in that sense political assassinations should be considered as a form of terrorism.

Chapter 5 looked at the extent to which incidents of political assassination meet the literature’s common definition of terrorism. In terms of features of other incidents readily accepted as forms of terrorism, political assassination incidents were similar. There was one key difference, supporting the arguments of Schmid (1992), and finding that the target group in political assassinations is restricted to specific individuals, whereas traditional terrorist targets three levels of victim: specific individuals, those representative of a wider target, and those who are randomly selected. Incidents of political assassinations also differ in terms of their outcome. In no instances do they result in financial losses while other types of terrorism do. However, this is likely to be due to the intention of the perpetrators. The motivation for attacks which result in financial losses is likely to be very different to those which result in deaths. Thus as the sole purpose of a political assassination is to kill the target, the perpetrator is unlikely to also design an attack which would result in financial losses.

There were however similarities between political assassinations and other types of terrorism. Chapter 5 also found that the offenders committing terrorist incidents were
the same types as those committing political assassinations, with both individuals and groups committing both types of violence. Terrorist incidents and political assassinations can both result in deaths, although perhaps obviously there are no political assassinations where there are no deaths (as by definition a political assassination requires a death). Thus, while the literature may argue that political assassination incidents are not terrorism, and this research supports this on the basis of the victim identity, in other aspects the two incident types are in fact similar. Thus it is suggested that in future research political assassinations should be considered as a type of terrorism, albeit with an understanding of the differences which exist. Thus research on terrorism can be drawn upon to increase and inform understanding of the political assassination incidents.

6.5 CONCLUSION: WHAT ARE POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS?

The purpose of this section, and these three research chapters, was to look in more detail at how political assassinations can and should be defined, in relation to both terrorism and homicide. Following Schmid’s (1992) statement that political assassinations should not be considered as a type of terrorism, analysis has shown that political assassinations share a number of features with some types of terrorism. This, along with the fact that terrorist groups do use political assassinations as a tactic, leads this study to conclude that political assassinations can, in some instances, be considered a type of terrorism. Looking more closely at political assassinations, it is shown that they meet the definition of terrorism on a number of factors, including similarities on offender type. However, the type of victim, which is deemed important by many, is different between political assassinations and more general types of terrorism. Thus, there may be some merit in using terrorism research to inform political assassination research, but it should be remembered that there are still fundamental differences between the two types of violence.

In addition, political assassinations were compared to other types of homicide, following from Kirkham et al.’s (1970) statement that they are another form of homicide. Similarities were found between the two types of killing, in particular that
the types of victims targeted are similar, with public and private individuals being at risk of both homicide and political assassination. However, differences were evident in the offender, with political assassinations only being committed by strangers to the victim, but homicides being also committed by individuals known to the victim. The motivation also differs between homicides and political assassinations, with no politically-motivated homicides in this sample. The results of all the analysis suggests that rather than there being one single definition of political assassination, there are multiple types that require a more flexible definition.

The following chapters examine political assassinations in more detail, drawing on factors from the research arenas of both terrorism and homicide. Other aspects of political assassinations will be examined, with the intention of identifying aspects of assassinations which may improve understanding of political assassinations, and the different types of assassination that may exist.
PART TWO:
MODELLING POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS
7. Existing knowledge on political assassinations

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research literature related to political assassinations. Research on this topic has been directed toward various areas including the assassin, the target of the attack, and the method used.

The research focused on the assassin tends to concentrate on profiling the assassin, identifying the common characteristics and presenting these as identifying factors. Others create typologies of assassins, grouping them according to their characteristics, and presenting these as different ‘types’ of assassins who behave in different ways. The intention of such research is to assist law enforcement agencies to identify potential assassins, and therefore to intercept them before they can commit an attack.

Finally, more recent research has drawn on the profiling and typology model of research, evaluating its practical use, and developing it further. (e.g. Fein and Vossekuil, 1998, and James, Mullen, Meloy, Pathé, Farnham, Preston and Darnley, 2007).

This chapter will discuss these areas of research in more detail, providing an overview of the research currently available. This chapter first divides the research into that conducted pre-1998, and post-1998, all of which is US-based. In 1998 Fein and Vossekuil published an influential report on US assassins, arguing that there was little or no evidence for previously accepted ‘facts’ about political assassination incidents. Subsequently, the focus of research altered somewhat. The third section of this chapter looks at European-based research, which also has a different approach to political assassination research.
7.2 PRE-1998 US RESEARCH

The majority of research in the area of political assassinations is focused on the perpetrators of the assassination, usually aimed at creating profiles or typologies of the offenders. The targets of these offenders are not always restricted to US Presidents, but sometimes also include politicians, and other related figures such as judges. One of the earliest studies was by Rothstein (1964, 1966), who examined case histories of prison inmates who had indicated an intention to attack the US President. From this work, Rothstein suggested the ‘Presidential Assassination Syndrome’, a collection of behaviours and beliefs which, Rothstein argues, lead to individuals developing a desire to attack or threaten the President. This took the form of a continuum of behaviours and beliefs, along which both assassins and threateners can be placed. Rothstein found that the individuals in his sample (n = 11) experienced difficult childhoods, with dominant mothers and weak fathers. Most joined the military at a young age, but had unhappy careers there. Rothstein’s sample also had difficulties in forming stable relationships, and trouble developing group identities. These findings were interpreted by Rothstein as being a manifestation of hostility towards the mother, subsequently redirected against symbols of authority, for example the government and the president. This redirected hostility then leads to threats, and in some cases even attacks.

Although not focused on assassins, Sebastiani and Foy (1965) considered the characteristics present in presidential threateners. They used a sample of 48 individuals, all of whom had tried to force their way into the White House to gain access to the President, finding that they were paranoid, and self-destructive, and persistent in their attempts to meet with the President. Although seemingly supportive of the work of Kirkham et al. (1970) and Rothstein (1964, 1966), the reliance on threateners over assassins means that the findings are not really applicable to individuals who commit violence, rather than just threaten.

A major attempt to understand the identity of political assassins is the work of Kirkham et al. (1970). As part of a review of attacks aimed at political figures in the US, commissioned by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of
Violence, they identified the common characteristics amongst their sample (n = 7). These were a combination of physical traits, and personality features, and they showed a number of similarities with the findings of Rothstein (1964, 1966). For example, all individuals in the sample were slender white males, with minimal social skills and difficult family relationships. All members of this sample, with one exception, were said to have been suffering from some form of mental illness. Kirkham et al. (1970) argue that due to the presence of this mental illness the men in their sample did not commit their acts of political violence with the intention of achieving any gains, or to advance a rational plan. All had poor parental relationships, difficulties in forming friendships or romantic relationships, and had experienced difficulties in remaining in employment in the years leading up to their violent behaviours. In addition to these personality characteristics, Kirkham et al. (1970) also found that, in their sample at least, the assassin tended to feel ambivalence towards their target, but did experience a general hostility towards the presidency itself. There is evidence that the assassins have focused on narrow, specific political issues, and feel no remorse for their actions, and instead feel that they have been guided by some higher power, and that this justifies their actions.

Graham and Gurr (1979) also identified common characteristics found in individuals who had attacked (or attempted to attack) prominent individuals. Graham and Gurr examined assassins’ case histories. Although the sample size was unclear, the findings echo those of Rothstein (1964, 1966), and Kirkham et al. (1970), suggesting that assassins tend to come from broken homes, are loners who find it difficult to build meaningful relationships, and have poor employment histories. Graham and Gurr (1979) suggest that assassins want to be wanted, and would prefer to be “wanted” for a crime such as murder, than not be wanted at all.

Taking a broader approach, and looking at offenders in general rather than focusing just on the narrow, small group of assassins/threateners, Goldstein (1981) examined research on both violent and non-violent offenders. He found that research which had previously tried to establish differences between violent and nonviolent offenders has generally been unsuccessful. For example, Goldstein (1981) cites research by Holland, Beckett and Levi (1981), who demonstrated that such attempts to
differentiate between groups tends to find either very tiny differences, or no consistent differences at all. Goldstein (1981) suggests that these findings are an accurate reflection of the nature of the relationship between criminality and personality, i.e. that there is none, or at least there is no clear link between the two. Instead Goldstein (1981) suggests that criminological research should view the individual solely in the context of their society, as this is where they draw ideas, beliefs and behavioural tendencies from. Goldstein suggests that the only patterns visible in studies of assassins is that they are socially isolated, with few family, friends, or community ties, rather than there being a ‘type’ of person who will become an assassin, or their being any type of ‘syndrome’ of assassin.

Goldstein (1981) suggests that it is this social isolation which could be the key to violence (in the US). Those missing social contact have no way to learn about themselves and the world around them, and receive no feedback on the beliefs and values they hold. Therefore they have little way of knowing whether their opinions and beliefs are reasonable, or even widely held. He argues that the thought patterns of the socially isolated resemble those of autistic or schizophrenic individuals, featuring rambling thoughts, confusion between fantasy and reality, disjointed speech, and highly affective components, such as violence or sexual elements. The isolation is not the source of the beliefs, but it compounds them. Those who have social contact with others have an awareness of when they are being unrealistic, but this is missing in socially isolated individuals. However, Goldstein (1981) does acknowledge that not all violence is committed by socially isolated individuals, and in fact groups may be formed by these socially isolated individuals. Such a group shares a set of core beliefs, isolating its members and ensuring acceptance of views. This seems similar to the way in which Ruby (2002) suggests that terrorist groups recruit their members, i.e. they attract individuals with shared beliefs, isolate them from others outside of the group, thus ensuring the acceptance of more extreme views (Ruby, 2002).

Political assassination research was advanced in the early 1980s, when the US Secret Service commissioned a study of presidential assassins, and other similarly dangerous individuals (Heyman, 1984). Although Heyman did not interview the
assassins themselves, data were drawn from publicly available sources, and Secret Service file data, in order to examine 21 participants, 11 of whom had killed/wounded/assaulted presidents, five who had killed or wounded others of interest to the Secret Service (intentionally, or in an attempt to attack the President), and a further five individuals who were under investigation as they were considered potentially dangerous. Three such individuals were apprehended while engaged in potentially dangerous attacks on the President or Vice President.

Heyman (1984) categorised the sample into two main groups: the ‘Crazies’ and the ‘Behavioural Disorders’. Individuals in both share a set of behavioural and background characteristics, with all lacking anything offering a sense of achievement or fulfilment. Heyman (1984) argues that it is the resulting feelings of inadequacy, along with the lack of achievement, that leads Presidential assassins and attackers to become dangerous. In common with earlier research, Heyman found that, with the exception of two cases, the participants had nothing personally against their targets. The targets simply symbolised the frustrations the attackers experienced, or personified the system which they perceived to be oppressing them.

Looking more specifically at the ‘Crazies’ group, Heyman argues that this can be subdivided further into the ‘marginal crazies’, and the ‘unsuccessful internalisers’. The division is largely based on the individuals’ mental state. Marginals are said to be confused, with their mental health being heavily reliant on others. They are capable of mental competence, but if their needs are ignored their mental wellbeing suffers. The group lack the support of family and friends, and are unable to achieve success because of their mental health problems. Conversely, the unsuccessful internalisers are introverted, socially insensitive, with poor social skills, and psychologically detached. Nevertheless, they are still highly dependent on others. Unsuccessful internalisers hold an unrealistic world view, are self-centred, isolated, friendless, and are unable to maintain employment. This group want to be independent of others, but are unable to fulfil this desire as they actually need constant institutional care. Heyman (1984) suggests that all of the sample he placed in this category could be diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenics, although no formal diagnoses were made.
The second group identified by Heyman (1984) is that classed as ‘Behavioural Disorders’, which he also refers to as ‘unsuccessful externalisers’. This group understand the real world and have an accurate perception of it, but are unable to relate to it in a meaningful or effective way. They do not want to be isolated, but are unable to relate to others, or to form relationships. It is because of this understanding of the world that members of this group feel the need to achieve something meaningful to themselves and others, and that will get them positive feedback from those they want to be close to. If this is unachievable, Heyman argues, the group will settle for a place in history, as a way to achieve recognition. It is their desire to make and maintain relationships, combined with their inability to do so, that drives them to extreme methods of gaining attention or achievement. The ‘unsuccessful externalisers’ reach out to others, but they struggle to adapt to the pressures they face, or the expectations of others, which must be met in order to gain the recognition they desire. If there is no such social reinforcement, they turn to learning skills or abilities in order to gain the desired respect. It is at this point that they differ from ‘normal’ people. Despite their desire to succeed, the group are chronically incapable of social or academic achievement. Their lack of social skills prevents the building of friendly relationships, and their low intelligence prevents impressive achievements. The cycling between social rejection and intellectual failure leads to feelings of frustration, rejection and isolation.

In addition to Heyman’s Crazies and Behavioural Disorders, he also suggests there may be a further group: the ‘Freedom Fighters’. These should be characterised as a prototypical psychopath, but are not included in the 1984 project as there were just two participants who fulfilled these criteria.

As mentioned previously, there are similarities between Heyman’s (1984) proposed categories of assassin, and those proposed by Kirkham et al. (1970), with all participants experiencing the avoidance of other people (through choice or otherwise), resulting in their social isolation. None of the participants had positive relationships, instead they were characterised by friction, hostility and unpleasantness. Romantic relationships were difficult for the participants, they were alienated from their families, and had little interest in joining mainstream, established
social groups. Where these participants did show an interest in social groups or activities, these were groups which were on the boundaries of society, and even still the assassins were rarely accepted. Instead, Heyman suggests that the assassins focus all of their energy on themselves. Heyman’s sample all had difficulty in school, both academically and behaviourally. Even where the individuals progressed to college, their personal weaknesses were their downfall, proving unable to deal with challenges or submit to the discipline required of them. A poor employment history was also identified. Habitual aggression was not in evidence, but the participants did appear to be unable to deal with their aggression when it surfaced, lacking the mechanisms required to deal with such negative emotions in a socially acceptable manner. Subsequently, Heyman argues, many turned their anger inwards in order to avoid confrontation with others. The assassins in this sample rely on others, with differences appearing between Externalisers and Internalisers. The Externalisers will try to communicate their needs, but are unable to due to their social inadequacies. Rather than gaining acceptance from others, they receive hostility. The Internalisers are so lacking in communication and social skills that many will not even attempt to communicate their needs. Where there were communication attempts, messages were often coded in a way only the assassin would understand. Heyman (1984) argues that it is the combination of these factors, rather than any one in particular, that produces the angry, isolated would-be assassin. However, an issue with Heyman’s (1984) typology is, as with many others, he draws a number of conclusions from case file data, with no actual meeting with the assassin themselves. Thus he is drawing rather strong conclusions from what is essentially secondary data. Wilson (2003) highlights this as an issue in profiling in general, suggesting that where speculative profiles are created, which are based more on the author’s own experiences rather than on empirical data, the resultant profile is likely to suffer from any cognitive biases held by the author, rather than being objective (Tversky and Kahneman, 1973).

Clarke (1990) went further than those before him, and created a full typology of assassins, rather than simply highlighting similar personality characteristics. This was a four part classification, based on the case files of individuals who had attacked US Presidents (n = 16). Assassins were grouped as Type I – IV, more specifically described as rational political extremists, mentally disturbed, emotionally disturbed,
or truly insane. Clarke (1990) used seven broad categories to differentiate between the groups:

1. Emotional distortion (ranging from mild to severe)
2. Cognitive distortion (ranging from absent to severe)
3. Hallucinations (absent or present)
4. Delusions (absent or present)
5. Reality contact (between clear and poor)
6. Social relations (varied, disturbed or isolated)
7. Primary motive (political, personal (compensatory), personal (provocation), irrational)

These seven categories are then used in varying combinations to create the four ‘types’ of assassin. The Type II and III individuals experience and “overwhelming and aggressive egocentric needs for acceptance, recognition, and status” (Clarke, 1990, p.82). Prior to the violent behaviour, the people on whom the TII or TIII are most dependent will have withdrawn from him, or denied his needs. This leads to feelings of inadequacy, leading to an inability to cope with disappointments. The individual has neither the resources nor the learned coping skills, to deal with the hurt, frustration and anger experienced. Clarke (1990) therefore argues that the individual will eventually become consumed by these negative feelings. In time, they will become suicidal, seeing no way out other than death. Further, they view this death as a way to gain revenge on those perceived to cause the unhappiness. The victims selected by TII and TIII individuals have no link to them, serving as surrogate victims, because the attention the victim receives will be reflected onto them. They are compelled to express their anger and resentment in a visible manner. The differences between the two groups relate largely to the underlying feelings of the assassin. According to Clarke (1990) the TII assassin is guided by conscience, using this to rationalise and justify his suicidal actions, whereas the TIII is at ‘rock bottom’, feeling alienated and estranged from wider society. However, this does not actually explain why they go on to attack the President, rather than any other person in authority.

Clarke (1990) draws comparisons between the displaced rage of a TIII assassin, and mass murderers (mostly who select their targets at random), arguing that both acts
will ensure notoriety, and offer the killer some kind of dominance or control over the situation. Both allow the killer to make a final, angry statement about the society which has excluded them. Indeed, some individuals who Clarke (1990) classifies as TIII assassins would consider mass murder and suicide, before settling on political violence. He highlights similarities in characteristics of TIII assassins and mass murders: they tend to be white males, who are socially isolated, with marginal employment, who have recently experienced a frustrating event. Although neither group appeared to be psychotic, there was also little evidence of inhibition by the individual’s conscience, or own fear. It is because of their disillusionment, and lack of value they place on their own lives, that they are prepared to take others’ lives.

7.2.1 Weaknesses of Pre-1998 US research
A difficulty with research which is based on a case-study methodology is that the researchers very rarely clearly define their rationale for their choice of methodology. A fundamental requirement when conducting both the design of and the data collection for case studies is that the researcher is guided by, and informed by, theory (Yin, 2003). The goal is to try and “develop preliminary concepts” (Yin, 2003, p.3) before beginning the case study, where these concepts are designed to serve two purposes. First, as with any empirical research, the literature should be used to inform the research, in order that the findings can offer a contribution to the field. The second purpose, which is more specific to case study methodologies, is to define the phenomenon under analysis, to identify the inclusion criteria to be used, and to identify the variables which are relevant to the area under examination (Yin, 2003). Without the guidance, the definition of the inclusion criteria, concept/phenomenon definition, selection of variables, etc. “may be extremely difficult and hamper the development of a rigorous case study” (Yin, p.3). As Ragin (1987, p.34) states: “most investigators who use case-oriented strategies...are not self-consciously methodological, that is, they do not regard the case oriented strategies they use as formal methodologies”. Despite an increased focus on case-study methodology in recent years, researchers have still not devoted enough attention to improving the methodology, in terms of formal strategies and guidance, and those improvements that have come have not yet been ‘taken on board’ more widely (Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999). This can be seen in the research papers presented in Table 7.1, where
the inclusion criteria is vague, and includes both threateners and attempted assassins, and the variables used to analyse the case file data are not clearly stated. In addition, the age of these studies (all were published before 1991) suggests they were conducted prior to these developments. Thus the case studies of assassins have a flawed methodology. In addition to these flaws, as Salfati and Canter (1999) have highlighted in homicide research, offender accounts/reports (as likely found in case files) tend to be biased and possibly unreliable, and therefore not suitable for objective observations.

Table 7.1
Details of Methodologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Attackers or Threateners?</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirkham, Levy &amp; Crotty (1970)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Attackers - attempted and actual</td>
<td>Case histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rothstein (1964, 1966)</td>
<td>11/27</td>
<td>Threateners</td>
<td>Case histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastiani &amp; Foy (1965)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Threateners</td>
<td>Case histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke (1990)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Attackers</td>
<td>Case histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham &amp; Gurr (1979)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Attackers</td>
<td>Case histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldstein (1981)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Attackers &amp; Threateners</td>
<td>Case histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedman (1965)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Attackers</td>
<td>Case histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heyman (1984)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11 - Presidential Attackers 5 - Attackers of others 5 - Under investigation</td>
<td>Case histories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, case study methodologies are not without their weaknesses. Kaarbo and Beasley (1999) summarise these thus:
"In both political science and psychology, there exists a stereotype of the case study that includes an idiosyncratic, historically specific, and atheoretical character; a lack of control; an inability to generate a sufficient number of data points to test theory; and a highly suspect ‘interpretive’ character that allows the analyst to draw favourable conclusions about hypotheses and to find support where no such support exists. Certainly, the ways in which case studies have been performed and used have frequently been rather divergent from the standards of systematic inquiry currently widely accepted in both political science and psychology" (p.371).

Even with these small samples, the research papers have drawn participants from a mixture of populations: those who have threatened prominent persons (in writing, or in person), individuals who have attempted to attack prominent persons, and those who have successfully attacked prominent individuals. Much of the research treats these three types of individuals as a homogenous group, creating profiles or classifications of assassins on the basis of common personality traits, arguing that these can be used by security services to identify would-be attackers. However, more recent research has shown that individuals who make threats do not typically go on to attack (Fein and Vossekuil, 1998), showing that inferences made on the basis of threateners’ characteristics should not be applied to attackers. It is also suggested that individuals who make attempts are different to those who complete assassinations – there is a reason why their attacks are incomplete, and these reasons should be identified before combining unsuccessful attacks with completed attacks. It is of course possible that there are no differences, and it is down to chance that some attacks are unsuccessful, but until this is investigated further it seems prudent to focus just on completed attacks.

In addition to the weaknesses of a case study methodology, the literature on political assassinations is also weakened by the sampling technique used. As Table 7.1 shows, in addition to the common case-study methodology employed by these studies, they also have a low sample size in common, which reduces the generalisability of the findings.
Because of the weaknesses inherent in case study methodology, despite the benefits of it, the inferences that can be drawn are limited, with the conclusions drawn considered to be an inadequate basis for scientific inferences because of the difficulties in establishing internal validity (Kazdin, 1981). This is not to say that case studies do not offer any benefits, and they can be appropriate when used, in single cases and particularly in clinical settings, e.g. in assessing change through treatment (Kazdin, 1981). As Karbo and Beasley (1999) found, in the field of political psychology one of the most popular methodologies is the case study. However, this is typically carried out by political scientists, rather than psychologists. Looking specifically at publications in the journal Political Psychology, Karbo and Beasley (1999) found that psychologists are more likely to use alternative methodologies, including surveys, experimental studies, or content-analysis based methods, with case studies being a rarity.

The studies listed in Table 7.1 are also weakened by their omission of a control group. None of the studies discussed used a control group, i.e. none compared their sample of threateners and/or attackers to a similar sample, either from a criminal population or the general non-criminal population. The purpose of using a control group in this situation is to provide comparison: the control group provides a baseline of the characteristics/personalities which are found in the general population, against which the specialised populations’ characteristics can be compared. If there is no control group, there is no way for researchers to know if the personality of the assassin is unique to that group, or if this personality type/traits are also found in the general (non-assassin) population. In some cases it is clear that the characteristics said to be typical of an assassin do not discriminate between assassins and the general population. For example, Clarke (1990) cites assassins as being white males, while Heyman (1984) suggests that attackers and threateners will experience social difficulties. In practical terms these highlighted characteristics are of little use: there are many such individuals who do not go on to threaten or attack prominent public figures. Other characteristics such as mental illness (Kirkham et al., 1970), problems with women (Rothstein, 1964, 1966), and attention seeking (Freedman, 1965) may well provide a means to differentiate between assassins and non-assassins, but with
no control group there is no way to tell. Thus the methodology used in these studies offers little in the way of practical contributions to the field.

However, the factors identified by this body of research as being common to political threateners and attackers are also commonly found in the general population of offenders. Blackburn (1995) points out that official figures show offenders to be young and male. There is evidence that offenders tend to be of a lower social class (Braithwaite, 1981). Other evidence suggests that offenders can be differentiated from non-offenders by their “personal status” (Blackburn, 1995, p.49), e.g. their level of educational achievement, and whether or not they have a stable job (Thornberry and Farnworth, 1982). There is a great deal of research looking at the IQ of offenders, with large number of offenders experiencing below average scores (Blackburn, 1995). A US study of ‘delinquents’ by Caplan and Siebert (1964) found that in almost 50% of cases the IQ was below 90. Other studies actually suggest that a higher IQ may serve as a protective factor against offending in individuals who have other risk factors (e.g. a criminal father (Kandel, Mednick, Kierkegaard-Sorensen, Hutchings, Knope, Rosenberg, and Schulsinger, 1988)), or childhood behavioural problems (White, Moffitt and Silva, 1989). In terms of education and learning, there is a range of evidence to suggest that, as a group, problems with learning are common (estimates range from 26% to 73%, Zimmerman, Rich, Keilitz and Broder, 1981). West (1982) found that “later failure at school and delinquency may be attributed primarily to deviant temperament” (Blackburn, 1995, p.190), suggesting that the educational difficulties experienced by offenders in general (and assassins) may be related to aspects other than IQ. In terms of social skills and functioning, there is evidence that problems with social skills are related to aggression. Kirchner, Kennedy and Draguns (1979) found that offenders, when role-playing conflict situations, were more aggressive than non-offenders.

In addition, Wilson (2003) highlights a number of problems about this type of profiling. The profiles discussed here are comprised of a number of features, but none are likely to be of use to investigators or policy makers. Although the features may seem useful, as Wilson (2003) highlights, they merely provide a ‘baseline’ of features which are likely to be common amongst all offenders, rather than specific to
assassins, as shown in the previous paragraph. Thus the profiles offer no way to differentiate between offenders, or to identify likely assassins. Wilson (2003) also points out that personality and background characteristics identified in groups such as terrorists, are often found in individuals who do not become terrorists. Instead of focusing on the background characteristics, the suggestion is that it would be of more use to investigate why these particular individuals chose violent action rather than another option. Wilson (2003) also identifies the difficulties in ‘backward profiling’. Unlike in police investigations, e.g. of rapists where the offender is an unknown individual, and the profile will assist in narrowing the list of suspects, with terrorist incidents, and likely with incidents of political assassination, the perpetrator is known. The main reason for creating these profiles is to enhance the understanding of potential perpetrators. However, it is unlikely that knowledge of likely background and demographic characteristics will be of use to investigators, whereas examining the techniques used by perpetrators is likely to be of much higher value.

7.2.2 Strengths of Pre-1998 US research
Despite the detailed discussion of the weaknesses of this body of research, there are also strengths. This research provided the first step in understanding assassinations, providing a basis from which to create more research. In fact, the characteristics of assassins identified by these researchers can be compared to those of the general offending population, suggesting that the assassins are similar to other offenders. Thus this offers justification for using forensic psychology to understand political assassinations.

7.3 POST-1998 US RESEARCH

Following the attempts to create typologies of political assassins, in the US a different approach was sought. The typologies and profiles that had been created were not providing the information required to prevent attacks directed at prominent figures, and so the Exceptional Case Study Project (ECSP) was designed to take a different approach to previous research. Rather than the profiles or typologies of assassins produced by previous research, the ECSP looked at specific incidents, and
examined the behaviours observable in those. In addition it went beyond the use of case study data, and also used sources such as investigative reports, interviews with the perpetrator, and medical records. It took a broad approach looking at the “thinking and behaviour of individuals who assassinated, attacked or approached to attack a prominent person of public status in the United States” (http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac.shtml). In total, the sample consisted of 83 individuals who were responsible for 74 incidents of assassination/attack/near-attack, between 1949 and 1995. Six of the incidents were perpetrated by groups, which in total involved 16 individuals. In addition, one of the individuals in the sample was responsible for two of the incidents.

Fein and Vossekuil (1998) conducted the Exceptional Case Study Project, and report on the overall findings. Differences between their findings and those of previous research regarding the demographic and personality characteristics of assassins and threateners are highlighted, along with the ECSP’s approach of only examining the thoughts and behaviours of individuals who have acted in “lethal or near-lethal ways” (p.177), i.e. they killed or attempted to kill their target. In contrast to previous research, where the targets of assassination (attempts) were US Presidents, Fein and Vossekuil (1998) examined cases targeting ‘prominent persons’, including all persons protected by the Secret Service (the president, vice president, their families, previous presidents, presidential candidates, and visiting heads of state), cabinet secretaries, members of Congress, federal judges, governors, mayors of large cities, celebrities (famous film, television, radio and sports stars), and the presidents and chief executives of large corporate organisations. The project was afforded access to a lot of data relating to the perpetrators of attacks, threats and approaches, including Secret Service files, and law enforcement files. They suggest that their findings debunk three key beliefs about assassinations.

First, Fein and Vossekuil (1998) suggest that there is no profile of ‘the assassin’. Despite the large body of literature which has attempted to create a descriptive or demographic profile of perpetrators of assassinations, the individuals who commit these attacks do not fit into one, or even many, profiles. However, there are some similarities in the assassins’ backgrounds, including what Fein and Vossekuil (1998)
call “common denominator behaviors and activities that potential attackers engage in before their attacks” (p. 182). In order to carry out an attack on a prominent person, the perpetrator must first select their target, choose their weapon, acquire that weapon, study the security surrounding their target, plan their attack, and make plans for escape (if desired). Although Fein and Vossekuil (1998) did not find that all of their sample committed all of these behaviours, most of the sample committed several of them, suggesting that there is an element of planning in the attack.

The second myth is that assassins are mentally ill, or are ‘deranged’, and it is this that leads them to violence against prominent figures. In actual fact, Fein and Vossekuil (1998) found that mental illness is rarely a feature of assassinations or assassination attempts. Rather than attacks on prominent persons being motivated by an individual’s mental illness, the motivation comes from the individual’s desire to achieve a goal or to solve a problem. Although those who “demonstrate unusual or inappropriate interests in, or make threats against” (Fein and Vossekuil, 1998, p. 183) public figures are often suffering from mental illness, those who actually turn to actions are not mentally ill. However, none of the sample were in perfect mental and emotional health, with nearly all experiencing some form of psychological problem. However, this was not the serious mental health issues suggested by previous researchers, and was not the primary motivator of the attack or approach. While Fein and Vossekuil (1998) did find that some attackers were mentally ill, in nearly all cases the attack was actually motivated by a desire to achieve a goal, for example to draw attention to a particular problem, rather than by mental illness. Even where mental illness was a factor in political assassinations, the symptoms of mental illness typically did not influence or hinder what Fein and Vossekuil termed “attack-related activities” (p. 183), for example the planning of the attack. Fein and Vossekuil compare this to the influence mental illness usually has on an individuals’ behaviours. Those with severe and untreated mental illness usually have impaired problem-solving abilities, and a tendency to struggle with organisational skills. In this sample of attackers and approachers, those with mental illness retained their organisational abilities, proving themselves capable of both planning and carrying out an attack. Fein and Vossekuil (1998) highlight that the act of labelling an attacker (or threatener, or approacher) as mentally ill offers no practical assistance in the
understanding of assassination behaviour. It neither explains, nor helps predict, assassins' behaviours, and it offers little investigative assistance. Fein and Vossekuil (1998) summarise their findings relating to mental illness as follows:

- Many of the sample have had contact with a mental health professional.
- Of those in the sample who had contact with a mental health professional, few told them of their intention to attack or approach a public figure.
- Nearly 50% show a history of delusions. However, it was in just a few cases that these led to the attack or approach behaviours.
- There were few members of the sample with “command hallucinations” (Fein and Vossekuil, 1998, p.183).
- There was minimal history of substance abuse amongst the sample.

These findings regarding the likely mental illness of assassins is echoed by research in the wider field of terrorism. Horgan (2005) discusses the way in which people try to make sense of terrorist incidents (and the perpetrators of such incidents) by deeming them as atypical, and making assumptions of mental illness and psychopathy. Attributing such features reassures people and assists their understanding of extreme acts of violence. The search for the ‘terrorist personality’, and within that the identification of terrorists as mentally ill, was a strong research idea throughout the 1970s and 1980s. However, more recent research has shown that terrorists are not “mad”, and, in fact, terrorist groups would be unlikely to accept a member with mental illness, for a number of reasons. Individuals with mental illness would be likely to draw attention to the group they join, and by their nature terrorist groups prefer to avoid this. Those with severe mental illness are unlikely to be able to identify with other group members, and their behaviour (which is likely to be chaotic, disorganised etc) is likely to make them unable to function satisfactorily (Horgan, 2005). Thus, the findings of Fein and Vossekuil (1998) regarding the mental illness of political assassins appears to reflect the findings relating to terrorists.

The third and final myth debunked by Fein and Vossekuil’s (1998) project is that threateners of public figures are the same people as attackers of public figures. As shown above, much research regarding political assassination draws links and comparisons between threateners and attackers. Fein and Vossekuil (1998) point out
that the two groups are often treated as if they are one and the same. In actual fact, Fein and Vossekuil (1998) claim, those who threaten most often, do not attack. The biggest threat comes from those who do not make threats. Although some who are a threat do make threats, Fein and Vossekuil’s (1998) key findings relating to this myth are as follows. Of the 43 attackers, none had made a direct threat to their target, about their target, before the attack, suggesting that even where a potential target of assassination has received no threats, they may still be at risk of harm. In addition, it suggests that individuals who receive threats may not actually be at risk of harm. Together, these facts suggest that threats are actually of little predictive use in establishing whether or not an individual is likely to be targeted by an assassin. When looking at the combined sample of 83 attackers and near-attackers, less than 10% had made a direct threat about their target, either to their target, or to a law enforcement agency. In practical terms, Fein and Vossekuil (1998) do not suggest that threats should be ignored by investigators. Prompt responses and reactions to threats have discouraged many threateners from taking further action. However, Fein and Vossekuil’s findings suggest that investigators should focus their attention on “identifying, investigating, and assessing persons whose behaviours suggest that they might post threats of violence, but who do not communicate direct threats to their targets or to the authorities” (p.184). They do not however, explain how these individuals, who have not communicated any threat to the authorities, should be identified, or if their existence would even be known about. Although few direct threats were made, two thirds of Fein and Vossekuil’s sample had either written or spoken in such a way that their plans to attack a public figure were clear. “Would-be assassins” (p.184) were found to have told family, friends, and work colleagues of their plans, or to have written their thoughts and ideas in diaries or journals. Thus, although it is not necessarily threats that ‘give away’ the identity of would-be assassins, the assassins themselves identify themselves in other ways. In this case then, it could be suggested that it would be useful if policy was to encourage these friends, family members, and acquaintances, to report any such activity, no matter how minor it appears.

In addition to presenting evidence regarding the myths around assassination, Fein and Vossekuil (1998) also offer a number of observations about assassins’
behaviours. Again, they identify three notable features of assassinations. First, an assassination (or attempted assassination) is the product of "a discernable and understandable process of thinking and behaviour" (p.184). Fein and Vossekuiil (1998) assert that assassinations, and attempted assassinations, are pre-planned, rather than being spontaneous, impulsive acts of violence. The development and planning of the initial idea continues over periods of weeks, months, or even years. They are prompted by things seen on television, or in newspapers, films and books. During the development of the assassination idea, would-be assassins gather information about assassination incidents, the lives of previous attackers, and the protection afforded to their chosen target. Thought is given to who the target should be, and the would-be assassin may switch their attentions from one to another. A great deal of thought will be devoted to the attack, and development of the plans, including thoughts on weaponry, location of the target, ways to gain proximity to the target, suitable clothing for the assassin, any necessary equipment, and whether they should prepare some form of explanation (i.e. a letter), in case of their own death. Rehearsals may form a part of this planning. In some cases, this planning gives the assassin purpose and structure, or offers them an "ending point when they believe their emotional pain will cease" (p.185). Despite the intense rumination and planning which goes into assassination attacks and attempts, many assassins are capable of maintaining and presenting a 'normal' persona to the rest of the world. However, in all cases in Fein and Vossekuiil's (1998) study, the resulting attack or attempt is the end result of an "understandable process" (p.185) of thinking, planning, and decision making preceding the actual attack.

The second important observation from Fein and Vossekuiil (1998) is related to the motivations of these assassins. Few incidents in the U.S. were solely politically motivated, even where the targets were major political leaders. In fact, Fein and Vossekuiil suggest that these attacks were utilised as a means of achieving a particular goal of the assassin. Eight main motives were identified. First, assassination as a means of achieving "notoriety or fame" (p.185) for the attackers. Second, assassination was used to draw attention to a problem or cause. Third, assassins used these attacks as a form of retaliation, or revenge against a "perceived wrong" (p.185) or "perceived injury" (p.185). The fourth motivation identified by
Fein and Vossekuil was to end the assassin’s own suffering, either because they simply want to be killed, or because they no longer want to be a part of society. The fifth motivation is to “save the country or the world; to fix world problems” (p.186), and the sixth was to “develop a special relationship with the target” (p.186). The penultimate motivation for assassination was the desire to make money, either by being paid to commit the attack, or because the assassination is an attempt to secure a ransom, although it is unclear how the ransom would be achieved. Finally, the eighth motivation was to cause political change. Thus although political motives are present, they are by no means the overriding motivation for assassinations, and assassination attempts.

The third observation made by Fein and Vossekuil (1998) relates to the link between motive and target selection. For the assassins, their target is instrumental, serving a purpose and acting as a means to an end. Unlike previous research (e.g. Kirkham et al., 1970) Fein and Vossekuil (1998) suggest that targets are selected on the basis of the assassin’s motivation, rather than because of any ill-feeling or negativity towards the target or office. For example, if the assassin is motivated by the desire for notoriety their feelings towards a particular individual or office holder is irrelevant. Similarly, one who attacks because they want to end their life is not likely to be concerned with their target’s political beliefs, but instead will select them as it is likely the attacker will themselves be attacked. In addition, many of the attackers in the sample presented by Fein and Vossekuil (1998) will consider a number of targets during the planning stage. Those wanting notoriety will consider the targets which are most likely to get them attention, for example they may begin by considering governors and members of Congress, but actually decide on the president or vice president, as they calculate that such an attack would receive more attention. The attackers in this sample also took into account the opportunity afforded them, with final decisions on target being influenced by opportunities for attack, or the approachability of the target.

Other research has examined political assassinations as a form of terrorism. Although they acknowledge that stalking/threatening/attacking public figures is largely a product of behaviours that do not meet the definition of terrorism, Biesterfeld and
Meloy (2008) suggest that there is a terroristic subgroup of public figure stalkers/threateners/attackers. They argue that the typology suggested by Clarke (1982), and others like it, have “consistently identified a small portion of stalkers, attackers, and assassins of public figures who are motivated to advance a political, social, or religious agenda” (p.152). Although in the minority of those targeting public figures, such individuals do exist, and it is argued that they do tend to be both rational and capable of planning the attack. Despite the rationality displayed by these individuals, they do nevertheless have a rather extravagant view of what the outcome of their action will be, in comparison to the more realistic, and more ordinary outcome. Biesterfeld and Meloy (2008) present the assassination of Anwar Sadat as a recent example of a terrorist assassination. The assassination “involved an organised group with committed members, but not an autonomous cell, dedicated to a radicalised philosophy (a politico-religious belief system) that had developed intelligence on their target and implemented a simple but effective attack plan” (p.154). The suggestion is that the success of political assassination is in large part down to the “tactical application” employed. That is, the way in which the perpetrator is able to observe their target, look at the situation in which they will be working, the way they plan their attack, and how to get close to the target. Although acknowledging that there is no single profile of a political assassination, Biesterfeld and Meloy (2008) suggest some common themes in terrorist assassins:

- Terrorist groups look for young people who can be easily influenced and manipulated, in order to perpetrate their violence.
- “Mid-level cell leaders” tend to be better educated, and from higher social classes (Meloy, 2004)
- In some cases of conversion prior to attacks (e.g. Eric Rudolph and Paul Hill), the perpetrators will have lost contact with their family prior to conversion, will have changed their behaviours, become more isolated and intolerant of others’ beliefs, and will become more paranoid and vigilant.
- Biesterfeld and Meloy (2008) argue that anyone who targets a public figure for political or religious reasons are terrorists, whether they are part of an organised group, or whether they are working alone. The fact that ‘terrorists’ may not be organised groups can cause problems for the security services, who may only be alerted to the threat once the attack has occurred.
• Public figures have been the subject of attacks by autonomous cells, and Biesterfeld and Meloy (2008) believe that this trend will continue, particularly targeted at Western business executives who may become targets of Islamic groups, because they symbolise the hated secularism, technology and free-market capitalism of the West.

• Terrorist organisations have been found to watch their potential targets, up to 14 times over a period of 22 months (California Department of Justice, Protection of Critical Infrastructure Report, 2005).

• Biesterfeld and Meloy (2008) suggest that the target’s behaviour influences and moulds the perpetrators’ plan to attack them.

In addition to these general themes, Biesterfeld and Meloy (2008) have also identified six key research findings relating to terrorist political assassinations. First, among the many different motivations for assassinating a public figure is the desire to “intentionally kill a public figure to advance a particular political, religious, or social belief” (p.160). Second, while the attacks may be planned rationally, and will achieve the perpetrator’s aims (according to the perpetrator’s desires), the attack will rarely achieve the ‘grand’ aims: e.g. to change history, alter a country’s belief system, or to change world events. Third, and perhaps most obviously, the perpetrator of these attacks is either an individual working alone, or is part of a group. Often, where the perpetrator has ‘adopted’ a group which they identify with, the other group members are wary because of the individual’s weirdness, or “behavioural oddities or extremism” (p.160). The fourth finding highlighted by Biesterfeld and Meloy (2008), in common with other political assassination research (e.g. Fein and Vossekuil, 1998), is that the perpetrators of these terrorist political assassinations tend to be instrumental rather than expressive. These attacks tend to involve weeks, months, or even years of planning, rather than being spontaneous, spur of the moment acts. The penultimate finding argues that even where an assassin has a psychiatric diagnosis, their particular political or religious motivations should not be ignored. Biesterfeld and Meloy (2008) suggest that in actual fact delusions “may bring a resolve to the ideology that would not exist otherwise” (p.160). Finally, away from group affiliations and particular motivations, the focus of the security services should be on gaining “knowledge of the research, preparation, and planning...
on the “pathway to violence” (Calhoun and Weston, 2003) before there is a breach and attack” (p. 160).

Other research, which has taken a broader approach, has looked at individuals who pose a risk to public figures (Calhoun and Weston, 2008). They suggest that there are two groups of individuals, each posing a different type of threat. First are what Calhoun and Weston refer to as ‘Hunters’. These make up a very small percentage of those who may pose a risk. They target public figures because they believe that by killing or injuring their target, they will achieve their goal (no matter how irrational or unrealistic that may be). They use lethal violence to “avenge some personal injustice” (p. 105). Examples of Hunters are Mark Chapman, John Lennon’s killer, and John Hinckley Jr, who tried to kill President Ronald Reagan. Chapman’s motivation stemmed from his belief that Lennon was a “phony” (p. 105), who did not deserve the fame that he had achieved. In the case of Hinckley, the motivation arose from his desire to get the attention of Jodie Foster, and to build a link with her (Clarke, 1990). As a group, Hunters focus their attentions on public figures, as a way to escape their own ordinary lives. Calhoun and Weston (2008) suggest that there are a series of stages individuals go through to become Hunters:

1. They start to build animosity towards their target
2. They decide that violence is the best, and perhaps only, way to relieve their grievance
3. They begin to research and plan the attack
4. Preparations are made for the attack
5. The target’s security is infringed
6. The attack takes place (Calhoun and Weston, 2008, p. 105).

Calhoun and Weston state that the Hunter moves through these stages in a linear fashion, but they can vacillate between the steps, moving back and forth between them on their way towards the final, violent, act. The key feature of the proposed pathway is that the Hunter must go through all of the stages in order to fulfil their intended violence.

Howlers differ from Hunters in that their purpose is to induce fear, to disturb their target, or to get attention, rather than to commit violence. Rather than attacking their
target, Howlers make (verbal or written) threats, which are never followed through. Howlers often indulge in repeated communications, and their target may find them more of an irritant than a genuine threat. This group, Calhoun and Weston suggest, will not follow the Hunters’ pathway, but instead are satisfied just with repeated and inappropriate contact. In nearly all cases the Howler has no personal connection with their target. They are simply looking for attention, or a reaction from their target. In fact, the ‘impersonal’ Howlers would rather keep their target at a distance, and use emails, letters, or telephone calls to do this. They have no need to get close to their target, because they only want to cause fear, or to get attention.

Looking at the two groups together, it is their behaviours which are fundamentally different. Calhoun and Weston (2008) suggest that it is these behaviours which provide the best indicators of whether or not an individual will become violent. Calhoun and Weston (2006) suggest that by looking at which of the two groups an individual falls into, it is possible to identify, assess, and manage individuals who may be threateners or attackers. Because of the increased risk posed by Hunters, compared to Howlers, research tends to focus on the former group. The Hunters’ focus on public figures is both more costly and more disruptive than the threat posed by Howlers. The research that has been conducted on this group has tended to focus on “a small minority of problem individuals” (p.107), suggesting that there may be difficulties in generalising research findings to a broader population. However, it does offer the advantage that this group of studies (known as the Exceptional Case Study) focuses solely on attackers, rather than creating a heterogeneous group of attackers, threateners, and approacherers.

Clearly there is a great deal of research on political assassins and threateners based in the US. However, assassination is an international phenomenon, and therefore it seems wise to look at research from other geographic locations.

7.3.1 Weaknesses of Post-1998 US research

Despite the differences between the pre-1998 and post-1998 research, they do share a number of weaknesses. As in section 7.2.1, this research restricts its sample to US citizens attacked in the US, resulting in a rather narrow selection of cases. In
addition, the research incorporates cases of assassination attacks, and assassination attempts. There is still no control group to provide a baseline with which to compare the findings relating to the assassins. In terms of the outcomes of the research, some of the post-1998 research is still focused on creating typologies of offenders, as in the case of the Hunters and Howlers identified by Calhoun and Weston (2006).

7.3.2 *Strengths of Post-1998 US research*

However, the post-1998 research does offer some improvements on the earlier research. First, Fein and Vossekuil (1998) offer far more detail on the data sources used, using objective data drawn from law enforcement case files. The inclusion criteria also tend to be clearer than the pre-1998 research. In addition, they used a broader sample than earlier research, moving beyond just attacks on US presidents and politicians, to attacks on prominent public figures, including judges, families of politicians, and so on. The use of this broader sample reflects an understanding that political assassinations can and are targeted at a wider range of people than just politicians. Fein and Vossekuil (1998) in particular go further than creating just psychological profiles of the assassins, but examine the processes they go through in planning attacks, and the motivations behind these attacks (rather than assuming that the assassin is motivated by mental illness).

Fein and Vossekuil (1998) drew on publicly available sources, such as newspapers, which were used in conjunction with other data sources. James et al. (2007) also used news sources to identify cases, and gather data for analysis. Wilson et al. (2010) used data from broadsheet newspapers, and the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) in an analysis of ETA’s use of bombings and assassinations. Away from the field of political assassinations, similar methodologies have been used. For example Wilson (2000) used descriptive accounts of hostage-taking incidents to analyse both the behaviours of the hostage-takers and others involved in the incidents, taken from both the Mickolus series of books, and supplemented by news sources (see below for more detail). Data drawn from such sources provides descriptive, easily accessible accounts of events, such as hostage-taking incidents or political assassinations, where it may otherwise be difficult to gather data.
7.4 EUROPEAN RESEARCH

In Europe, research on political assassinations takes a broader view of likely targets, i.e. there is less focus on the head of state alone, and more focus on politicians in general, and the Royal Families. As Hoffman (2009) says, “literally all empirical studies on stalking and unusual contact behaviours toward public figures outside of Europe were conducted in the USA” (p.294). This section will therefore discuss European based research.

James et al. (2007) examined the role of mental illness in attacks on European politicians, between 1990 and 2004. With no previously published research on the attackers or killers of European politicians, the intention of the research was to examine attacks on politicians committed by individuals rather than terrorists. A total of 24 cases were identified using the author’s contacts, and publicly available sources, with information collected from publicly available secondary sources, court records, and psychiatric assessments of the offenders (in 12 of the 24 cases, not conducted by the authors). Of the 24 attacks selected for the sample, James et al. (2007) found that in 13 cases there was evidence of mental disorder, with 8 cases of definite schizophrenia. In two cases a diagnosis of “paranoid disorders of uncertain aetiology” (p.339) was made, two cases were diagnosed as having a personality disorder (borderline or obsessive), and one was diagnosed as suffering from a depressive disorder. They also found evidence to suggest that in three of the 24 cases, the attacker would have been happy to attack another politician “of similar status” (p.339) as their victim was selected by chance. In one further case, reports suggest that the attack was spontaneous and impulsive, with the “choice of victim...more or less accidental” (p.339). In terms of the motivations of the attacks, James et al. (2007) found that there were two cases where the motivation was unclear, nine where the motivation was political, and 13 where the motivation was personal. The political attacks were driven by an understandable, if extreme, belief system. Those pursuing a personal agenda were sometimes, although not always, delusional, in an obsessive and irrational sense, “a phenomenon referred to as fixation” (p.339). These personally motivated cases were more likely to result in either the target’s death, or serious injury. The perpetrators were more likely to be
loners, it is more likely that they are psychotic and/or delusional at the time of the
attack, and more likely that they will have displayed warning behaviours prior to the
attack. In contrast to the work of the ECSP (see 7.2) there were no cases where the
perpetrator was in love with the target, or where they were motivated by a desire to
develop a personal relationship with the target. James et al. (2007) suggest that this
may be because the US sample includes celebrities, while the European sample does
not.

There are a number of other differences between the findings of James et al. (2007)
and the findings of the ECSP. While James et al. (2007) agree with the ECSP finding
that many attacks on public figures are preventable, they suggest different risk
management strategies to achieve this, arguing that cases should be split into two
groups: the mentally disordered, and the politically motivated. The mentally
disordered group is responsible for the majority of the fatal and serious wounding
attacks, and tend to display warning behaviours. These are not subtle, nor are they
likely to be missed so long as someone is aware of them, and paying attention to their
existence. Conversely, the politically motivated cases give little, if any, warning prior
of an attack. In order to defend against these individuals, James et al. (2007) suggest
that targets should employ personal protection, in particular during public events,
where the perpetrator is provided with (and may take) an opportunity to mount an
attack.

Also contrasting Fein and Vossekuij’s (1998) assertion that mental illness is not an
issue in attacks or attempts on US prominent figures, James, Mullen, Pathé, Meloy,
Farnham, Preston and Darnley (2008) found that attackers of the British Royal
Family are often mentally ill. Of the sample of 23 attacks, in 11 of these the
perpetrator was experiencing delusions or hallucinations at the time of the incident,
and a further four had a history of mental disorder, although there was no evidence of
psychosis at the time of the attack. Despite this, they did find that seven of the
attackers were motivated by political issues. A further four were driven by anger,
using the attack as a way to express their anger and resentment towards the world,
generally, and the royal family specifically. Three cases were classified as “frustrated
petitioners” (p.64), and two cases were motivated by the individuals’ belief that they
were heirs to the throne who were trying to make a claim to the throne. A further three were considered to have “bizarre” motivations (p.65), and in four cases the motivation could not be categorised. In terms of prior warning behaviours, ten of the 23 had displayed these (for example through threatening letters, “communications with demands linked to warnings” (p.64), or telling others of their plans to attack a royal). In addition, nine of the 23 had also displayed prior stalking behaviours.

In addition, attackers of other public figures are said to often be “delusionally driven” (p.522), for example the assassination of Spencer Perceval in 1812, and the attack on Edward Drummond, private secretary to the Prime Minister in 1843. Research by James et al. (2007, 2008) shows that the main risk of harm to public figures comes from lone individuals, most of whom were mentally ill, and “driven by highly personal causes or quests for ‘justice’” (p.523). Also contrasting US findings, James et al. (2007, 2008) found that warning behaviours are very important. These take the form of threatening letters sent to politicians, deluded letters to prominent figures, frivolous law suits against governments, adverts in newspapers, posters, leaflets, and discussions with friends. Fixated individuals often engaged in these repeatedly over months, or even years.

In the UK, the Fixed Threat Assessment Centre (FTAC) was established as a joint venture between the police and the National Health Service, created to manage and assess lone individuals with “intense pathological fixations” (James, Kerrigan, Forfar, Farnham and Preston, 2010, p.521). While there already exist established systems to deal with terrorist and criminal threats, there are no such systems for dealing with “disturbed members of the general public” (James et al. 2010, p.522). Based on this, James and colleagues were able to build on their previous work (2007, 2008).

The purpose of the 2010 study is to examine characteristics of 100 individuals who are considered to pose a “moderate or high concern” (p.521). James et al. (2010) differentiate between risk and concern, with concern relating to the current context. For example, a high risk individual in a high security facility is of low concern. Cases deemed to be of moderate concern are those in which the individual made
threats to a public figure, or someone close to them, and who have exhibited unusual interest, and a willingness to or capability to travel. Those of high concern show “behaviours which indicated a likelihood of adverse consequences and a capacity and intent to cause such consequences” (p.256). The organisation of the perpetrator was considered, with organised individuals seeming “unremarkable in their general functioning and who are able to make plans and put them into effect” (p.528), with the research showing that 40% of these fixated individuals could be considered organised. James et al. (2010) state that the mentally ill can be considered organised where their “structured delusional systems” (p.528) mean that they can look and function ‘normally’ on the surface. The most common types of behaviours preceding referral to the FTAC were “approaches to iconic sites or prominent individuals” (p.528), with 66% of the sample displaying this. A further 19% were found to have “inappropriate communications” (p.528), and 15% made both inappropriate approaches, and inappropriate communications. The subject of the fixation in 37% of cases was a member of the Royal Family, in 27% of cases the subject was a specific politician, and in 4% of cases the individual was fixated on both a Royal Family member and a politician. A further 32% were fixated on a building, most often those occupied by individuals in power (e.g. Buckingham Palace, Palace of Westminster).

Regarding the mental illness of the fixated person, the majority (61%) were diagnosed schizophrenic. Other diagnoses were personality disorders (narcissistic or paranoid), unspecified paranoid psychosis, delusional disorder, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, and depression. In total, 90% suffered from some form of mental illness, 86% of which were psychotic, with James et al. (2010) calling this a “notably high proportion” (p.528).

In contrast to the US based work of Fein and Vossekuil (1998), James et al. (2010) suggest that the behaviours of this fixated group are not easily predictable, do not have simple understandable motivations, and “do not fit easily into standard policing mechanisms for assessing and managing threat (Mullen, James, Meloy, Pathé, Farnham, Preston et al., 2009)” (p.522). They also argue that the existence of warning behaviours provide “evidence of their fixations and of the threat which they went on to constitute” (p.523). James et al. (2010) go on to conclude that “the attacks
were not predictable, but were potentially preventable, had a system been in place to assess warning behaviours” (p.523).

As has been shown, there is a lot of disagreement between political assassination research in the US and Europe. James (2010) provides a discussion of the differences in the findings of European research and the ECSP. Although Fein and Vossekui (1998, 1999) suggest that mental illness is an unimportant feature of political assassinations, James (2010) points out that in actual fact, the presence of mental illness is far higher in their sample than in the general population, and so should not be dismissed so easily. A psychiatric history was present in 61% of cases, 43% of cases had a history of delusional ideas, and 10% had a history of violent command hallucinations. In addition, Fein and Vossekui report that threats are unimportant, but James (2010) point out that in 77% of the ECSP cases there was “a history of verbal or written communication about the target and that 63% had a history of indirect or conditional threats about or to the target” (p.243). Thus, James (2010) argues that while mental illness may not be the important aspect of political assassinations believed by older research, where the individual is driven by their mental illness, it is nevertheless a feature that should not be ignored. In addition, they suggest that although it appears to be the accepted wisdom that threateners do not become attackers, with it even suggested that threats are ‘protective’, attackers do indeed communicate with their target prior to attacks, and again should not be discarded as unimportant.

7.4.1 Weaknesses of European research

Again, this research takes a different approach to that discussed previously (pre- and post-1998). However, with its focus on European targets, it is still restricted to one geographical region and one population. Nevertheless, it is an important step in extending research beyond the US. Similar to other research the studies discussed here tend to include a mixed sample of completed and attempted assassinations, with the associated problems, and again there is no comparison to a control group. Finally, and also in common with US-based research, the European research presented here omits any consideration of the behaviours of the victim, and how they interact with the assassin’s actions.
### 7.4.2 Strengths of European research

However, there are a number of positives to this research. As mentioned above, it does broaden the research base by considering attacks outside of the US, and outside of US victims. Collectively, the European research studies a broader sample, including politicians and members of the royal family. Data sources are clearly explained, and include both case file data and publicly available resources. A variety of sources were used: “existing scholarly accounts” (p.60), court records, government papers, “the archives of lunatic asylums” (p.60), newspapers, “published and unpublished letters of politicians and royal family members” (p.60), “various editions of State Trials and the Newgate Calendar” (p.60). Thus, although they did not restrict themselves to case studies, there were elements included in the James et al. (2008) study, for example, they offered a classification of the assassins’ motivations, splitting them into six categories: 1) political, 2) “frustrated petitioners” (p.64), 3) “pretenders to the throne advancing their claims” (p.64), 4) “resentful, expressing their rage at the world in general and royalty in particular” (p.64), 5) “the bizarre” (p.65), and 6) those whose motivations were unclassifiable. In addition, the paper looked at the presence of psychosis and psychiatric disorders in the assassins, based on records from the time. Thus more recent research has moved away from the case-study based profiles, instead utilising other sources of data. James et al. (2008) looked at attacks on the British Royal Family (1778-1994, n = 23), but went beyond just looking at case studies of the assassin. They also considered:

- “The target and the harm inflicted.
- Where and how the attacks occurred.
- The nature of prior warnings or stalking behaviours, if any.
- The attacker’s motivation
- The attacker’s psychiatric history and mental state at the time.
- The outcome for the attacker.” (p.60).

### 7.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an overview of the research available examining political assassinations. Early research in the US attempted to create profiles and typologies of
the perpetrators of political assassins. These were not a great success, with problems both in the methodology used and the practical applicability of the findings.

In 1998 the Exceptional Case Study Project findings were published, suggesting that previous research was incorrect, and that actually there was no ‘profile’ of an assassin. In addition, they suggested that the presence of mental illness and prior threats should not be of huge concern.

However, in the past few years, research on European political assassination incidents has been published, based on incidents involving European politicians and Royal Families. This research found a number of discrepancies between it and the findings of the ECSP, namely that mental illness is indeed a feature, and that ‘warning behaviours’ are important. However, they exclude ‘terrorist’ assassinations, which may affect this finding.

Thus there are conflicting findings from political assassination research.

Nevertheless there is some consensus in the newer research. First, projects should not be based on those who have stalked prominent individuals, but instead should draw information from actual attacks or attempted attacks. Second, there should be less focus on the internal motivations of the offender, and more on their observable behaviours. Finally, it appears that research has tended to focus on specific regions, and it may be useful to examine attacks worldwide, to gain larger samples and a broader range of attacks.

The next stage is to examine how psychology may underlie such research, and the ways in which psychology can contribute to an understanding of political assassination incidents.
8. Theoretical Perspectives

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers how psychology can be used to inform research into political assassinations. As chapter 7 has shown, much of the research on political assassinations has drawn on stalking research. However, although this may be valid in that stalkers do sometimes turn to murder, not all stalkers do. Rather than viewing political assassinations as a form of stalking which results in death, it may be more useful to view them as a form of homicide which in some cases has been preceded by stalking. As chapter 4 showed, political assassination events share similarities with homicide events. Therefore, the first section of this chapter will discuss possible contributions from homicide research. The second section will look more broadly, with a consideration of how rational choice theory, reasoned action theory, and situational crime prevention theory may assist understanding of political assassination incidents. Finally, script theory will be discussed.

8.2 HOMICIDE RESEARCH

As shown in chapter 7, profiling of political assassination offenders and offences is widespread. Similarly, in the field of homicide there is a large body of research looking at the profile of both homicide offenders and offences. Blackburn (1995) has suggested that the basis of a theory of crime could lie in the development of typologies which take into account the variations in offenders and their offending behaviour. Reminiscent of profiles and typologies of political assassination perpetrators, typologies of homicide offenders focus on their personality traits and characteristics, drawing on information both from observable features of the crime, and assumptions made about the offenders' internal psychology. On the other hand, typologies of the offence focus on the behaviours shown in the offence itself, drawing information from the crime scene (Santilla, Junkkila and Sandnabba, 2005) rather than looking at the offender, and making assumptions about his or her internal
characteristics. In order that such offender and offence typologies are of a good standard, Canter, Alison, Alison and Wentink (2004) argue that there are two key assumptions which must be met. First, the criteria used to define the different categories must “consistently co-occur” (p.301) and second, there should be minimal overlap of the criteria that differentiate between the two types.

A prominent and influential example of a typology of the homicide offender is the Organised/Disorganised dichotomy devised by the FBI. As the name suggests, this is designed to define offenders either as organised or disorganised (Ressler, Burgess, Douglas, Hartman and D’Agostino, 1986). Based on data gathered during interviews with 36 serial homicide offenders, the classification scheme was designed to provide assistance to investigators, and has been used by police forces internationally (Canter et al., 2004). The behaviours evident at the crime scene (e.g. a weapon was found at the crime scene, or brought by the offender) are used to draw inferences about the offender, to provide law enforcement agencies with information about the personality characteristics of the offender. Offenders were assigned to one of the two categories on the basis of key personality and demographic characteristics. According to Ressler et al. (1986) in homicides committed by ‘organised’ offenders, there is evidence of careful planning of the offences, and of the offender displaying restraint in their crimes. Conversely, ‘disorganised’ offenders are erratic and impulsive in their offending, with little evidence of any planning behaviours (Canter et al., 2004). Later, a third category (the ‘mixed’ category) was added to the dichotomy, designed to account for offenders who do not easily fit into either of the initial two categories (Douglas, Burgess, Burgess and Ressler, 1992). However, this addition of a third category undermines the validity of the classification: as Canter et al. (2004) state, good typologies should have minimal overlap between the categories, and the introduction of a third ‘mixed’ category suggests that the original two categories do not appropriately account for differences in offender behaviours. As Canter et al. (2004) highlight, if many homicide cases are classified as ‘mixed’, then the basic Organised/Disorganised dichotomy is unlikely to withstand “systematic scrutiny” (Canter et al., 2004, p.294). In addition, Canter et al. (2004) highlight that there is a lack of information regarding the underlying concepts and theories of the Organised/Disorganised model. As discussed in chapter 2, a crucial part of research
and theory creation is a clear explanation of the concepts which underlie the phenomenon under examination, and where this is missing the proposed model is unlikely to stand up to rigorous testing. Further, Salfati and Canter (1999) identify issues with the sampling technique used by Ressler, Burgess and Douglas (1988). Offenders volunteered to be interviewed about their crimes, and it is suggested that these individuals may represent the more extrovert offenders, therefore risking introducing bias into the findings, and limiting generalisations that could be drawn.

Others have created their own typologies of offenders. Dietz (1985) examined the (presumed) psychopathology of serial homicide offenders, which the killing was believed to be based on. He distinguished between five types of homicide offenders: the psychopathic sexual sadists, the crime spree killers, the organised crime killers, the psychotics, and the custodial poisoners. Holmes and DeBurger (1988) created a classification of serial homicide offenders, consisting of six categories, based on 14 features they identified as key to classifying serial homicide offenders. Canter et al. (2004) draw attention to an interesting feature of this typology: that each category has exactly seven features. They argue that the supposedly distinct categories laid out by Holmes and DeBurger (1988) have considerable overlap in the characteristics assigned to each group. On the basis of this, Canter et al. (2004) suggest that rather than presenting a new scale by which to categories homicide offenders, Holmes and DeBurger merely presented the Organised/Disorganised dichotomy as a scale, assigning labels to various places along the scale. Subsequently, Canter et al. (2004) propose that Holmes and DeBurger’s typology could be reinterpreted as a continuum running from “disorganised and spontaneous to non-random and dispersed” (p.298).

Another two group classification was suggested by Jenkins (1988) who defined the ‘Predictable’ type offender and the ‘Respectable’ type offender. Assignment to each category was largely on the basis of the offenders’ prior violent criminal behaviours, and whether or not they were habitual alcohol abusers. However, Canter et al. (2004) suggested that this classification merely drew attention to features of cases that Jenkins believed to be important, rather than identifying any actual differences between homicide cases.
As mentioned previously, as well as the typologies of offender, it is also possible to create typologies of offences. For example, Canter and Heritage (1990) looked at offender behaviour in stranger rape, finding that certain groupings of behaviours consistently co-occur. The behaviours observed in the crime scenes showed that there were five different ways in which the offender interacted with the victim. From these, they created a three-way model, placing the Victim as Object, Vehicle, and Person. This model demonstrated that in addition to there being a level of consistency in an individual's behaviour at crime scenes, it is also possible to coherently differentiate between patterns of crime scene behaviours, and then reliably associate these with offender characteristics. However, there are difficulties in typologies of offence, as well as those of offender. Salfati and Canter (1999) examined stranger murders, creating a classification of crime scenes, and then linking this to offender characteristics. However, they use police case files as a data source, which, as they acknowledge, were not collected with the intention of use in research and so may contain errors, and 'noise' (although this concept is not defined by the authors). In addition, although Salfati and Canter’s (1999) study is based on 82 offences, it actually draws on just 30 crime scenes, which is similar to the number of interviews Ressler et al. (1986) conducted for the Organised/Disorganised dichotomy, which was criticised by Salfati and Canter (1999) for its low sample size.

In addition, variables fall between the regions defined by Salfati and Canter (1999), and were then allocated to an ‘appropriate’ region by the researchers based on their interpretation of it. For example, the variable describing the presence of wounding of the face was close to the boundaries for all three regions. Salfati and Canter (1999) argue that because it occurred in 40% of cases in the sample it is of low importance in distinguishing between the three themes, and suggest it may be relevant to all of them. Nevertheless, they allocate it to the ‘Expressive (Impulsive)’ region as it is argued to reflect findings of clinical work in the area, with the face (perhaps unsurprisingly) representing the victim. Having established these themes on the basis of crime scene evidence, Salfati and Canter (1999) attempt to draw links between these and the offenders. There appear to be a discrepancy in this, as the ‘Instrumental (Opportunistic)’ crime scene shows sexual offending behaviours to have occurred, but the corresponding offender has no background of sexual offending. Conversely
the ‘Expressive (Impulsive)’ offender does have a background of sexual offending even though these crimes are said to have no sexual content. In addition, the ‘Instrumental (Cognitive)’ offender is said to be distinguished by a history of prison sentences, or being in the armed forces, which could be said of many offenders and non-offenders.

Beyond the offence-based research in homicide research, offence-based research has also been successfully used in the field of terrorism research. Wilson (2000) examined offence behaviours in hostage-taking incidents. Three types of hostage-taking incident were studied; aerial hijack, barricade siege, and kidnap. Each was analysed separately because of the differences on a number of important dimensions, with the focus on the behaviours of both the hostage takers and the others involved in the incidents (e.g. hostages). Wilson found that there are clear patterns of behaviour in terrorist hostage taking, with structures involving interactions with large numbers of other people underlying the behaviour of hostage-taking groups. Her analysis of aerial hijack does suggest that there are behaviours present in hostage-taking which reflect the level of organisation within the incident.

Thus there are a range of areas of psychology where typologies have been developed. Although typologies of offenders have proved to be flawed in some ways, typologies of offences may be more promising. Basing typologies on objective, observable features of the offence itself appears to be a more reliable way of categorising crime than trying to draw inferences on the internal workings of offenders from their behaviours.

8.3 RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

In addition to drawing on homicide research, the field of rational choice theory (RCT) also offers a way of understanding offender behaviour. RCT comes from the perspective that, in the study of human behaviour, all human action is presumed to be rational, be it offence-related or not (Cornish, 1993). Thus, rather than crime being a random act, it comes about as a result of the relationship between an individual and
their environment (Guerette, Stenius and McGloin, 2005), with offenders basing their
decision to commit a particular crime on the combination of perceived costs and
benefits of committing that crime in a particular place and time (Clarke and Cornish,
1985, Cornish and Clarke, 1986). RCT argues that by studying the costs and benefits
of committing crime, researchers are better able to understand criminal behaviour
(DeHaan and Vos, 2003).

The decision by the offender to commit a crime is based on a cost-benefit analysis of
the (potential) criminal act, and the non-criminal alternative (Blackburn, 1995). The
benefits involved vary depending on the individual, but may be pecuniary (i.e.
money or goods) or non-pecuniary (i.e. enjoyment, satisfaction) or a combination of
the two (Blackburn, 1995). The costs involved include the resources required for the
offence, the fact that the offender may not enjoy committing the offence, the fact that
by choosing to act unlawfully the offender is closing off lawful avenues, and the
consequences of being caught, both in material terms and social terms. The
likelihood of, and likely severity of punishment, is also a key cost in the decision to
offend. The overall calculation of these benefits and costs is influenced by individual
differences, for example the offenders' attitude to risk. As economists tend to assume
that offenders who make decisions tend to avoid risk (Blackburn, 1995), they argue
that in any situation where the costs outweigh the benefits, no criminal action will be
taken (Blackburn, 1995).

However, in practice the cost-benefit analysis is not quite so simple. The calculations
may not appear rational or methodical to an outside observer, but according to the
rational choice perspective even impulsive and violent crimes are guided by rational
decision making (Blackburn, 1995). Also, the rational decision making process is
sometimes constrained by time, or limited by the information available, or the effort
required from the offender themselves. Carroll (1978) found that both offenders and
non-offenders evaluate opportunities for crime on just one dimension. The
suggestion here is that some offenders will assess the feasibility of their (potential)
offence but will not consider all possible costs and benefits, i.e. they may either
ignore, or simply not consider, some of the costs and benefits of the offence. Carroll
(1978) suggests that offenders' process of decision making may well be sequential,
meaning that decisions about different parts of the crime may be assessed at varying times throughout their criminal career. For example, Carroll and Weaver (1986) looked at decision making in experienced shoplifters, finding that while they recognised many of the aspects involved in the opportunities for crime they were presented with, when it came to the point of actually making a decision, only a few aspects were assessed by the offenders. Interestingly, research has shown that offenders tend to have cognitive deficits, and in particular experience difficulties with planning. Harper, Man, Taylor and Niven (2004) suggest that of offenders who are serving custodial sentences, up to 59% have thinking and behaviour difficulties, and 50% of those serving community sentences experience such difficulties. This is born out by the fact that in the UK, offenders attend ‘offending behaviour programs’, including those known as Enhanced Thinking Skills and Think First, which is intended to develop better thinking skills in offenders, and teach them to think before they act (offend). Despite these difficulties, and although offenders may not consider all the possible costs and benefits to their offending, it is argued that all criminals, even violent or sexual offenders, will show a large amount of rationality (Rossmo, 2000).

Where offenders do conduct a cost-benefit analysis, it is argued that there are individual differences in the weighting afforded to the various costs and benefits that the offender gives consideration to. Carroll (1978) found that the strongest influence in decision-making for both offenders and non-offenders was the potential for monetary gain, being twice as important as the threat of penalties. The context and situation the offender experiences are also strong influences on offender decision making, for example the influence of peers or (echoing Carroll, 1978) their own material need (Guerette et al., 2005). Within the rational choice perspective, situational features such as the nature of the crime scene, or characteristics of the victim, should be carefully considered. This is especially the case when looking at the way situational features influence offender decision making. In this way it is possible to examine the varying person-situation interactions which lead to distinctive differences in offending. For example RCT suggests that individuals are more likely to offend when their target is “more accessible, vulnerable and attractive” (Nagin and Paternoster, 1993, p.478). Supporting this, Birbeck and
LaFree (1993) also suggest that accessibility, in terms of ease of access to the target (Scarr, 1973, Brantingham and Brantingham, 1975, Molumby, 1976) is an important factor in the decision to offend (see section 8.3 for more detail). They also suggest that a further key consideration is the likelihood that the offender will be seen or apprehended (Bennett and Wright, 1984, Walsh, 1986). Finally, echoing previous work, the expected reward from the crime is an important consideration (Hough, 1987). Thus, in examining political assassinations it is important to consider not only the offender, but also the accessibility and vulnerability of the target of assassin, in terms of the location in which they are targeted.

The deterrence hypothesis is a further key aspect of the rational choice perspective. Deterrence describes any act which is designed to make a criminal act harder, or to stop it altogether (Blackburn, 1995). In the context of criminal behaviour, deterrence is the process by which individuals do not commit certain criminal behaviours because of their fear of suffering some externally-located consequence, which is generally a negative consequence (Blackburn, 1995). In real terms, when the expected or calculated costs of a deviant act are greater than the benefits (which are subjective rather than objective), the result is deterrence (Blackburn, 1995). More recent papers on the deterrence hypothesis view it as a variable process, affecting individuals and their behaviour differently. It is suggested that the deterrence effect may be more effective in instrumental crimes, for example burglary or tax evasion, as these are more focused on material gains. Expressive crimes are considered to be more motivated by emotions, and so are considered to be less influenced by deterrence (Blackburn, 1995). However, research examining incarcerated offenders found only a small amount of support for the deterrence effect, with the suggestion that when looking at experienced offenders, the potential benefits do outweigh the potential cost (Bridges and Stone, 1986).

Enders and Sandler (2006) consider Rational Choice Theory in the context of terrorism. They argue that there are two essential components for rational behaviour: first, the terrorist must have a clearly defined set of choices or options, which can be placed by the terrorist in order of preference. Second, the person must select the most preferred out of the choices, when given an option. However, it is unimportant why
they prefer one option over another, and these can change over time. This rational choice perspective of terrorism argues that terrorists have limited resources, and they will use these in ways that will achieve the best outcomes and achieve the most for them. Enders and Sandler (2006) identify “basic commodities” (p.115) (for example “media attention, political instability, popular support for their cause, and the creation of an atmosphere of fear and intimidation” (p.115)), which terrorist groups ‘consume’ in order to achieve a shared political goal. There are a number of different strategies that can be used to achieve these, both terrorist and non-terrorists, which may be violent or non-violent. Some groups, for example the IRA, have used both terrorist and non-terrorist means (via their political arm, Sinn Fein) (Enders and Sandler, 2006).

Others have examined the presence of planning in criminal behaviour. Amongst one sample of convicted burglars, evidence of planning was found in 75% of cases (Repetto, 1974). In another study looking at incarcerated armed robbers, Petersilia, Greenwood and Lavin (1978), found evidence of detailed planning in 25% of cases. In 50% of cases some aspects of the crime were planned, while in the remaining 25% of cases there was no evidence of any planning at all. In a study of British armed robbers, 52% were found to have planned their attack (Walsh, 1986). While there is variation in the rates and level of planning in these studies, this can be explained by differences in aspects such as sampling, the different crimes, definitions of planning, and data collection methods. Nevertheless, this collection of studies does show evidence of planning in crime behaviours at different levels.

Rational choice theory has come under criticism, much of which comes from research into street crime. For example, Conklin (1972) found that the majority of robberies, including street robberies, are opportunistic rather than premeditated. Silberman (1978) supported this, showing that individuals who commit street robberies are “impulsive, chaotic youngsters who seldom prepare their crimes and who are not capable of advanced planning” (p.39). Shover & Honaker (1992) found that most street robbers, and some muggers, rarely complete a cost/benefit analysis, with the majority not actually having the skills to do so. More recently, DeHaan & Vos (2003) looked at street robbery in terms of the rational choice perspective, and
also included impulsivity, moral ambiguity and expressivity, to see if they would fit with the rational choice perspective. Their findings did not support the rational choice perspective, and they suggested that the “spontaneous and moral aspects of criminal behaviour” cannot be understood if crime is viewed as a rational choice. Thus, although rational choice theory appears to have a lot to offer, it may not be relevant to all crimes or all offenders. However, as previous research into political assassinations has found evidence of planning (e.g. Fein and Vossekul, 1998, see chapter 7), it is suggested that these crimes are, at least in part, pre-planned, and the result of rational decision making. Of course, political assassinations may be spontaneous and unplanned in some cases, but the existing evidence suggests that these are not the majority of cases, and as such it would seem that RCT may be a useful tool in furthering the understanding of political assassinations.

8.4 ROUTINE ACTIVITY THEORY

Related to Rational Choice Theory is Routine Activities Theory (RAT). RAT views crime in terms of the physical and temporal location of the people and property involved in crime (Cohen and Felson, 1979, Felson, 1986). The term ‘routine activities’ refers to those activities through which people satisfy their basic needs, for example grocery shopping, raising children, and leisure pursuits. These routine activities determine where people are, when, and what they are doing, therefore determining the location and vulnerability of “personal and property targets” (Blackburn, 1995, p.104). RAT is designed to explain crimes where there is direct physical contact between offender and victim, and in RAT for such a crime to occur three things must come together. There must be a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian (Sherman, Gartin and Buerger, 1989). When these three aspects occur at the same place, spatially and temporally, the likelihood of a direct-contact crime occurring is, according to RAT, greatly increased (Messner and Tardiff, 1985). The probability of these three aspects co-occurring is non-random, but instead is dependent on the “structure of everyday interactions” (Messner and Tardiff, 1985, p.242) and also on the idea that legal and illegal activities are related to one another, and therefore dependent on one another.
According to RAT, illegal acts 'feed on' legal acts. The target and guardian aspects of RAT are thought to be especially dependent on patterns of routine activities, and therefore are considered to be very influential on levels of crime. Cohen and Felson (1979) found that changes in routine activities (reflected by things such as the number of working married women, people living alone, out of town travel, size and weight of consumer items) were significant predictors of changes in the patterns of both personal and property crime in the US.

Birbeck and LaFree (1993) examine two aspects of the opportunity theory aspect of RAT, suggesting that both the decisions made by offenders regarding the situation of the attack, and the behaviours of the victim, should be considered in looking at crime. The first is called 'situational selection', and describes the way in which situations are assessed as being suitable for crime. The assessments may be fast or slow, and may occur before the decision is made to commit a crime (thus involving an assessment of just one situation), or after the decision to commit crime (thus involving the comparison of a number of possible situations in looking for the best one). An important aspect of situational selection is related to planning. As discussed previously (section 8.2), there is mixed evidence regarding the planning behaviours of offenders, with little consensus on whether they plan, and to what extent they plan. In addition, the actual concepts of planning and situational selection differ. Premeditation is an essential part of planning: planning implies premeditation. However, not all situation selection is premeditated. Also, situational selection is just one part of planning, as planning includes other concepts, such as organisation of multiple group members. Planning involves a series of steps which must be considered, whereas (as mentioned above) situational selection can be spontaneous and casual. Birbeck and LaFree (1993) cite research suggesting that situational selection is likely to be more thorough when the offender(s) are older (Reppetto, 1974), less thorough in impulsive offenders (Letkemann, 1973), and faster amongst experienced offenders (Carroll and Weaver, 1986).

The behaviours of the victim are considered as part of 'theories of victimisation', and these reflect the idea that the victim of crime contributes to their own victimisation, as seen in RAT. Victimisation comes about as a the function of an interaction
between the potential victim, and the motivated offender, both of which are risk factors for crime. These echo aspects of RCT, finding that the most commonly discussed risk factors are the exposure of the victim, in terms of the physical accessibility of the target to the offender; the guardianship available, i.e. the protection afforded the potential target by either people (bodyguards) or objects (protection of a building); and the attractiveness of the target to the offender, in either a material sense or a symbolic sense (Cohen, Kluegel and Land, 1981). RAT argues that potential targets are more likely to become victims of crime when they are more attractive to motivated offenders, less well guarded, and more often exposed to motivated offenders. Thus in terms of political assassinations according to RAT individuals are more likely to be victimised when they represent something important to the offender, when they are not guarded (by an individual or by their physical location), and when they are more accessible (in a location to which the assassin can gain access).

8.5 SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

Also related to Rational Choice Theory and Routine Activities Theory are Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) theories. These are a derivative of rational choice models and routine activity theories, and are influenced by the growing attention afforded to the victims of crimes (Young and Matthews, 1992). SCP theorists see “crime as the outcome of immediate choices and decisions, and which focus on the proximal rather than distal influences on crimes as specific events” (Blackburn, 1995, p.104). Taking into consideration the influences of both the environment and individual differences, SCP suggests that much crime should be viewed as a rational decision, with offenders being normal people who offend when their actions/behaviours are influenced by particular pressures when faced with specific opportunities and “situational inducements” (Hough, Clarke and Mayhew, 1980, p.104). It is suggested that crime can be reduced by reducing the opportunities available to the offender to commit crime. It does this by “changing the relationship between the offender, the victim, and the environment (Nietzel and Himelein, 1986)” (Blackburn, 1995, p.398).
SCP theories can be applied to real-life situations to prevent crime in a number of ways. The physical environment can be changed, or (potential) victims of crime can be encouraged to change their behaviour. In addition, “strengthening the social control of crime by the community” (Blackburn, 1993, p.398). SCP is initially based upon the concept of target hardening and surveillance (Brookman, 2005). Target hardening can be used to reduce opportunities for crime, and works by altering the balance of perceived costs and benefits of offending, for example by replacing aluminium coin boxes in pay phones with steel coin boxes, which are far harder to break in to (Blackburn, 1993).

Target hardening has also been considered in the context of terrorism. Enders and Sandler (2006) suggest that target hardening works by “protect(ing) potential targets either by making attacks more costly for terrorists or by reducing their likelihood of success” (p.120). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, plane hijackings (‘skyjackings’) became so prolific between the US and Cuba that metal detectors were installed across US airports in 1973 (Enders and Sandler, 2006). This stopped the large number of skyjackings for eight years, until strategies were identified to evade the metal detectors. In addition, when skyjackings became too difficult terrorists expanded their portfolio, moving to kidnapping and barricade-siege incidents (Enders, Sandler, and Cauley, 1990).

Related to target hardening is the option to increase the use of surveillance. The design of new housing and offices has highlighted the possibility for opportunity reduction via looking at access opportunities and surveillance. Over time, SCP evolved to incorporate strategies relating to offenders and victims, as well as those relating to location (Brookman, 2005). Some aspects of SCP can be done by encouraging potential victims to take action, for example to get security for their home, or display warning notices of alarm systems on their houses (Blackburn, 1993).

Such concepts could be applied to the understanding of political assassinations. For example, targets of political assassination can be ‘hardened’ by employing a bodyguard for protection, or installing extra security measures in their homes,
offices, or cars. In this sense, the behaviours of political assassination targets really could affect the behaviours of their attackers.

It is suggested that “situational constraints” (Blackburn, 1993, p.104) may not work well on impulsive or “emotionally disordered” (Blackburn, 1993, p.104) offenders. In fact, situational crime prevention is considered to be particularly relevant to ‘opportunistic’ crimes, for example shoplifting, tax evasion, or vandalism. In the case of vandalism, it occurs where there is minimal surveillance, for example in empty buildings, or on unsupervised buses (Sturman, 1980). There is some suggestion that perpetrators of political assassinations are emotionally disordered, or experience mental illness. If this is the case, SCP theories may not be relevant. However, there is also evidence of planning amongst political assassins (Fein and Vossekuil, 1998), and therefore SCP theories are a relevant consideration of this project.

There are criticisms of situational crime prevention. First, target hardening can be expensive, with a large amount of effort required to try and reduce offences, such as criminal damage or violence. However, this may be of limited value in reassuring concerned citizens regarding inner city crime (Trasler, 1986). Second, SCP efforts often have unclear, ambiguous goals. They also are sometimes based on untested assumptions about offender decision making. Third, SCP efforts to make offending more difficult may result in displacement, which can be seen in the changes in time/place/method/form of offending (Trasler, 1986). For example as newer cars are better secured, theft of older cars was found to increase (Mayhew, Clarke and Hough, 1980). However, it is possible that displacement may occur most in “highly motivated ‘professional’ crimes, such as bank robbery” (Mayhew et. al., 1980), and least in opportunistic crimes. It should be possible to predict displacement “from rational choice analyses of criminal decision processes” (Blackburn, 1993, p.399). Repetto (1976) developed the ‘displacement hypothesis’, which suggests that this displacement of offending may occur because offenders change their usual crime location, timing, target, method, or even crime type if the usual option changes for the worse.
Similarly, Enders and Sandler (2006) refer to the concept of ‘transference’, in which targets of terrorism are hardened, and so the terrorists transfer their attentions elsewhere. This follows directly from the idea of terrorists as rational (see section 8.3), meaning that when one target is hardened, providing there are two types of violence/behaviour that “are logistically similar and yield similar basic outcomes” (Enders and Sandler, 2006, p.115), transference will occur towards the softer target. In the last decade security at airports has been increased, and therefore terrorists look to target softer targets (referred to by Enders and Sandler as the ‘weak links’), which are less protected, for the Madrid train bombings in 2004, which killed 191 people and resulted in more than 1200 injuries. Transference resulting from target hardening also affects the targets of terrorism, as shown by the bombing of the Australian embassy in Jakarta in 2004. An Al-Qaeda linked group targeted the embassy with a car bomb, because the Australian embassy was easier to attack than the US embassy, which had heightened security (Enders and Sandler, 2006).

In terms of political assassinations, it will be interesting to see whether the presence of a ‘hardened target’ (i.e. a target with a bodyguard) means fewer attacks, i.e. if there will be fewer incidents where the target is protected by a bodyguard, than where they are not protected. However, as all targets of assassination in this sample are deceased, it is important to note that there may be many targets with bodyguards who were not killed, and therefore no firm conclusions can be drawn regarding this.

8.6 SCRIPT THEORY

Similarly to the rational choice perspective, script theory has been used to explain both non-offending and offending behaviour. Developed by Schank and Abelson (1977) it offers a way to explain how people process their understanding during events or in situations. Scripts are a type of schema, which guide individuals’ behaviour in everyday situations, in terms of their interactions with their environment and other people (Abelson, 1981). They provide individuals with an expectation of what will happen during situations and events, enabling people to predict likely outcomes, therefore assisting them in what is and is not appropriate
behaviour in a given situation. Script theory has been applied in a number of fields to explain people’s behaviour. For example, Donald and Canter (1992) looked at the behaviour of those who were in the King’s Cross underground fire (in London, 1987). They found that even in life-threatening situations such as this, people tend to behave in predictable ways, based on what they think will happen. For example, in trying to leave the station, rather than take the nearest exit, people tended to take their usual route out, even if this was not the closest or fastest way out of the station. As Donald and Canter (1992) point out, although people have scripts to guide their behaviours in everyday life, a large number of people do not have scripts for new situations they encounter, in particular for emergencies where they may be in danger. Where people do have scripts, it is possible these are based on what they expect should happen, according to news reports they have read, or scenes on television or in films, rather than what actually does happen. Having studied a number of major fires, Canter found that people tend to behave according to the standard, accepted social roles and place roles that are dictated by their situation at the time of the emergency (Canter, 1990).

Wilson, Canter and Smith (1995) examined the patterns of behaviour in terrorist hostage-taking incidents, finding that the behaviours present in such incidents are in fact not random. Underlying psychological dimensions were revealed, which could be used to describe the different types of events. These included the method of control used, the type of interaction, the resources used and the (apparent) motivation for the incident. By examining the way in which these underlying dimensions interact with one another, and the combination in which each occurs, it is possible to define and describe hostage-taking incidents, with the potential for creating models which could predict outcomes.

Later, Wilson and Smith (1999) used the concept of script theory to explain terrorist hostage taking behaviour, in particular looking at what behaviours are predictable. They found that in general in hostage situations, adherence to the usual social roles and rules are expected of all groups involved, although they do offer examples of instances where the scripts broke down. However, rather than this being a negative issue, Wilson and Smith (1999) found that the breakdown of scripts can result in
positive interactions between the groups involved in hostage incidents. They explain this by suggesting that the individuals actually end up relying on their everyday scripts to guide their interpersonal interactions, and that this suggests a certain level of (sometimes limited) predictability, even in unusual and stressful incidents.

Similarly, Wilson (2000) found that "there are clear patterns of behaviour in terrorist hostage taking as in other forms of criminal activity such as rape (Canter and Heritage, 1990, Wilson, Canter and Jack, 1997) and arson (Canter and Fritzon, 1998)" (p.420). Finding the behaviours to be highly structured, Wilson (2000) suggested that this provides support for the rational decision making model of criminal behaviour.

Away from terrorist situations, Gavin and Hockey (2010) looked at whether script theory could be used to explain criminal versatility, both in terms of their offending behaviour, and their social behaviours. Finding support for the presence of script theory, Gavin and Hockey (2010) suggest that there is evidence that offenders possess a number of scripts for different offences, i.e. versatile offenders hold a range of scripts for offending which have been gathered throughout their offending careers. They also found that scripts for criminal behaviours are learnt in the same way as scripts for non-criminal behaviours.

In the context of political assassinations, script theory suggests that assassins will follow usual patterns of behaviour in planning and carrying out their attack. Fein and Vossekuiil (1998) found that the planning conducted by assassins is very similar in structure and content to the planning that would be used in more everyday situations, for example in planning a trip. This is supported by the view of offenders and terrorists as rational (e.g. Enders and Sandler, 2006, Wilson, 2000), and suggests that the behaviours of assassins may be structured and predictable. However, the findings of Donald and Canter (1992) suggest that when faced with unexpected situations individuals do not have scripts to follow, and so if an assassins plans do not go well, they may struggle to adapt, putting them more at risk of apprehension.
8.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a discussion of the ways in which forensic psychological theory can be used to better understand the phenomenon of political assassination. As discussed in chapter 4, political assassinations are indeed a form of homicide. Therefore, the literature on homicide has been discussed here, in particular the ways in which typologies and profiles have been used to explain homicide incidents. Although there are difficulties in creating profiles of the homicide offender, it seems that creating a profile of the offence itself is more likely to have positive results. Therefore, it is likely that looking at the features of the assassination incident itself will be more fruitful than trying to create profiles of the assassin.

In addition, rational choice theory, routine activities theory, and situational crime prevention theories, offer useful approaches to understanding the way in which decisions are made regarding offending behaviour, and the considerations made by offenders (e.g. how situational factors affect decision making). RCT has proved applicable to a range of offence types, and again it is possible that RCT could be used to inform the present assassination research. Such theories also offer insight into how target behaviours can affect offender behaviours, and possible ways targets can reduce their risk.

Script theory describes the way in which individuals act in given situations. With research in other areas finding script theory a useful way to understand behaviours of the offender and the target in situations such as hostage taking, this may also offer a way to understand the ways in which offenders and targets behave in political assassinations.
9. Methodology

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will outline the methodological issues of the thesis. This research analyses political assassinations at two levels – the assassin’s behaviour and the victim’s behaviour, and how these interact to influence aspects of the assassination incidents. The chapter will examine the methodologies which have previously been used in political assassination research, and the methodological issues related to such research. The methodology to be used in this thesis will be presented and explained.

9.2 REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Chapters 7 and 8 provided an overview of both the previous research related to political assassinations, and the underlying psychological research that is relevant to the area. The research into political assassinations can be loosely divided into three groups – US based pre-1998, US based post-1998, and European. As chapter 7 showed, the existing research has focused on the personality characteristics and behaviours displayed by perpetrators of political assassinations.

The pre-1998 US-based research solely focused on creating typologies and profiles of political assassins, with the overall aim of understanding the type of person who assassinates, attempts to assassinate, or threatens, US presidents and other senior politicians. This is expanded in the post-1998 research to include prominent public figures, such as judges, but there was still a focus on the psychological profile of the offender. The European research examines attacks on both politicians, and the royal family, again with a focus on the characteristics and background of the offender. As shown in Part 1, political assassinations are not solely targeted at politicians, and therefore the research should reflect this. Following on from previous research, the current study will draw a sample from a range of professions according to a broad definition of political assassination, rather than focusing on one specific professional
group. In addition, rather than trying to create a profile of 'the assassin', or drawing inferences about their mental wellbeing based on behaviours displayed during the attack, this project will look at observable behaviours to understand the incidents of assassination.

There are also issues related to the sample used for the research. Previous research has, in some instances, used mixed samples combining both those who have threatened prominent figures and those who have attacked them. As research has shown threateners are unlikely to become attackers (Fein and Vossekul, 1998), it is suggested that future research concentrates just on actual attacks, rather than a combination. Previous research has also concentrated on individuals who have been apprehended, which automatically excludes a large number of attacks on prominent public figures. Thus research should be aware of this, and not limit itself in this way. The current research will only examine completed attacks, in order to study a homogenous group, and to avoid problems of generalisability.

Again, as discussed in chapter 7, the existing research is entirely focused on the assassin; both their psychological workings, their personality characteristics, their background, and their behaviours immediately prior to the (attempted) assassination. There is no attention afforded to the behaviours and actions of the victim of the attack, and how this may interact with the behaviour of the assassin to create the incident. As chapter 8 discussed, theories of victimisation suggest that in actual fact, the behaviours of the target are important in understanding crime. The accessibility, the guardianship, and the attractiveness of the target are all said to be key risk factors in victimisation. Thus, this project will examine the behaviours of the target in addition to those of the assassin.

Relatedly, chapter 8 also discussed where the victims of crime are most likely to be victimised. Reasoned Action Theory (RAT) argues that potential targets are more likely to be victimised when they are more attractive to motivated offenders, when they are less well guarded, and when they are easily accessible. To investigate how this relates to political assassination the present project will seek to identify the situational vulnerability of victims of political assassination, in terms of their
location (accessibility), and preparedness for attack (guardianship). In previous research this has not been widely considered, and thus this is a new contribution to the research.

As discussed in chapter 5, there is a belief among some terrorism researchers that political assassinations are targeted at, and kill, just one person. The number of victims other than the target has not been considered by any of the research discussed in chapter 7. The existing research only focuses on the immediate target of attacks. However, political assassinations do incur victims other than the target (both injured and killed), and this research will consider both the number of casualties, and how this relates to other aspects of the attack, such as the identity of the perpetrator, and the location of the attack.

Existing research does not address the methods used by assassins. This is an important feature of political assassinations, as it is possible that method (which includes both the weaponry and the behaviour of the assassin) varies both in frequency and in nature. By understanding more about how potential targets are attacked, it may be possible to implement protective strategies. This would be exploratory research, as there is no existing research on this area.

Thus the aims of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the behaviours of the perpetrators of political assassinations;
2. To identify where victims of assassination are at risk, in terms of their situational vulnerability;
3. To consider how widespread the casualties of assassinations are, in terms of how specific the attack is;
4. To look at the methods used by assassins to target their victims.
5. To understand how these aspects interact with one another, with a view to creating a multi-faceted model which furthers understanding of political assassinations.
9.3 THE CURRENT METHODOLOGY

From the discussion of methodologies used in previous political assassination research, it is clear that a key issue is that of the data sources to be used, with a related issue of accessibility. It is (obviously) impossible to collect data from the victims of political assassinations. Gaining access to assassins would also be very difficult, for various reasons: death of the assassin, imprisonment, the assassin being unidentified/unknown, and so on. In the absence of this direct contact, others have used case file data, but as discussed earlier, there are numerous flaws in the use of case studies in this area. Nonetheless it is likely that data drawn from open source accounts will provide enough information on political assassinations on which analysis can be conducted.

The methodological approach taken in this research will follow a nomothetic approach, in that the focus will be on a large group of political assassination incidents, rather than an idiographic approach, which has been used before in case study methodologies which focus on one person. Data will be drawn from two sources: newspapers and a series of books offering accounts of terrorist incidents, and will then be content-analysed to provide numerically coded descriptions of a number of political assassination incidents.

The data on political assassination incidents will be drawn from two sources, UK broadsheet newspapers, via Nexis and the Mickolus series of books (e.g. Mickolus and Simmons, 1997, 2002). Nexis offers a way to search newspaper articles. In this study, UK broadsheet newspapers were used (The Time, The Sunday Times, The Independent, The Independent on Sunday, The Guardian, The Observer, The Telegraph, The Sunday Telegraph).

The use of multiple sources is known as ‘triangulation’, and offers a way to explore different facets of the same (often complex) event. Different sources offer different viewpoints of the same event, providing a greater level of information (Henwood and Pidgeon, 2006). For example, the Mickolus books only cover transnational terrorist attacks, meaning that they only report terrorist events which involve more than one
country. For example an attack on an English person in France would be reported, whereas an attack on a French person in France would not be. Newspaper reports do not have this restriction. In addition, at the time of this data collection, the Mickolus books available only detailed events up to and including 2001, while newspaper reports are available up to the present day. Combining the two data sources ensures the inclusion of more domestic incidents, and more recent incidents.

As discussed in chapters 7 and 8, such data sources have proved valuable in a number of other studies (e.g. Fein and Vossekuil, 1998, Wilson, 2000, Wilson et al., 2010). The use of newspaper sources does have its weaknesses. It is possible that the UK newspapers used for data do not report all assassinations occurring worldwide. However, as Snitch (1982) states, it is an appropriate data collection technique on the basis that political assassinations tend to be major events which are therefore attended to by the media, particularly when an assassination is successful. James, et al. (2008) used a similar method of data collection, drawing data from sources which were already in the public domain. Pape (2003) has also used Nexis to access the online world news media, for a study of suicide bombers. Wilson et al. (2010) used newspaper reports as a data source when looking at ETA’s bombing and political assassination campaigns, finding that they provided sufficient behavioural information to use in analysis. Although it is true that newspapers suffer bias, in that they are motivated to sell their product, the use of newspaper sources in previous studies such as those listed here suggests that this has not proved an actual issue in research. The information drawn from the newspapers is largely related to behaviours in the incidents, and the reporting of these are unlikely to suffer bias, in that the location of the attack, or the identity of the victim is relatively objective. In addition, the use of numerous news sources (each of which is likely to have different agendas or bias) provides some level of protection against this bias. Finding consensus amongst different sources reinforces the validity. Where there is no consensus relating to aspects of the assassination incidents (e.g. one source reports that there were more than one assassin, while another reports that there were not) the variable is coded to the negative, i.e. that there is not more than one assassin. If there are more than two reports in agreement, with one disputing the fact, the majority view is coded. This conservative strategy results in the best possible data set.
The cases were selected primarily on the basis that they meet this definition of political assassination:

"A political assassination is an attack targeted at a specific victim. The victim does not need to be a politician, but their death must have some political impact, either because of who the victim is, or the position they hold. There are no constraints on who the attacker may be; an individual, a conspiracy of individuals, or a terrorist group."

There are a multitude of definitions of political assassination in the literature, and these have been discussed in more detail in chapter 2. For the purpose of this research, the above definition was created which draws on various aspects of other definitions of political assassination. This is based on a thorough literature search, and is intentionally broad in order to capture a wide range of incidents. It highlights the need for the attack to be targeted at a particular person, but does not specify who that person must be in terms of their position or identity. The key aspect of the victim is that they must be a person whose death will result in some kind of impact on the political scene they are a part of. In this definition, the assassination can be carried out by anyone, with no limits on who can conduct an assassination. This definition is used to search for cases of political assassination, and is used to determine which cases should be included in this research and which should not.

Cases were identified via a thorough search of the Mickolus series, with each political assassination incident recorded. In addition to these cases, Nexis was used to identify further cases of political assassination, with a search term of "assass*". This allowed the identification of a large number of newspaper reports which included any word with "assass" as part of it (e.g. assassinate, assassination, assassinated). These were then examined, with suitable cases for inclusion identified, according to the definition cited previously. From the list of potential political assassination incidents, a further name-specific search was conducted on Nexis. Where there was sufficient data for inclusion (i.e. on the victim identity, the attack, and offender identity), and the attack occurred between 1990 and 2008, the data was gathered for future content analysis.
In total, 400 cases of political assassination were collected. This is obviously not the total number of political assassination incidents that occurred in the 18 years under examination, and in order to determine an appropriate sample size, G*Power 3 was used to conduct an *a priori* power analysis. This computes a required sample size, on the basis of effect size, alpha value, and power value. Typically, this effect size would be drawn from a similar study. However, as discussed in chapter 7, there are no similar studies to the present one. Therefore, a medium effect size of 0.3 was selected for use, along with an alpha value of 0.05, and a power of 0.8. On the basis of a Mann-Whitney test, G*Power 3 calculated a required sample size of 368. *A priori* power analysis was also computed for the use of chi-square tests, finding that, with a maximum assumed three degrees of freedom, there would be a required sample size of 122. Thus 400 was taken as an appropriate sample size. This was supported by the finding that other research in related areas (e.g. homicide, terrorist behaviour) had similar, or smaller, sample sizes. For example, Last and Fritzon (2005) looked at stranger and intrafamilial homicide, with a sample size of 82. Salfati and Taylor (2006) used a sample size of 74 in a study on sexual homicide. Wilson (2000) examined behaviours in hostage taking situations with a total sample of 160, while Wilson, Scholes and Brocklehurst (2010) looked at ETA’s use of assassinations with a sample size of 275. Thus, the 400 used in the present research exceeds all of these. In addition, as shown by the descriptive statistics presented in chapter 10, the sample of 400 political assassination cases provides a wide range of attacks across different countries, years and victim types. In addition, there are attacks in a range of locations, with a range of weapons, committed by various perpetrators.

Of course, this is not to say that the sample is perfect. In an ideal world data on all political assassinations would be included. In addition, it should be acknowledged that the inclusion criteria has weaknesses. As discussed in chapter 2, the definition of political assassination is not a simple concept. The inclusion criteria utilise a definition of political assassination that is as inclusive as possible, but the method of identifying cases does rely heavily on the way in which attacks are reported by the news media. The search terms used mean that the pool of attacks from which suitable cases can be drawn is already pre-defined as assassinations by the newspapers. This
is not ideal, however, short of manually reading all available newspaper articles, it seems to be the most straightforward way of identifying cases. Of course, this creates a somewhat circular problem: this thesis is examining what happens in assassination attacks, by using cases already defined as ‘assassinations’. So we are defining assassinations using cases already defined as assassinations. However, this thesis is only providing the first steps in examining behaviours in political assassinations. There may be a whole universe of other incidents which are political assassinations, but which are not reported as such in the news media, and therefore are not included here. However, this researcher is very aware of the limitations of the data collection techniques, and so will not claim that findings can represent all political assassination attacks. As a first step however, the data collection techniques are considered sufficient.

9.4 EXISTING DATASETS

At present there are two key datasets relevant to this area: START’s Global Terrorism Database (GTD), and the International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) dataset, along with the Mickolus series of books.

The GTD is a comprehensive database of terrorist-perpetrated incidents, both domestic, transnational, and international. It contains data on incidents which occurred between 1970 and 2010, and currently includes more than 98000 cases. An open-source dataset, the GTD’s information is drawn from publicly available news articles and sources. At present it is the most comprehensive, non-classified, dataset of terrorist incidents in the world. The GTD has been widely used as the basis of a terrorism research, with numerous papers published based on its data. However, there are some problems with missing data. Wilson et al. (2010) found that although there was a comprehensive record of political assassinations they were only able to use a small proportion of the cases for their analysis. The GTD contains little behavioural information, and although there is space for an ‘incident summary’, in practice this gives little information and is normally a one-line description of the incident. Demographics are recorded, along with the success, or otherwise, of the
attacks, and the type of the attack (e.g. hostage incident, assassination, armed assault). There is space for details of the target to be recorded, but this tends to be broad (e.g. tourist, infrastructure) rather than specifying the target by name. Often the outcome for the target is unclear, with the total number of injuries/deaths recorded but no detail on whether the target is one of these. More information tends to be included regarding the perpetrator, including whether a responsibility claim was made, and how. In addition, some political assassination cases recorded in the GTD gave no way of identifying either the victim or the attack, and therefore it was not possible to find the necessary supplementary data from other sources (i.e. newspapers/Mickolus). The GTD acknowledges that there are problems with its recording and coding of assassination incidents in particular (Gary LaFree, personal correspondence). Thus other data sources were required to identify incidents, to provide more behavioural information on the assassination incidents.

The ITERATE dataset differs from the GTD in that it only records instances of transnational terrorism which occurred between 1968 and 2004. Like the GTD, information for ITERATE is drawn from publicly available news and media sources, but is smaller, containing more than 3000 cases. Associated with the ITERATE dataset are a series of books authored by Mickolus and colleagues (e.g. Mickolus and Simmons, 1997, 2002). The Mickolus series provides a comprehensive account of all terrorist incidents carried out worldwide, and are primarily based on newspaper reports. They offer an advantage in that they draw on information from newspapers worldwide, and have been proven as a valuable data source for a number of other studies.

Although both datasets discussed here have proved to be valuable research tools, the purpose of this study is to look more widely at assassinations rather than just examining terrorist-perpetrated incidents. In addition, as mentioned above, the GTD in particular suffers from missing data in a number of cases, and neither contain the necessary information regarding victim and offender behaviours (see Wilson et al., 2010). Therefore, a new dataset will be created for this project, with the purpose of describing behaviours in political assassinations. The data collected will be coded according to a total of 118 variables. Guidance for variable selection was taken from
previous research (e.g. James et al., 2008) and the aims of the project, resulting in political assassination incidents being coded on the three main aspects of attacks: first, the characteristics of the targets, second, features of the attack, and third, characteristics of the assassin(s) (see Appendix A). These variables were placed across three distinct temporal occasions: prior to the assassination, during the assassination, and after the assassination (see Figure 9.1). These variables will be discussed in more detail in section 9.6.

Figure 9.1. Schematic outline of Coding Variables

Thus the dataset created for this project will provide a comprehensive account of behavioural aspects of political assassinations, with a range of victims and no restriction on the identity of the perpetrator.
9.5 CONTENT ANALYSIS

Once the reports of political assassination incidents were collected, they were content analysed using a carefully constructed, rigorously designed coding scheme.

The purpose of the content analysis is to transform the qualitative data collected from the newspapers and books into numerical data which can then be easily subjected to further analysis. It provides a way of reducing the data to a manageable level (Breakwell, 2006), with results in the form of a data matrix, which describes the presence or absence of a series of behaviours, in a numerical form (Breakwell, 2006). In this type of quantitative content analysis, the descriptive text is reduced into numerical values by way of a coding scheme (Millward, 2006), and this involves the issue of reliability of the categorisation. There is a risk that the categories specified may be ambiguous, or unclear, or open to bias. In order that the manual coding scheme used here can be classed as reliable, it must be sufficiently unambiguous that two independent raters will classify the data in exactly the same way, thus establishing inter-rater reliability. This involves a second rater coding the data according to the coding scheme. Any differences are identified and the inter-rater reliability is calculated on the basis of this. This reliability must be at least 0.7 (Gregory, 2004). If inter-rater reliability is not established, the coding scheme runs the risk of being open to individual interpretation, with the researcher imposing their own views onto the material (Wilson, 1995). In this study, approximately 20% of cases were selected at random from the overall sample, and passed to two other researchers along with the coding dictionary. Inter-rater reliability was calculated by comparing the coding of each researcher, and it was found that the coding matched in 94% of the coded observations (cases x variables = total coded observations/data cells). That is, with 118 variables, and 80 cases, there were a total of 9440 data cells to be coded by the second researchers. The coding of the researchers matched in 94% of these instances. Looking in more detail, these inconsistencies appeared in 98 of the 118 variables, showing that they were spread across a range of variables. In 25 of these variables, there was just one instance (per variable) where the coding differed between researchers, and in another 14 variables, there were only two instances (per variable) where the coding differed between researchers. At the other end of the
scale, there was one variable where, in 20 out of 80 cases, there were discrepancies between the coding of the researchers. In another three variables, there were discrepancies in 16 cases, 14 cases, and 13 cases, and in two further variables there were discrepancies on these variables in the coding of 15 cases. Thus, it seems that some variables were more reliably coded than others. However, the overall figure of 94% consistency is high enough to demonstrate good overall reliability, showing that both raters classified and understood the data in the same way. The inconsistencies were carefully examined and some variables were recoded on the basis of the second researcher’s classifications, and the discrepancies in some variables’ coding demonstrated that the definitions were not clear enough. These definitions were altered to ensure consistency of coding.

The coding scheme is a detailed account of all variables under examination, specifying the universe of possible responses to each variable. The majority of the variables used in this coding dictionary will use a present/absent dichotomy, and where the data is missing, the variable will be coded as absent. As highlighted by Wilson (2000), it is important to note that not all features of attacks will be reported in the newspaper articles from which the data is derived, and because of the type of data used, “the absence of an action in the accounts could not be taken as a definite indication that a certain behaviour had not occurred but simply that it was not reported as having occurred” (p.406). Thus, the coding scheme has been created to code the presence of a variable, rather than the absence. This means that while something coded as present definitely did happen, items coded as absent are not necessarily absent, and it is possible that, actually, they did happen but were not reported. In instances where variables are not coded according to presence or absence, but rather for two other dichotomous choices, a (1) or (2) was assigned to the appropriate variable category. Of course, there were some variables that were not dichotomous (i.e. they had more than two ‘options’), and these were assigned a numerical code. For example, when coding the region in which the attack took place there were 15 options, and so each region was assigned a code, ranging from ‘1’ up until ‘15’. Where the information was missing no code was assigned.
9.6 CODING SCHEME

Target characteristics both prior to the assassination, and during the assassination, were described (see Appendix B). These include basic demographics (name, age, gender), along with the profession of the victim. The experiences of the target prior to the attack were quantified dichotomously (present (2) or absent (1)), as receiving threats prior to the attack, being stalked or followed prior to the attack, and any previous attempt(s) on their life. Aspects of the target which were relevant during the attack were coded (again dichotomously). The behaviour at the time of the attack included whether the target was at leisure or work, whether they were indoors or outdoors, in transit or stationary, and whether they were in a private, public or semi-private location. This provides a simple description of what the target was doing at the time of the attack. Dichotomous coding was also used to record whether or not the target had a bodyguard at the time of the attack, and whether they died instantly, or survived for a period of time (but still died from the injuries sustained in the attack).

Assassin characteristics are relevant at all three time periods: prior to the attack, during the attack, and after the attack, as shown by Figure 9.1. The identity of the assassin is a difficult aspect to define, thus a simple classification system is used: the assassin is coded as either an individual working alone, as a terrorist group, or as an unknown. In addition, dichotomous variables were included to show whether there was any (suspected) government involvement or (suspected) military or police involvement. The presence of an ‘insider’ was coded as either planning the attack, or assisting in conducting the attack. More specific aspects of the assassin were also included, such as the presence of mental illness, or a history of offending or violence. However, in many cases, such data was not reported, and therefore coded as absent (as discussed previously).

Assassin characteristics which could be observed at the time of the attack include their presence at the scene of the assassination, whether the assassin stayed at the scene after the attack or left, whether they ambushed their target, or broke in to a home or work location. The number of assassins present at the scene of the attack
was recorded numerically, along with the gender. The terms Primary, Secondary and Tertiary assassin were used to allow a simple categorisation of the different roles taken by assassins. The presence of a Primary assassin indicates that an individual was present at the scene and responsible for the killing. A Secondary assassin was classed as a ‘support’ to the Primary assassin, an individual who did not do the killing itself, but acted as get away driver, look out, or similar. The Tertiary assassin was any individual not present at the scene of the attack, who had responsibility for planning or carrying out the attack. Again, these were coded dichotomously (present (2) or absent (1)), but there was an element of interaction between variables. A Secondary assassin could only be coded as present where a Primary assassin was also coded as present, as their purpose is to assist the Primary. Other than this, any combination of the three roles could be present in the data.

The coding scheme was designed to account for the outcomes for the assassin. This data was largely unavailable, but variables were provided to record whether the assassins were apprehended, when they were apprehended (at the scene or later), whether they were killed or committed suicide, if they confessed, were convicted, and whether they were sentenced to prison or death.

Finally, aspects of the attack were recorded, including a description of what happened in the incident. The presence or absence of other victims (bodyguard or civilian) will be recorded, along with the number of each. The weaponry used in the attack is recorded, both simply (i.e. the presence (2) or absence (1) of shooting/knife incident/manual/explosive device), and with more detail (e.g. explosive device could be a letter bomb, an incendiary device, a suicide bomb, and so on).

9.7 SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the methodologies used previously in political assassination research, those used in related research, and to identify the most suitable and appropriate methodology for this thesis. Previous political assassination research has typically been based on case study methodologies, producing
in-depth profiles of individual assassins, or typologies intended to characterise different types of assassin. As discussed, there are a series of ‘gaps’ in the existing research, and the purpose of this project is to explore some of these gaps. Five aims are stated at the start of this chapter, related to understanding more about the perpetrators and victims of assassinations.

The present study utilises a methodology with information drawn from publicly available sources. Similar methodologies have proven successful in both political assassination research (Wilson et al., 2010), and other related research (Pape, 2002, Wilson, 2002). The triangulation of resources allows a broader understanding of the incidents, and improves the reliability of the information. A new dataset is created, which provides a comprehensive dataset of behavioural aspects of political assassination. The qualitative data gathered is content analysed according to a rigorous and reliable coding scheme, which is designed to meet the aims of the project, and is informed by previous research. Data are gathered from publicly available newspaper sources, and the sample is drawn from international, completed, assassination attacks. Data is content analysed at three levels (assassin/victim/attack) over three time periods (pre-assassination/during assassination/post-assassination). The focus of the research is on objective aspects of the assassination, rather than on the internal aspects of the assassin.
10. Sample Characteristics

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the characteristics of the sample of political assassinations. As discussed in chapter 9, a sample of 400 cases was drawn from the population of political assassinations, according to specific inclusion criteria. By looking at the characteristics of assassinations it is possible to increase understanding of such events, in terms of when and where they happen, who the victims of assassination are, and who the perpetrators of assassinations are.

10.2 PLACE AND TIME DEMOGRAPHICS

This section considers when and where the political assassinations in this sample occur. By looking at the number of assassinations over time it is possible to identify any patterns or cycles in the incidence of the attacks in this sample. The location of assassination attacks is important for two reasons. The existing research focuses on attacks in two locations: on US figures in the US, and on European citizens in Europe. This project extends the focus, and looks at attacks in other countries as well.

Over the 18 year period in which incidents took place, the year with the highest number of assassinations is 1991 (n = 42, 10.5%), while the year with the lowest number of assassinations is 2004 with just 10 assassinations (2.5%) identified for this sample. Figure 1 shows the frequency of attacks each year since 1990. There are notable peaks in 1991 (n = 42), 1997 (n = 28), and 2007 (n = 34). The year with the fewest assassinations was 2004 (n = 10). The overall annual rate of attacks in this sample was 22.2, which is higher than that of both Fein and Vossekuijl’s (1998) which found an average of 0.7 attacks per year, and James et al.’s (2007) study which found an average rate of 1.6 attacks per year.
Figure 10.1. Number of assassinations over time

It is possible that there are cycles of political assassinations over the 18 years being studied here. The rate of political assassinations appears to form a peak every 3 – 7 years. Figure 10.1 shows that from the peak in 1991, a trough appears in 1993, with another peak in 1997, followed by a trough in 2004, and back to a peak in 2007. However, this sample is just a small selection of the overall population, and the peaks and troughs may therefore simply mean that more cases were collected for that year, rather than there being a change in the incidence of assassinations in that year. Figure 10.2 shows the number of assassination incidents recorded in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) over the same time period. There are similarities in that both data sets suggest high numbers of assassinations in the early 1990s, and then a general downward trend from the mid 1990s onwards.
The assassinations in this sample took place in a total of 85 different countries, with the most commonly occurring country being Northern Ireland (n = 58). A full list of these countries is presented in Appendix C. To simplify examination of the location of political assassinations, the countries in which incidents take place have been grouped into regions of the world, using the 13 areas defined by the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) centre’s Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Table 10.1 shows that the majority of incidents in this sample took place in Western Europe (n = 128, 32%), including countries such as N.Ireland, Germany and Spain. The next most common region is Middle East and North Africa, with 96 cases (24%), followed by Russia and the Newly Independent States with 53 cases (13.3%). The region with fewest political assassination incidents is Australasia and Oceania, where there was just one incident (0.25%), along with Central Asia and Southeast Asia, which each had 2 incidents (0.5% each). In 3 cases the region in which the incident took place was unclear. Interestingly, despite much of the existing research focusing on incidents in the USA, there were just six political assassinations in this sample which occurred in the USA (1.5%).
Table 10.1
Region in which the attack took place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East &amp; North Africa</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia &amp; Newly Independent States (NIS)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America &amp; Caribbean</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia &amp; Oceania</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.3 THE VICTIMS

This section will examine the demographics of the targeted victims of political assassination incidents. By examining just who is killed in assassinations, it may be possible to identify individuals who are at more risk of assassination, and it will also highlight those non-political figures who may not expect to be at risk of assassination.

The majority of political assassination victims were male (n = 376, 94%), while just 24 (6%) of victims in this sample were female. Figure 10.3 shows the range of victims’ ages. These are seemingly normally distributed, as indicated by the bell curve. Victims most often fall into the age group 41-50 years, with 72 cases (18%). The next most common age range is 51-60, with 69 cases (17.3%). There are fewest
cases in the range 11-20, where there is just one case (0.3%). However, cases where the victim’s age is not specified are the most common, with 121 cases (30.3%).

![Histogram showing distribution of victim's age]

**Figure 10.3. Age of Victim**

As Figure 10.3 shows, the age of the victim appears to peak around middle age (in the 40s and 50s). It is possible that by this point the target has reached the peak of their fame or notoriety, and therefore are likely to be the target of a political assassin.

The profession of the victims in this sample were split into 21 categories, designed to cover all variations of professions which are present in this sample. These are shown in Table 10.2. Victims of political assassination were most often ‘political figures’ (n = 116, 29%). Members of terrorist groups were the next most common victim of political assassination (n = 46, 11.5%), followed by military personnel (n = 43, 10.75%). The least commonly held profession in this sample is UN Negotiator, with just 1 such victim (0.25%). The sum of all frequencies adds up to more than 400 (actually 479) and this is because some victims were eligible to be included in more
than one category (e.g. a lawyer who was also an advisor to the government would be coded as both ‘Legal Professional’ and ‘Government Official’).

Table 10.2

Profession of Victim

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Figure</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist Group Member</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Personnel</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Professional</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activist</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Leader</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic/Historian</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Official</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Professional</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to a politician</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Politician</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing Industry Personnel</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Leader</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Leader</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exile/Refugee</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Diplomat</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity worker</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Negotiator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The victim was protected by a bodyguard(s) in 74 cases (18.5%). Thus the majority of victims of political assassination were not politicians, and had no bodyguard at the time of the attack (n = 326, 81.5%).
Of the 400 cases of political assassination, the majority (n = 317, 79.25%) of the sample had no reported experience of receiving threats, being followed, or surviving previous attacks. Figure 10.4 shows the experiences of those who had received threats, or been followed, or survived previous attacks. In 35 cases the target had been threatened (8.75%), in 24 cases the victim had survived a previous attempt (6%), and just four cases reported being followed (1%). In 14 cases (3.5%) the victim had been threatened and survived a previous attempt, and in a further three cases (0.75%) the victim had been threatened, and reported being followed. There were no incidents where the target reported being followed, and surviving an attempt on their life. There were just three cases (0.75%) where the victim had experienced all previous behaviours, receiving threats, being followed, and surviving a previous attempt.

In addition to the target, it is possible that other individuals will be harmed in the assassination, as shown in Figure 10.5. In total, there were ‘other victims’ in 155 attacks (38.75%), meaning that only the target was killed in more than half of the incidents in this sample (n = 245, 61.25%). These ‘other victims’, were divided into two categories: either the bodyguard of the target, or not, in which case they are described as ‘civilians’. The ‘civilians’ category can of course include people who were accompanying the victim, e.g. colleagues, assistants, family members.

In 113 cases (28.25%) there were civilian victims, but no bodyguards were harmed. There were far fewer cases where only the only other type of victim was a bodyguard, with just 8 such cases (2%). In 34 cases (8.5%) there were both civilian and bodyguard victims, in addition to the target.
Figure 10.4. Previous experiences of victims

Figure 10.5. People harmed in the attack
10.4 THE ASSASSINS

This section looks at the perpetrators of assassinations, in order to identify where the risk comes from. In existing research the perpetrators are largely individuals working alone, but this sample has intentionally widened the inclusion criteria. The perpetrator is considered in terms of both their identity (e.g. terrorist group, individual, government), and the types of assassins (e.g. presence at the scene, behind the scenes planners).

The variable ‘terrorist group’ is used to identify those incidents where a terrorist group actually claimed responsibility for the attack. Of the 400 cases sampled, responsibility was claimed in 102 (25.5%). In addition, there was one incident where November 17 were suspected, as the gun used was also used in a previous attack committed by them. In three of these cases although it was reported that responsibility was claimed by a group, the name of the group was not specified.

Of the terrorist attacks, they were claimed by a total of 42 groups. Table 10.3 shows these groups classified by cause, according the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism’s (MIPT) Terrorist Organisation Profiles (TOPs), provided through START. A total of six causes are represented here, and there is also a category for groups which are unclassified. It should be noted that there is considerable overlap between some categories, in particular the ‘Nationalist/Separatist’ and the ‘Communist/Socialist’ categories. Thus, the number of cases listed in Table 10.3 is greater than 102 as some cases are represented twice. The ‘Nationalist/Separatist’ category contains 60 incidents, including those committed by the most prolific group in this sample, ETA (n = 17, 17% of the total claimed by terrorists), the Spanish Basque Separatist group. This is unsurprising, as it has been noted that assassinations are a favoured strategy of the group (Wilson, Scholes and Brocklehurst, 2010). There are 33 cases in the ‘Communist/Socialist’ category, which includes the 14 cases (14% of all terrorist incidents) that were claimed by the IRA, the Irish separatists. Again, this has been noted as a strategy utilised by the IRA (Enders and Sandler, 2006). There are 23 cases where it is not possible to classify the group within a ‘type’ of terrorist group, and this is because there is too little information on the group.
There are eight cases which can be classified as ‘Religious’, and a further five which are classified as ‘Leftist’. ‘Anti-Globalisation’ groups account for three attacks, and one attack is the responsibility of a group classified as ‘Racist’. Interestingly, a total of 28 groups claimed just one attack each, showing that terrorist groups may use political assassinations as a “one-off”, rather than as a regular tactic (a full list of the groups and their classifications is in Appendix D).

Table 10.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Type</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist/Separatist</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist/Socialist</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leftist</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Globalisation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some groups claimed attacks under more than one name, for example the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) also claimed attacks under the name Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF). In addition, the Red Hand Defenders, who claimed responsibility for 2 assassinations, is a cover name used by loyalists in Northern Ireland when they were operating under a ceasefire. Thus it is possible that these attacks were claimed by another group already listed here. Furthermore, the group Direct Action Against Drugs (n = 6) appears to be a separate group from Northern Ireland, but this is often considered to be a cover name used by the Provisional IRA.

An individual was responsible for just 28 of the 400 political assassinations in this sample. Responsibility at an individual level was established in one of three ways; if there was evidence reported by the law enforcement agencies that an individual was responsible, if an individual claimed responsibility or confessed, or if an individual was convicted of committing the attack. An attack recorded as perpetrated by an ‘individual’ may have involved more than one person, but these are not a recognised
terrorist group and are simply one or more people working together on this occasion to achieve their goal.

In a further 52 (13%) of the 400 cases a government either claimed responsibility for the attack, or was suspected of being responsible for the attack. This was established in a number of ways: the weapon used may have been owned/come from a particular country’s supply, the country may have stated that they were responsible for the incident, or there may be evidence reported that the country was responsible.

Table 10.4 shows that the 52 attacks in which a government is (suspected to be) responsible are perpetrated by 12 different governments. In these cases it is not necessarily the head of the government who has been involved in the attack, but could be a minister, the country’s secret service, or police or military. The government is considered to be involved because they have authority over such organisations. The country responsible for most political assassinations is Israel (n = 13), followed by the USA (n = 10). The USA is also thought to be responsible for a further attack, in collaboration with Britain.

Other than these 52, there are five further cases where it is suspected that a government was involved in an attack, but there is not sufficient proof. Russia and the FSB are suspected in two more cases, North Korea is suspected of being responsible for one attack, and one is suspected to be the responsibility of Syria. There is a further case where the perpetrator is not specified. A UN report into the incident suggested that Syria or Lebanon were responsible, but also suggested that the US could be involved, as an attempt to discredit Syria and their allies. This case in particular shows how difficult it can be to establish governmental responsibility for political assassinations.

There was also the option to record the presence of police or military involvement separately to the ‘Government Involvement’. The purpose of this was to identify specific cases where the police or military were involved, in more detail than simply recording that a Government had some involvement. Thus these two variables may show overlap. In seven cases there was police involvement in the assassination, for
Table 10.4

Governments suspected of involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza/Hamas</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA/Britain</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

example where the assassins themselves were police officers. In a further 27 cases there was military involvement, for example where soldiers were tasked with killing a target.

In 270 of the 400 cases, there was no claim of responsibility, or the perpetrator was not identified. Thus in the majority of cases (67.5%) the identity of the assassin has not been reported.

In some cases, the assassins were assisted by ‘insider cooperation’. This is taken to mean that the assassin either was, or had, some form of ‘inside’ cooperation: they were fed intelligence by someone close to the target, or were assisted at the time of the attack, e.g. the target’s bodyguard was also working with the assassins, and permitted them entry to the location of the target. Additionally, it may have been the case that the assassin themselves was close to the target. They may have got close with the prior intention of assassinating the target, or they may have formulated the assassination plan after gaining the closeness. In 11 cases (2.75%) the assassins were
assisted by a collaborator ‘on the inside’, while in 16 cases (4%) the assassin was an ‘insider’. Thus in a total of 27 (6.75%) cases there was some element of ‘inside cooperation’.

The ‘type’ of assassin who carried out the attack was characterised as primary, secondary or tertiary. The phrase primary assassin describes an assassin who is present at the scene of the attack, and is responsible for the target’s death, e.g. they were present at the scene and pulled the trigger on the gun. A secondary assassin is a collaborator who is also present at the scene, but not directly responsible for the death, e.g. they are a get-away driver. A tertiary assassin is a collaborator who is not present at the scene of the attack at all, e.g. they built and planted a timed bomb, but left the scene in advance of the bomb detonating.

In the majority of cases a primary assassin was involved (n = 344, 86%). A secondary assassin was less common, present in just under a fifth of cases (n = 77, 19.25%). A tertiary assassin was involved in approximately half of the cases (n = 198, 49.5%).

In addition to looking at the types of assassins individually, it is helpful to look at the different combinations present in the sample. A primary assassin may work alone, or may be assisted by a secondary or tertiary assassin. A tertiary assassin may be the only type of assassin involved. However, as a secondary assassin is present as an ‘assistant’ or collaborator to the primary assassin, it is not possible to have a secondary assassin without the presence of a primary.

Figure 10.6 shows the different combinations of assassins. The most frequent assassin type was still just the primary assassin, with nearly half of all incidents just involving a primary assassin (n = 172, 43%). The next most common combination was that where both a primary and tertiary assassin are involved (n = 95, 23.75%), meaning that there was an assassin present at the scene responsible for killing the target, and another collaborator who was not at the scene. In 56 cases (14%) there was just a tertiary assassin, thus there is no assassin present at the scene. In a similar number of cases, 47 (11.75%), there was a combination of primary, secondary and
tertiary assassin. This was relatively rare, perhaps because such a high level of manpower resources is either not necessary, or impractical. The most infrequently used combination was that of a primary and secondary assassin, with no tertiary assassin. In 30 cases (7.5%) this was the case.

![Figure 10.6. Type of Assassin](image)

Where possible, the number of assassins present at the scene of the incident was recorded (see Table 10.5). In the majority of cases (n = 166, 41.5%) the number of assassins at the scene was unknown, either because it was not reported at all, or because it was reported but there was confusion, with different numbers reported in different sources, or just confusion as to how many assassins were at the scene. Of the remaining cases, 84 (21%) had two or three assassins at the scene, 59 (14.75%) had one assassin at the scene of the attack, and in 35 cases (8.75%) there were four or more assassins present. In a further 56 cases (14%) there were no assassins at the scene of the attack (for example where a timed explosive device was used).
Table 10.5

Number of assassins at the scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of assassins</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In just 20 cases (5%) the assassin was both present at the scene and apprehended at the scene. In a further 314 cases (78.5%) the assassin was present at the scene but evaded capture. Where this was the case, in 67 instances the assassin was later apprehended. It is sometimes the case that assassinations can be fatal for the assassin as well as their target, with the assassin being killed at the scene in 15 cases (3.75%), 12 of which were suicide bombings (3%) and so self-inflicted. In a further six cases (1.5%) the assassin was killed after the incident.

Literature suggests that mental illness is commonly present in political assassins (Clarke, 1990), but in the sample here only three assassins were reported to have any form of mental illness (0.75%).

10.5 THE ATTACK

The final aspect of the sample to consider is the attack itself, in terms of the mode of death and the physical location in which the attack takes place. The purpose of this is to identify the types of weapon utilised in political assassinations, and the locations in which assassinations occur.

Figure 10.7 shows how the political assassination victims were killed. These have been split simply into 7 categories which broadly describe the mode of death. The frequencies total more than 400 as in some cases more than one weapon was used.
The most commonly used weapon was a gun, which featured in 286 cases (71.5%). The second most commonly used weapon was an explosive device, which was used in 80 cases (17.5%). In 12 cases the target was killed by a suicide bomber, which is considered as a sub-set of other explosive devices (3%).

![Method used to kill victim](chart)

*Figure 10.7. Method used to kill victim*

In fewer cases a ‘manual’ method was used (n = 34, 8.5%). The manual classification incorporates any attack where the assassin did not use an automated weapon, so for example the victim was beaten to death, attacked with a blade, pushed from a height, smothered, etc. The only exception to this was poisonings, which obviously do not involve an automated weapon. However, attacks involving poisons do tend to have key differences in the administration of the attacks, for example there is no need for the assassin to be in close proximity to the target, as the poison can be planted in advance, whereas manual attacks require the presence of the assassin.
Poisonings were used in a small number of cases, with just 4 incidents of poisonings occurring in this sample (1%). The methods used in assassinations will be considered in more detail in chapter 13.

When looking at the attack, the victim’s location was considered in terms of whether they were inside or outside at the time of the attack, and whether they were in a public, private or semi-private location. A public location is a place which is open to anyone, with no restriction on entry, e.g. a public park. A semi-private location is one which is open to the public, but requires permission to enter, e.g. a workplace where the public may enter with permission, or in a car, which is considered private, but travelling on a public road. The majority of incidents were targeted at individuals who were outside (n = 277, 69.25%), presumably because these are easier to gain access to. Less than half (n = 123, 30.75%) of targets were attacked when they were in an indoors location.

Table 10.6 shows the second aspect of location. In the majority of cases the target was attacked in a public location (n = 187, 46.75%), while private locations were least common (n = 82, 20.5%). Victims were attacked in semi-private locations in around a third of cases (n = 133, 33.25%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-private</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In over half of the 400 cases the victim was in transit at the time of the attack (n = 215, 53.75%). Victims are classified as ‘in transit’ in any case where they are travelling at the time of the attack, including driving, flying, walking etc. The location of the attacks is considered in more detail in chapter 11.
10.6 SUMMARY

Having established the methodology to be used, a sample of 400 cases of political assassination were collected. There is considerable variance in the incidence of political assassinations over time, with most attacks in 1991, and fewest in 2004. Within this sample there was a downwards tendency in the frequency of attacks from 1990, up until 2004, but since 2005 there appears to be an increasing trend, with another peak in 2007. Attacks are spread across a total of 85 countries (see Appendix C), and once these are divided into regions, a total of 13 different regions. Western Europe has the highest incidence of assassinations, with over a quarter. Other regions in which assassinations often occurred include Middle East and North Africa, and Russia and the Newly Independent States. Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Australasia and Oceania were relatively ‘safe’ areas, with incidents being relatively rare.

This chapter showed that, in this sample, the typical victim of political assassination is a male, aged between 41 and 50 years old. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the profession most commonly targeted in political assassinations is that of ‘politician’, which includes elected politicians, presidents, congressmen, and so on. This is followed by individuals who are considered to be terrorists, and military professionals. Of the individuals in this sample, less than one quarter were protected by a bodyguard at the time of the attack against them. This could be related to the relatively low level of ‘previous behaviours’ experienced by the victims. Around one eighth had been threatened prior to the attack which killed them, one eighth had survived a previous attempt on their life, and even fewer had reported being followed before their death. These assassinations tend to show a reasonable level of specificity, with other victims being involved in less than half of the attacks in this sample. These ‘other’ victims tend to be civilians, rather than bodyguards, or a combination of both. There were very few cases where the only other victim was a/were bodyguard(s).

Characteristics of the assassin are also considered. Around one quarter of the attacks in this sample were claimed by terrorist groups. A total of 42 groups were represented, ranging from established groups such as the IRA and ETA, to less well known groups such as the Strugglers for the Unity and Freedom of Levant. The
groups claiming the most attacks are ETA and the IRA (just under one fifth each), while a total of 28 groups just claimed one attack. This could be taken as evidence that terrorist groups do indeed use assassinations as a tactic, contrary to Schmid (1992). Individuals also claimed or were attributed blame for political assassinations in this sample, but far fewer than terrorist groups, with fewer than a tenth being the responsibility of individuals. This may of course be an artefact of using the Mickolus books as a data source, which are solely accounts of attacks claimed by or attributed to terrorist groups. A similar number of attacks were considered to have involved police or military figures, either as the assassin themselves, or in planning the attack. Just over a tenth of this sample were considered to be ‘state-sponsored’ attacks, with 12 different countries involved in assassinations. Despite these various claims/attribution of responsibility, in a total of 270 cases there was no claim of responsibility. However, this does not mean that there was no evidence to attribute these attacks to a government/group/individual, merely that no one actually claimed responsibility for the attack.

Other aspects of assassins were considered, beyond the identity of the perpetrator. In very few cases (less than a tenth) the assassin was assisted by ‘inside information’, i.e. they had someone close to the target feeding them intelligence, or they worked to get close themselves. The ‘type’ of assassin was also considered, and in the majority of cases there was only evidence for a primary assassin, that is the assassin was present at the scene of the crime, and worked without a collaborator away from the scene. In around a quarter of attacks this primary assassin did get assistance from a tertiary assassin who was not present at the scene. The remaining combinations of assassin type were less frequent, and are made up of cases where there were just tertiary assassins, primary and secondary assassins working together, or a combination of primary, secondary and tertiary assassins.

The number of assassins at the scene of the attack was largely unrecorded, but typically there were 2-3 assassins at the scene (around one fifth). In a minority of cases there were more than four assassins at the scene, perhaps because of the difficulty in recruiting and managing a large group of people, both in the planning stages, and while carrying out the attack itself.
The presence of mental illness in assassins was considered because the literature suggests it is a key aspect of political assassins. However, mental illness was found in less than one percent of cases in this sample, suggesting that it is uncommon. In a further contrast with previous research, where the sample consisted of individuals who had been apprehended, a minority of assassins in this sample were reportedly apprehended, either at the scene of the attack or later. This suggests that the sample under examination here is considerably different to those which are the basis of previous research.

A key aspect of the attack is the method used to kill the target. A gun was the most commonly used weapon, used in nearly three quarters of all the cases. An explosive device was the next most commonly used weapon, used in nearly one quarter of incidents. Other methods used were poisons, beatings, and rarely, a plane crash. The location in which the target was attacked was also considered, in terms of whether they were inside or outside, and in a public or private location. The majority of incidents were against targets who were outside, as opposed to inside, and in public locations rather than private ones. Victims were stationery at the time of the attack in the majority of cases, with less than half of all attacks occurring while the victim was travelling.
11. The Situational Vulnerability of Victims of Political Assassinations

11.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the situational vulnerability of victims of political assassinations. In this analysis, situational vulnerability is defined in terms of two parts: the accessibility of the victim at the time of the attack, and the preparedness of the victim for an attack, both prior to and at the time of the attack. It is important to examine the behaviours of the victim of assassination as there is evidence that these can influence and mould the perpetrators’ plans for the attack (Biesterfeld and Meloy, 2008, see chapter 7). The combination of these two aspects (accessibility and preparedness) are highlighted as important by James, Mullen, Meloy, Pathé, Farnham, Preston and Darnley (2007); they suggest that those who are considered at risk of assassination should consider employing protection, particularly during public events, as this is where their attackers will find, and may take advantage of, opportunities to mount attacks (see chapter 7).

Thus the accessibility aspect is comprised of the physical location of the victim at the time of the attack: whether they are inside or outside, whether they are in transit or stationary, and whether this location is a public or private place; and the time of the attack, in terms of whether they are attacked during their work or leisure time. The combinations of these aspects of political assassination attacks combine to form different situations in which victims may be targeted. By examining these it will be possible to identify the different types of situations in which the targets of political assassination are attacked. In addition, by looking at the frequencies with which these different types of attack occur, it is possible to identify those situations in which targets are likely to be attacked within the current sample.

The second aspect of this chapter is the victim’s ‘preparedness’ for an attack. This is established by considering whether the victim of the attack has been threatened, or survived a previous attempt on their life, and whether or not they are protected by a
bodyguard at the time of the attack. It could be reasonably assumed that if the target has been threatened or attacked before they may have an increased awareness of the possibility of a (further) attack. Where a bodyguard is employed it can reasonably be assumed that the victim has an awareness of their own risk of assassination (or violence more generally).

Underlying these concepts of accessibility and preparedness are those theories which were discussed in chapter 8. Routine activities theory (RAT) suggest that direct-contact crimes occur when targets and offenders come together in the same geographical and temporal location. For a crime to take place, RAT requires that there is a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. In the context of political assassinations, and this study, the absence of a suitable guardian is likely to be reflected in the absence of a bodyguard. Thus it would be expected that more incidents occur where there is no bodyguard than where there is a bodyguard. Away from guardians in the form of bodyguards, research has also suggested where there are large numbers of people, an area can seem more anonymous, and so people may reduce or completely neglect their guardianship activities which they might perform in quieter areas (Roncak, 1981). Thus incidents in public areas (where it is likely there are more people than in private areas) may mean a reduction in guardianship and therefore a greater chance of crime (assassination) than in less crowded areas. This is supported by the concept of bystander effects, which suggest that in situations where a person is in difficulty, others present who may be able to help are less likely to respond, and slower to do so, when there are other people in the locality, than when they are the only person in the area (Garcia, Weaver, Moskowitz and Darley, 2002). An interesting concept is that of ‘confusion of responsibility’, which suggests that when there are others around, people tend not to help the victim as they do not wish to be (mistakenly) identified as the cause of the victim’s problem (Cacioppo, Petty and Losch, 1986). Particularly in the case of political assassinations, where a serious crime is committed, it may be that bystanders do not want to be mistaken for the assassin, and so will be reluctant to become involved in any way. However, it is also possible that an attack in a busy area is likely to have a higher number of witnesses, and therefore
an increased chance of the offender being apprehended, either on the scene or at a later date.

Cohen and Felson (1979) state that a suitable target is one where there is value, visibility, low inertia and accessibility. Thus it is reasonable to expect that targets who are more visible are more likely to be targeted (e.g., those who are at pre-publicised events such as political rallies, or who are distinctive in other ways). The presence of low inertia in the make up of a suitable target suggests that targets who are in transit are less likely to be targeted than those who are stationary. Accessibility is an important feature of suitable targets, with the more accessible targets (e.g., outdoors rather than indoors, or in a public rather than a private location) likely to be targeted more often than less accessible targets.

A key part of RAT is the concept of 'hotspots', defined by Sherman, Gartin and Buerger (1989) as “small places in which the occurrence of crime is so frequent that it is highly predictable, at least over a one year period” (p.36). As the political assassinations in this sample are spread worldwide, it is unlikely that there are any particular geographical hotspots. However, it may be the case that with this type of incident there are more ‘generic’ hotspots, with attacks frequently occurring in the same type of location, if not the same geographical location.

In addition, the literature on re-victimisation (i.e., being the victim of a crime more than once) suggests that the majority of crimes are targeted at a minority of victims (Farrell and Pease, 1993). The British Crime Survey (1982) found that 71% of crime was reported by 14% of the population. Importantly, there are similar patterns of revictimisation across crimes. Farrell and Pease (1993) suggest that the lifestyle or occupation of the victim may leave them vulnerable to revictimisation. It is likely to be the case, of course, therefore that victims of assassination are at risk due to their jobs. In terms of the timing of repeat victimisation, the research suggests that even across crimes, “the risk of revictimisation is greatest in the period immediately after victimisation” (Farrell and Pease, 1993, p.8). The implication of this is that preventative measures therefore should be put in place quickly after the initial victimisation, and even temporary protective measures (which are in place during the
subsequent high-risk period) may be helpful in reducing the likelihood of revictimisation. In terms of domestic violence, Farrell, Clarke and Pease (1993) found that where a victim made a call to the police, there is a 0.8 probability of a further call within one year. Thus it is possible that the presence of previous attempts may actually increase the likelihood of subsequent attacks, if only because it highlights them as a prominent target.

11.2 ACCESSIBILITY OF THE TARGET

11.2.1 The Data

Four variables are selected to go forward into the analysis. In relation to the accessibility of the target, the variables 'outside/inside', 'public/private', 'leisure/work', and 'transit/stationary' were selected as appropriate to describe the location and thus the accessibility of the target. In Table 11.1 the frequency of each variable category is displayed.

Table 11.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presence/absence of Access variables</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>69.25</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>30.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>30.75</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>69.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>46.25</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>53.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>53.75</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>46.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>53.75</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>46.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>46.25</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>53.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 11.1 shows, all of the 400 cases were used in the analysis of the accessibility of the target. In the majority of cases (69.25%) the target was outside rather than inside (30.75%). Slightly more incidents occurred in private locations (53.75%) than public locations (46.25%), and there were more incidents while the
target was at leisure (61.5%) than at work (38.5%). Finally, marginally more incidents occurred with a moving target (53.75%) than with a stationary target (46.25%).

11.2.2 Content Analysis
As in previous chapters, each case in the sample was coded by each of the four variables. The Outside/Inside variable specifies whether the victim was inside (1) a building (e.g. at home, in an office) or outside (2) (e.g. in a garden, or a street) at the time of the attack. In this case, the attacks outdoor are considered to be more accessible than indoor attacks, simply because in general it is likely to be easier to get to the target outside, and they are therefore more vulnerable. The Public/Private variable refers to the nature of the location – whether it is public (1), and therefore open to all (e.g. a restaurant, park, road), or private (2), and so not open to all (e.g. a private home, workplace). Again, this is a simple distinction: it is easier to gain access to a public location than a private one, leaving targets more vulnerable in public locations. The Leisure/Work variable indicates the time of the attack. Working (2) is not restricted to office work, but can also include behaviours such as travelling as part of a job, or making public appearances. Victims who were not working were deemed to be ‘at leisure’ (1). Here, the distinction is not so simple, but as targets are often targeted due to their position, they are likely to be more vulnerable when in that role, i.e. when at work. However, it is possible that they would not have the protection of a bodyguard when they are ‘off duty’ (unless they are very prominent) and so may be more vulnerable in this situation. The Transit/Stationary variable shows whether or not the victim was in transit at the time of the attack. Any victim reported to be moving, for example travelling in a car, walking, flying, was coded as in Transit (2). Any victim not reported as in transit was coded as Stationary (1). In this variable, a target is considered to be more vulnerable when they are travelling than when they are still, as in these cases they are likely to be outdoors than indoors, and so easier to target. In addition, it may be harder to prepare for an attack while travelling, than while standing still, simply because as the target is moving the risk is constantly changing.
As there is some overlap between variables, some clarification is necessary. Where a target was in transit in a car, they were generally considered to be outdoors, and in a public place. Although inside the car, they are not inside a building or structure which would offer them any significant protection, or which would require any effort to gain access. In addition, although the car itself is a private area, it is travelling in a public space and so is accessible to the general public.

The leisure/work variable describes the time in which the target was killed. This is not limited by set time periods, but refers to the activity the target was undertaking at the time of the attack, i.e. were they in work, or doing leisure pursuits. Where the target was attacked on their way to work, the attack was coded as during work time. If they were on their way home from work, the time was classified as leisure.

The result of the coding is a data matrix, a sample of which is shown in Figure 11.1. This data matrix is then used as the basis for the next stage of analysis. This section has demonstrated that there is variation in the location of the victims of assassination, and therefore their accessibility and vulnerability to attack. The next step is to investigate the inter-relationships of these different variables, which demands a multidimensional approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Outside (2) / Inside (1)</th>
<th>Private (2) / Public (1)</th>
<th>Work (2) / Leisure (1)</th>
<th>Transit (2) / Stationary (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cetin Emec</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajiv Gandhi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yann Piat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest Lluch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafiq Hariri</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 11.1. Example of the Data Matrix coding*

**11.2.3 Interactions between variables**

A statistically significant association was found between whether the victim was in transit when they were killed, and whether they were in a private place, $\chi^2 (1) =$
109.239, p <.001. This seems to represent that based on the odds ratio, when the victim was in transit they were .012 times more likely to also be in a private location. It is likely that this is an artefact of the coding, as in order to be in transit the target would typically be in a public location, rather than a private one.

Further statistically significant associations were found between whether the victim was inside or outside, and whether they were in transit ($\chi^2 (1) = 165.023, p <.001$), and whether they were inside or outside, and whether they were in a private place ($\chi^2 (1) = 185.791, p <.001$). The odds ratio suggests that when individuals were outside, they were 49.954 times more likely to be in transit than if they were inside, and that they were .014 times more likely to be in private than if they were inside. Again, this is likely to be an artefact of coding: individuals who were in transit in vehicles were coded as outside. In addition, private outdoor locations are likely to be rarer locations, as there are simply fewer private outdoor locations than private indoor locations.

Table 11.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Transit/Stationary</th>
<th>Inside/Outside</th>
<th>Work/Leisure</th>
<th>Public/Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transit/Stationary $\chi^2$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside/Outside $\chi^2$</td>
<td>165.023</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Leisure $\chi^2$</td>
<td>6.348</td>
<td>2.002</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public/Private $\chi^2$</td>
<td>109.239</td>
<td>185.791</td>
<td>17.788</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold text indicates significance at the .05 level.
The relationship between time of death (i.e. during work or leisure hours) and target behavior (i.e. if they were in transit or stationary) was also examined, finding a statistically significant association between the two variables, \( \chi^2 (1) = 6.348, p = .012 \). The odds ratio suggests that victims who were killed during leisure time were .591 times more likely to be in transit when attacked. In addition, there was a statistically significant association between the time of death and whether the attack was in private, or not, \( \chi^2 (1) = 17.788, p < .001 \), with an odds ratio of 3.468 suggesting that attacks during leisure hours are more likely to be in a private place than not.

11.2.4 The Results of the Accessibility MSA
In this section the results of multidimensional analysis will be presented. The purpose of this is to examine the relationships between the different aspects of victim accessibility. As in chapter 3, the data were analysed using Multidimensional Scalogram Analysis (MSA), one of a variety of analyses which are related to facet theory (Wilson, 2000). MSA analyses cases on the basis of their 'profile', in this case the sequence of 1s and 2s which describe the aspects of an attack via the coding on the four variables. In this analysis, the points in the plot represent one or more assassinations, and the plot is partitioned according to the categories of each variable. The coefficient of contiguity for this analysis is 0.95.

Figure 11.2 shows two of the item plots generated by the MSA for the variables Outside/Inside, and Public/Private. Figure 11.2a shows that of the 15 profiles generated by this analysis, there were eight types of incident in which the victim was outside at the time of the attack (n = 277), indicated by the vertical shaded partition on the left. Similarly, as shown in Figure 11.2b, there are also eight profiles where the victim was in a public location at the time of the attack (n = 185), although these partition the plot horizontally and fall towards the bottom.
Figure 11.2. Item plots of the Accessibility MSA

Figure 11.2a. Shaded area indicates profiles where the target was Outside

Figure 11.2b. Shaded area indicates profiles where the target was in a Public location

Figure 11.3 shows these two variables together, on one plot. This results in four regions. In the bottom left there are four points where incidents took place both outside, and in a public location, for example at a rally. In the bottom right region are a further four points representing incidents which occurred inside in a public location, for example at a restaurant. Towards the top left are four points which represent incidents which took place in an outside, private location, such as the garden of a private residence, while in the top right are three types of incident which occurred in an inside, private location, such as the victim’s home.

In addition to these two variables, the third variable showing whether the target was at work or leisure when attacked, can be overlaid. Figure 11.4 shows that this variable divides the plot again horizontally with the shaded regions indicating cases where the target was attacked during leisure time. This addition turns the plot from the four regions in Figure 11.3, to a total of 8 regions. Thus the four regions specifying where the attack took place are further subdivided according to whether the target was attacked during work or leisure time, with each region containing cases, meaning that it is possible for any combination of the three variables to occur.
Figure 11.3. Combination of Outside/Inside variable, and Public/Private variable

Figure 11.4. Shaded area indicates that the victim was attacked during leisure time
Again, this plot can be further subdivided according to the fourth and final variable, showing whether the target was stationary or in transit at the time of the attack. As shown in Figure 11.5, there are four bands which indicate those incidents where the victim was in transit, with the remaining four bands containing cases where the target was stationary. As with the transformation in Figure 11.4, in Figure 11.5 each of the eight existing regions are further divided, creating a total of 16 regions, 15 of which contain cases. The one region where there are no cases is that where the target is inside, in a private location, attacked during work hours, and while in transit.

![Figure 11.5. MSA partitioned depending on whether attack was Outside/Inside, Public/Private, Work/Leisure, and Transit/Stationary](image)

This analysis can be simplified, with the schematic combination of the four item plots shown in Figure 11.3. The solution presented in this analysis is a three-dimensional one, therefore for ease the results are presented as two separate, two dimensional analyses.
Figure 11.6 shows that theoretically there are 16 categories in this model of Accessibility in political assassinations. As mentioned above, however, one category has no cases in, so in reality there are only 15 categories represented in this sample. The missing region contains cases where the target was in an indoor, private location, during work hours, and while in transit. It is possible that there are attacks that would fit into this missing category, for instance walking through private work offices, but they are not present in the current sample.

Figure 11.6a shows that the most common situation in which individuals were attacked was when the victim was in transit, at leisure, outside and in a public location (n = 70), in the top right of Figure 11.6a, which is perhaps to be expected. An example here is that of Claude Erignac, a Corsican politician, who was shot as he got out of his car near an entertainment complex. The other attacks which occurred outdoors while the target was in transit showed similar frequencies to one another, with 51 attacks occurring while the victim was in transit, outdoors, and in a private work location (bottom right), such as the killing of Ismail Abu Shanab, a senior Hamas leader, who was killed in his car by a missile attack. Where the target was travelling outdoors, but was in a private leisure location there were 45 incidents (also bottom right), for example Walid Eido, a Lebanese politician killed while driving to a social club. Where the target was travelling outdoors, in a public work situation, there were 42 incidents (top right), for example the case of Luis Donaldo Colosio, a Mexican politician and presidential candidate, who was shot dead as he was walking during an outdoor political rally, which he attended in a work capacity.

On the left of Figure 11.6a are the less common types of incidents where the target was indoors and in transit at the time of the attack, although perhaps this is obvious because of the less open nature of such locations. Aside from the category which has no cases (bottom left: work, inside, private, transit), the least common type was where the victim was at leisure, inside and in a public location (n = 1, top left). In this region is the case of Francesco Fortugno, an Italian politician who was shot dead while at a polling station. Similarly, there were just two incidents where the victim was travelling indoors, in a public work location (also top left). Andrew Blake, a British businessman in Turkey, was killed in this situation, as he stepped into a lift at
Figure 11.6. Accessibility of Victim

Figure 11.6a. Transit Attacks

Figure 11.6b. Stationary Attacks
a public workplace. There were only four incidents where the victim was travelling, indoors and in a private, leisure situation (bottom left), for example Gerald Bull, a businessman involved in arms trading with Iraq, who was also stepping into a lift when he was killed, but in his apartment building, i.e. a private leisure situation.

Figure 11.6b shows the other ‘slice’ of the three dimensional plot, with all incidents where the target was not travelling, i.e. where they were stationary. Again, there are eight distinct combinations, and in this dimension all of the regions contain cases. As there are fewer cases in total, it is to be expected that there are also fewer incidents in each region. This is found to be true; even the region with most cases (n = 65) has fewer cases than the corresponding most common region in Fig. 11.6a (n = 70). The most commonly occurring type of incident falls in the bottom left, where the targets are stationary is where the target is in a private, indoor, leisure location (n = 65). An example of this type of attack is the case of Cecil McKnight, a former Ulster Defence Association commander turned Ulster Democratic Party politician, who was killed in his own home.

The next most common regions have similar frequencies: there are 35 cases where the target is in a public, outdoors, leisure situation (top right), including the case of Paolo Borsellino, an Italian magistrate who was killed outside his mother’s house while visiting. The other regions occur less frequently, with 17 cases occurring where the target is in a private, outdoors location while working (top right) (e.g. the case of Lalith Athulathmudali, a Sri Lankan politician, who was killed at a public political rally, while standing still talking to attendees), and 33 cases where the target is in a private, indoors location while working (bottom left) (e.g. Dmitry Kholodov, a journalist who was killed by a bomb in a briefcase, which he believed contained documents from a work source).

A further 14 cases are in a private, outdoors, leisure situation (bottom right), including the case of Ian Lyons, an alleged drugs dealer killed by the IRA. He was sitting in a car with his girlfriend when he was shot and killed. In 12 cases the target was in a public, indoors, leisure situation (top left), with the example of former Irish National Liberation Army member Dessie McCleery, who was killed in a restaurant.
Finally, in six instances the target was in an indoors, public work location (also top left) (e.g. influential Jewish Rabbi, Meir Kahane, who was shot in a hotel while at a work event), and in three cases the target was in an outdoors, private, work location (bottom right) (e.g. John McColgan, a driver who was killed in his taxi cab, while working).

In addition to examining the different types of accessibility, the location of attacks by specific perpetrators can also be examined. Of the terrorist-perpetrated attacks in this sample, the two most prolific groups are ETA (n = 17) and the IRA (n = 14). Figure 11.7 shows the regions in which these groups’ attacks fall, with ETA-perpetrated attacks indicated by blue shading, and the IRA attacks indicated by yellow shading. Where both groups act in a region, the shading appears green. Figure 11.7 shows that there is much similarity in this sample between the regions used by these two groups to target victims of political assassination. If the time in which they attack (work/leisure) is disregarded, then all ETA and IRA incidents occur in the same places. Both groups most commonly commit assassinations when the target is in transit, outside, and in a public location, with the main difference being in the time in which attacks occur: ETA tend to commit assassinations during the target’s leisure time, while the IRA attack during the target’s work time. Interestingly, neither group commits attacks when the target is in transit and in an indoors or private location.
Figure 11.7. Location of ETA and IRA assassinations
11.3 ‘STEREOTYPICAL’ ASSASSINATIONS

The types of assassination which have been identified here show that victims of assassination are targeted in a range of locations and times. However, these are not necessarily the ‘stereotypical’ situations that people may think of when they think of political assassination. It could be hypothesised that the commonly held stereotype of an assassination would be the shooting of a political figure at a public event.

A common finding in research in forensic psychology is that people over-estimate the occurrence of certain forms of a crime, for example, violent stranger rape (Wilson and Scholes, 2009), and it has been suggested that heuristics are responsible for the fact that these beliefs are still held, despite evidence to the contrary. Heuristics are cognitive ‘rules of thumb’, developed through experience, and used in uncertain conditions, where there is minimal or missing information, or where the individual is under time constraints, in order to speed up decision making and understanding of a situation (Eyre and Alison, 2010). However, systematic biases can arise from the use of these heuristics, which can lead to errors. ‘Belief persistence’ refers to the situation where individuals continue to hold incorrect beliefs, despite evidence to the contrary, because the heuristics are so strongly held. ‘Confirmation bias’ is similarly related to heuristics, and describes situations where any information which is not supportive of the hypothesis is discarded, rather than the hypothesis revised.

Various authors have discussed the way in which individuals construct ‘typical scenarios’ to understand complex situations, arguing that these tend to be based on media portrayals (Sime, 1990, Donald and Canter, 1992, Wilson and Smith, 1999). Thus, people’s understanding of political assassinations is likely to vary considerably from what actually happens, and their expectations of the situations where targets are most at risk may be subject to biased perceptions of frequency.

Incidents of political assassination which are salient to most people are those such as the assassinations of public figures such as Benazir Bhutto, John F Kennedy, Lord Mountbatten, and Martin Luther King. This, along with the heuristic beliefs
discussed above, may lead to an expectancy that assassination takes certain forms, for example, that assassinations occur in public work situations (e.g. Benazir Bhutto), such as rallies, or walkabouts, and private leisure situations (e.g. Lord Mountbatten), such as while holidaying.

The ‘types’ of accessibility which have been identified here can be summarised as four main types, as shown in Figure 11.8. These encapsulate the broad styles of assassination incidents. As Figure 11.8 shows, the public work situation such as the rally or walkabout accounts for only 16.75% of the deaths in this sample, while private work situations account for 21.75%, private leisure accounts for 32%, and public leisure 29.5%.

![Figure 11.8. Situational categories of political assassination incidents](image)

It was found that although there is no statistically significant association between the ‘archetype’ of assassination and whether the target was a political figure or not ($\chi^2 (3) = 10.409, p = 0.015$), there was a statistically significant association between the ‘archetype’ of assassination, and whether the more target was, more specifically, a politician or not ($\chi^2 (3) = 16.895, p = 0.001$).
11.4 THE VICTIM’S PREPAREDNESS

11.4.1 The Data

The second aspect of the situational vulnerability of the target is that of the target’s preparedness for an attack. In this analysis, the level of Victim Preparedness is defined by three variables, which describe whether or not the victim had been threatened prior to the attack (either by their eventual attacker, or by another person), whether they had survived a previous attempt on their life (again, by their killer or by another person), and whether they were protected by a bodyguard, or not, at the time of the attack.

Table 11.3
Presence/absence of Victim Preparedness variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>86.25</td>
<td>400 (100/%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No threats</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>86.25</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>400 (100/%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempts</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>89.75</td>
<td>400 (100/%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No attempts</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>89.75</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>400 (100/%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>400 (100/%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not protected</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>400 (100/%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11.3 shows the presence and absence of these variables. Where the presence of a behaviour was not stated in the data sources, it was treated as absent, and therefore these findings should be treated with some caution: it is possible that these behaviours were present with more frequency than shown here, but were not reported and so not included in this analysis. Table 6 shows that all 400 cases were used in this analysis. In more cases, the victim of political assassination had received no threats prior to their death (86.25%), with just 13.75% of this victims in this sample receiving threats. A similar figure had experienced no previous attempts on their life (89.75%), with a similarly low number of victims surviving a previous assassination attempt (10.25%). Finally, in just 18.5% of cases the target was protected at the time of the attack, with the target being unprotected in 81.5% of cases in this sample.
11.4.2 Content Analysis

As in the previous section, each case in the sample was coded according to the presence or absence of the three variables describing the victim's preparedness for attack. These variables are considered to both raise the victim's awareness of the likelihood of an attack, and also demonstrate a physical preparation for an attack. The Previous Threats variable is coded as present (2) if the victim has received threats in the past, directed at themselves or their family. A threat is anything in which the victim is told that they (or their family/friends) will be harmed. These may be written or verbal, and need not come from the assassin. The Previous Attempts variable is coded as present (2) if the target has experienced previous unsuccessful assassination attempts. These must have been directed at the victim. Finally, the Protected variable is coded as present (2) if the victim was protected by a bodyguard at the time of the attack. The result of the coding is a data matrix, a sample of which is shown in Figure 11.9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Threats (2)/ No Threats (1)</th>
<th>Attempts (2)/ No Attempts (1)</th>
<th>Protected (2)/ Not Protected (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cetin Emec</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajiv Gandhi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yann Piat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest Lluch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafiq Hariri</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11.9. Example Data Matrix

As before, the data matrix is used as the basis for the next stage of analysis. The present section has shown that there is variation in the level of preparedness demonstrated by victims of assassination, and the next stage is to investigate the relationships between these variables, which requires a multidimensional approach.

11.4.3 Interactions between variables

Table 11.4 shows the relationships between these variables. A number of chi-squares were conducted on a set of variables which were likely to contribute to the victim's
preparedness or expectation of an attack. A statistically significant association was found between the existence of previous threats against the target and whether there had been previous (unsuccessful) attempts on the target’s life, \( \chi^2 (1) = 29.585, p < .001 \). This seems to represent that based on the odds ratio, the target was 5.984 times more likely to have experienced previous attempts if there were previous threats, than if there were not.

Table 11.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Protected/Not Protected</th>
<th>Attempts/No Attempts</th>
<th>Threats/No Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi^2 )</td>
<td>( \chi^2 )</td>
<td>( \chi^2 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected/Not Protected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Attempts/No Attempts</td>
<td>7.417</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats/No Threats</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>29.585</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.948</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold text indicates significance at the .05 level.

A further chi-square was conducted on the data, again finding a statistically significant association between the target surviving previous attempts on their life, and whether they were under protection at the time of the current incident, \( \chi^2 (1) = 7.417, p = .006 \). An odds ratio of 2.584 was calculated, suggesting that the victim was more likely to have survived previous attempts if they were under protection at the time of the current attack, than if they were not under protection.

The chi-square conducted on the variables ‘threat’ and ‘protected’ found that there was no statistically significant association between the target receiving threats prior to the attack, and whether they were under protection at the time of the current incident, \( \chi^2 (1) = .004, p = .948 \).
11.4.4 The Results of the Preparedness MSA

As with the data on the accessibility of the target, the variables here were used to run an MSA, to identify commonalities between variables, and examine the underlying structure of victim preparedness. Figures 11.10-11.12 show the item plots for the Victim’s Preparedness analysis. As with the Accessibility analysis, the shaded areas show the presence of the variable. This analysis has a coefficient of contiguity 0.99997.

Figure 11.10. Shaded area indicates profiles where the target received Threats

Figure 11.10 shows the division between cases where the target received threats prior to the attack in the shaded region, and those cases where there were no threats reported in the unshaded region. The second variable, indicating whether or not the target was protected at the time of the attack, can be overlaid onto this, as in Figure 11.11.
Figure 11.11. Partition added to show presence of protection at the time of the attack.

As can be seen from Figure 11.11, the addition of the ‘protection’ variable divides the plot into four regions, rather than the previous two. In both of the original two regions, i.e. previous threats and no previous threats, there may or may not be the presence of a bodyguard, with cases in each of the four new regions.

Finally, Figure 11.12 shows the MSA plot with the third variable. This further divides the plot horizontally, creating eight regions. Those in the bottom section of the plot experienced no attempts on their life prior to their death, while the incidents in the top section survived a previous attempt prior to their death. These occur in just two of the four regions of the plot, at either side. On the left of the plot are incidents where the victim received threats, and survived previous attempts, but had no protection. On the right of the plot are incidents where the target had not received any threats, but had survived a previous attempt, and was protected. These three variables are shown together in Figure 11.13, presented as a schematic plot.
Figure 11.12. Bottom partition shows incidents where the target survived previous attempts.

Figure 11.13 shows that there are eight possible categories of victim preparedness, with all categories containing cases. Over half of the victims in this sample were unprepared for the attack, at least according to the variables used in this analysis, with no reported experience of previous attempts, no threats, and no bodyguard, shown in the bottom right corner of the plot (n = 267). An example of this type of where the target had a bodyguard, but no previous attempts or threats (n = 54), for example Luis Donaldo Colosio. Towards the bottom left, the plot shows that in 32 cases the victim had been threatened, but had experienced no attempts on their life and had no bodyguard, as in the case of French politician, Yann Piat. At the top right are those victims who have survived attempts but were not threatened and had no bodyguard in 14 cases. An example of such a case is the Indian politician, Rajiv Gandhi, while the killing of Chris Hani, head of the South African Communist Party, is an example of similar attacks in which victims received threats, but no attempts and employed no bodyguard, shown in the top left with 13 cases. In 10 cases (top
right) victims had survived previous attempts, and had a bodyguard but had received no threats, e.g. Giovanni Falcone, the head of the Italian Justice Ministry's penal division. Categories with the least cases were those in which threats had been made, and a bodyguard was employed although there were no incident is the killing of Francesco Fortugno, the Italian politician killed at a polling station. Also in the bottom right corner is the second most frequent type of attack, previous attempts (n = 6, bottom left, e.g. Paolo Borsellino), and where threats and attempts had been made, and a bodyguard was employed (n = 4, top left, e.g. Benazir Bhutto, the Pakistani politician).
11.5 SCALING SITUATIONAL VULNERABILITY

Having established that the situational vulnerability of political assassinations can be modelled, in terms of the accessibility of the victims of assassination, and their preparedness for an attack, this model will now be explored in more detail. First, the accessibility will be examined by assigning quantitative values to the different types of accessibility present in political assassinations. Sixteen types were identified, using four variables. The variable work or leisure gives an indication of the time of the attack, and the other three variables describe the location of the attacks according to whether they were inside or outside, in transit or stationary, and in a public or private location. It is the location of the attack that is taken forward in creating a scale of the accessibility of assassination. Each of the ‘types’ of accessibility identified in chapter 11 can be assigned a score which reflects the accessibility of the attack type. Incidents which are outdoors are considered to be in a more accessible location than those which are indoors, therefore outdoor attacks are scored as ‘2’ while indoor attacks are scored as ‘1’. Being in a public location is considered more accessible and as such is scored ‘2’, while attacks in private locations are scored as ‘1’. Attacks where the target is stationary are considered more accessible and are scored ‘2’ while attacks where the target is in transit are scored ‘1’. The variable relating to whether the target was attacked during work or leisure time is not included in this scale, as it does not contribute to the overall accessibility score. There is no way to establish whether being attacked during work or leisure time offers greater or lesser accessibility. The possible combinations of these variables is shown in the Hasse diagram in Figure 11.14.

This shows the different levels of accessibility, ranging from the least accessible at the bottom, represented by ‘111’, to the most accessible at the top, represented by ‘222’. The total scores are also listed, created by adding the individual scores, and resulting in 3 and 6 respectively. Between these minimum and maximum scores are the remaining levels of accessibility. There are three types of incident which are scored as four on the scale, and these are each qualitatively different. Although they score the same, the way in which they achieve that score differs. For example, the cases scored as ‘112’ were indoors (1), in a private location (1), and while stationary
Figure 11.14. Accessibility Scores

(2), whereas the ‘211’ cases were outdoors (2), in a private location (1), and stationary (1). On the next level up, there are another three types of assassination which score ‘5’ on accessibility. Again these are quantitatively the same, but differ qualitatively. The cases scored as ‘122’ are indoors (1), in a public location (2), while stationary (2), while those scored as ‘221’ were outdoors (2), in public (2), and in transit (1). It would be reasonable to expect that the cases with the lowest accessibility scores would occur least frequently, while those with the highest accessibility scores occur most frequently. Figure 11.15 shows the frequencies with which these scores appear in the sample, showing that there are few cases with a score of ‘3’ (low accessibility), verifying this. However, the highest number of attacks do not occur in the most accessible location, but instead in one of the least accessible, where the score is ‘4’.

Figure 11.16 shows the average accessibility score per incident over the years. By looking at this it is possible to identify whether there is any change in the accessibility of the targets over time. It may be that targets of assassination learn from others’ and avoid areas where they are especially at risk of assassination. However, there does not appear to be any obvious changes in Accessibility over time, and there is no statistically significant change in the victim’s level of accessibility over time (rho = -.074, p = .141).
**Figure 11.15.** Frequency of Accessibility Scores

**Figure 11.16.** Accessibility Scores Over Time
The second aspect of situational vulnerability is the preparedness of the victim for an attack. As with accessibility, the victim's preparedness for attack was modelled in chapter 11, according to the existence of previous threats made to the target, previous attempts survived by them, and whether or not they had a bodyguard with them at the time of the attack. These combine to create eight different 'types' of preparedness, which can be assigned a score in a similar way to those categories present in the victim's accessibility. Perhaps obviously, cases where there was a bodyguard were scored as '2', while where there was no bodyguard a score of '1' was given. If threats had been received prior to the attack '2' was given, while a '1' was given with no threats, and in the same way if the victim had survived a previous attempt the case was assigned '2' and where there were no attempts they were assigned '1'. The Hasse diagram in Figure 11.17 shows how the variables describing Victim Preparedness can be combined to create total Preparedness scores.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
222 \\
122 \\
212 \\
221 \\
112 \\
121 \\
211 \\
111 \\
\end{array}
= 6 \text{ (three variables)}
\]
\[= 5 \text{ (two variables)}
\]
\[= 4 \text{ (one variable)}
\]
\[= 3 \text{ (no variables)}
\]

**Figure 11.17.** Victim Preparedness Scores

The more variables that are present for the victim, the higher on the scale they rate. At the top of Figure 11.17 are cases where the victim had experienced Threats (2), and Attempts (2), and had a Bodyguard (2), thus being considered the most prepared victim. These cases score six, and it is suggested that these individuals would be both aware of potential attacks, and they have made physical preparations for an attack. Lowest on the scale will be the victim who has not experienced Threats (1) or
Attempts (1), and does not have a Bodyguard (1), resulting in a score of three.

Moving up Figure 11.15, there are three types of cases which score four, which are qualitatively different to one another. As with the accessibility scale, cases assigned a score of four may be protected by a bodyguard (2), but have received no previous threats (1) or survived any attempts (1), or they may have no bodyguard (1), nor threats (1) but may have survived previous attempts (2). Again, incidents scoring five are qualitatively different to one another, depending on the combination of variables.

Figure 11.18 shows the frequency of these attacks. It would be expected that the majority of incidents involved an unprepared target, as they would be most vulnerable to attack, and this is verified by the data. As the preparedness of the victim rises (according to these three variables), the number of cases falls, with fewest victims scoring '6' on the preparedness scale.

*Figure 11.18. Frequency of Victim Preparedness Scores*
Looking at the victim’s preparedness over time (Figure 11.19), there appears to be an upward trend, with a notable dip in 1999, and a peak in 2004. However, there was no statistically significant correlation between the year of attack, and the scores on the preparedness scale.

**Figure 11.19. Victim Preparedness Scores Over Time**

Having established the scoring, these scores can be used to examine the relationship between these two aspects of situational vulnerability, by correlating the scores assigned to each case. A Spearman’s rho was calculated, which showed that there was no statistically significant correlation between the two scales (rho = -.058, p = .245). The fact that there is no statistically significant correlation suggests that there is no relationship between the two scales, and that the victim’s accessibility at the time of the attack is not linked to their preparedness for attack. Despite the fact that there is no statistically significant relationship between these two aspects, it is possible to look at the relationship in another way. The accessibility MSA plot
presented in chapter 11 can be overlaid with the types of victim preparedness to understand the relationship better, as shown in Figure 11.20.

Figure 11.20 shows the accessibility MSA, with the Victim Preparedness scores overlaid, starting from the highest scores (most prepared) at the top in purple, down to the lowest scores (least prepared) at the bottom in orange. Figure 11.19 shows that the least prepared victims are targeted in all possible locations. Cases which score ‘4’ on the Victim Preparedness score (i.e. they had experienced one of the variables) occur in all regions bar the least accessible. Thus ill-prepared victims can be targeted in areas which are accessible, i.e. they are not targeted in the least accessible regions. Scores of ‘5’ on the Preparedness scale (i.e. the more prepared victims) also happen across the scale, and cases with a score of ‘6’ (i.e. the most prepared victims) do not occur at either extreme of accessibility. Prepared victims are not attacked in the least accessible areas, nor in the most accessible. It is possible that these individuals do not go to the most accessible areas, because of their previous experience, or that the bodyguards they employ are particularly effective.

These scales will be considered again in later chapter 12 and 13 in relation to other variables.
Figure 11.20. Victim Preparedness Scores overlaid onto Accessibility MSA
11.6 SUMMARY

Features of political assassination incidents and the behaviours of assassination victims have been analysed empirically, showing that there are at least two aspects of assassinations which have underlying behavioural structures; the accessibility of the victim at the time of the attack, and the victim’s level of preparedness for the attack. The physical location of the victim at the time of the attack has two dimensions, reflecting two aspects of the accessibility of the assassination victim. The Outside/Inside dimension refers to the physical properties of the location, while the Public/Private dimension refers to the ownership of the location, in terms of whether it is open to everyone (public) or is open only to specific individuals (private). The Accessibility model also considers the behaviour of the victim at the time of the attack: whether they were in transit or stationary, and whether they were at work, or at leisure. The interaction between each of these aspects creates a model of accessibility for the assassin. As discussed, these aspects combine to provide 16 different categories of accessibility, each of which is used with differing frequency. By examining how common the different categories are, it is possible to suggest that the safest situation for targets of political assassinations appears to be where the victim is in transit, while at work, in an inside, private location, as there are no incidents in this sample where an individual is (successfully) targeted while in this situation. Conversely, the most risky situation for targets of political assassins, in terms of frequency of assassinations, appears to be where the target is in transit, while at leisure in an outside, public location. By identifying the relative frequencies it may be possible to identify where targets are most at risk, and use this information to assist potential targets.

If those types of attacks were to be examined along the accessibility scale proposed previously, the most commonly occurring level of accessibility would score 4 out of 6, while the category with fewest cases would score 3, the lowest possible on the accessibility scale. Thus the victims of political assassination are rarely targeted in the hardest-to-access situations, which could be considered to require more organisation. However, although it may be expected that assassins would act in the most accessible locations, they do not; in fact, this is the second least common location in which attacks occur.
The second component of this Situational Vulnerability is the Victim’s Preparedness. There are two aspects to this; an awareness of the possibility of an attack due to previous threats and/or attempts, and as a physical preparation in the form of a bodyguard. Of the categories possible, the most common was where the victim was completely unprepared for the attack, having experienced no threats, no previous attempts, and had not employed a bodyguard. It is possible, that the individuals who are targeted by assassins in this sample are not expecting an attack at all, and so have no reason to take any steps in preparation (i.e. they employ no bodyguard). However, it might also be the case that they are unable to employ a bodyguard, or they are targeted when the bodyguard is off duty. The second most common level of victim preparation is that where the target has experienced one of the three variables; they have been threatened, survived a previous attempt, or employed a bodyguard. These three ‘types’ of preparedness account for exactly a quarter of the sample. Even fewer targets had experienced two of the variables, and just one percent had experienced all three prior to their death. Such findings support previous studies, for example research looking at attacks on European politicians found that all individuals who died had no bodyguards, suggesting that the absence increases risk of death (James, Mullen, Meloy, Pathé, Farnham, Preston & Darnley, 2007), although it does not prevent attack as two of the most serious woundings in James et al. occurred when the victim was protected by a bodyguard. Additionally, Fein and Voskuil (1998) reported that assassins rarely threaten their victims prior to attacking them.

Similar to the accessibility component, attacks where the target is most prepared are the rarest (n = 4), again suggesting that where the most organisation is required (on behalf of the perpetrator) the targets are least likely to be attacked. At the other end of the scale, where targets are least prepared, attacks are most frequent (n = 267) suggesting (perhaps obviously) that assassins prefer to attack where less organisation is required.

Considering these findings in relation to the literature, the current research provides mixed support for previous work. The finding that there are ‘high-frequency’ types of accessibility relates to the concept of ‘hotspots’ as discussed in Section 11.1
(Sherman, Gartin and Buerger, 1989). It has been suggested that crime may occur in hotspots, i.e. small areas where crimes occur with such frequency that they become predictable. Although this chapter does not look at geographical locations, it may be possible that there is a ‘generic hotspot’ in the type of location in which victims of political assassination are targeted. In this sample, one such hotspot would be outdoor, public locations, while targets are at leisure and in transit, with a high number of attacks occurring in this location. Thus it may be prudent for potential targets of assassination to be aware of the high likelihood of an attack when they are in this situation, and take appropriate steps as necessary. As well as looking at accessibility as an aspect of hotspots, it is also possible to consider how accessibility contributes to the idea of a ‘suitable target’. Cohen and Felson (1979) consider what makes a ‘suitable target’ for crime, finding that value, visibility, low inertia, and accessibility are key aspects. It is assumed that targets of political assassination are of value to the offender, as this is part of why they are targeted. Although the visibility of targets is not directly considered in this research, the inertia and accessibility are. Cohen and Felson (1979) argue that individuals in transit are less likely to be targeted than individuals who are stationary, but this is not borne out by this sample, with more attacks targeting individuals who are in transit than stationary. However, in this sample individuals who are walking are coded as ‘transit’, and so the discrepancy may arise because of this. They also suggest that the more accessible the target (outside rather than inside, public rather than private) are more likely to be targeted more often. Attacks in this sample are more often outside than inside, supporting Cohen and Felson. However, they are also more often in private than in public, not offering support for Cohen and Felson. Thus, there is mixed support for Cohen and Felson’s (1979) concept of the suitable victim.

Looking at the literature in relation to Victim Preparedness, Routine Activities Theory suggests that where there is an absence of a capable guardian (i.e. there is no bodyguard) more incidents should be expected, than where there is a capable guardian (i.e. there is a bodyguard). In this sample, less than one quarter of the cases involved the presence of a bodyguard, supporting the suggestion of RAT that attacks are more likely to take place where there is no guardian. However, it is important to note that this sample is solely comprised of completed attacks, where the target was
killed. It is possible that there are other attacks, where the target did not die due to the presence of a bodyguard. Thus this should be considered in future research. The literature also suggests that there may be links between Victim Preparedness and Accessibility. Although this chapter has not found a statistically significant relationship between the two aspects, overlaying VP scores onto the Accessibility MSA did suggest that there may some relationship between the two aspects. In addition, literature suggests that the idea of guardianship is also linked to the location of the attack or accessibility of the target. It is possible that in crowded areas with lots of people, an area can seem more anonymous, thus reducing the guardianship opportunities that individuals may perform in quieter locations (Roncek, 1981). Thus, incidents in public areas (where there are likely to be more people than in private areas) may mean a reduction in guardianship and therefore a greater chance of assassination, than in less crowded areas. While this does not seem to be supported in this sample, with just under half of the attacks occurring in public, it is important to remember that this sample consists solely of completed attacks where the target is killed, and it is possible that there are even more attacks occurring in public locations, but which are not successful and so are not present in this sample.

The current study has looked at two key aspects of political assassinations, the accessibility of the victim, and the preparedness of the victim. By basing the analysis on concrete, observable behaviours it goes some way to identifying the behavioural patterns and structures underlying assassination incidents. With further development and analysis of other aspects of political assassinations such as the assassins' resources and planning, this could be useful to organisations such as the security services.
12. The Specificity of Targeting in Political Assassinations

12.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 8, specificity has been shown to be an important concept in terrorist behaviour in assassinations (Wilson et al., 2010). In an analysis of ETA’s targeting, Wilson et al. (2010) examine how accurate their assassinations are, and whether or not they will injure or kill more people than just their target. Wilson et al. (2010) found that ETA’s assassination attacks ranged from those with low specificity (with individuals other than the intended target being killed or injured) to those with high specificity (with no or few individuals other than the intended target being killed or injured). In fact, with ETA, very few incidents had low specificity, with most actually having just one victim: the immediate target. This chapter will examine the level of specificity present in political assassination incidents in this broader sample. As in Wilson et al. (2010), ‘specificity’ refers to the accuracy of a political assassination incident, in terms of the number of individuals who are injured or killed in the attack, other than the intended target. Examining this in terms of other variables, relating to both the assassin and the victim, enables identification of situations in which those other than the intended target are likely to be at risk, and those where there is minimal risk.

In addition, examining the specificity contributes to the overall understanding of the phenomenon of political assassinations. As discussed in Chapter 2, political assassinations are often discounted from the wider field of terrorism research due to the fact that they are typically targeted at an individual, rather than a more representative target (e.g. Schmid, Jongman and Stohl, 1988), thus incurring fewer casualties and being less likely to induce personal fear. However, if political assassination incidents are found to be non-specific, and result in victims other than the intended target, there is support for the argument that political assassinations should in fact be considered as one form of terrorism.
This chapter will examine the specificity of assassination attacks, in terms of the number of ‘collateral victims’ in relation to the identity of the perpetrators of assassinations, the location and timing of assassinations, and the geographical region in which assassinations take place. Together these will provide an understanding of the way in which specificity varies according to the type of attack.

12.2 METHOD

12.2.1 The Data
As previously described (see Chapter 9), data on 400 political assassination incidents were collected. These data were content analysed on a series of variables. For the purposes of this study, just 380 cases were included in the analysis. A total of 20 cases were excluded as the presence and number of other victims was unclear, or unreported. In this sample of 380 cases, a total of 135 incidents (36%) resulted in victims other than the target, while in 245 cases (64%) there were no other victims. The term ‘collateral victims’ describes individuals other than the intended target who are either injured or killed in the attack. These collateral victims were coded broadly as either ‘Bodyguard Victims’ (i.e. the other victim(s) was the target’s bodyguard and therefore responsible for their safety) and ‘Civilian Victims’ (i.e. they were not responsible for the target’s safety, they were bystanders, either with no links to the target, or as part of the target’s family or entourage). Although it may have been beneficial to differentiate between ‘pure bystanders’ and those who could be considered part of the intended target’s entourage, the data did not offer sufficient information with which to make this distinction. Therefore the decision was taken to use these two broad categories.

Of the 135 cases (36%) with collateral victims, five incidents resulted in only bodyguard victims, with no civilian victims. There were 105 incidents (28%) were there were civilian victims but no bodyguard victims. A further 25 (7%) had both bodyguard victims and civilian victims. Thus, as shown in Table 12.1, the majority of cases had no other victims, followed by just civilian victims, and a combination of
bodyguard and civilian victims. The least common type of ‘collateral’ victim was just bodyguard victims.

Table 12.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No other victims</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodyguard victims</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian victims</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodyguard and Civilian victims</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking in more detail, it is possible to see that the number of collateral victims in the attack ranged from zero (n = 245, where the only victim was the intended target) to 141 (n = 1) (see Figure 12.1).

![Figure 12.1. Number of cases with ‘collateral victims’](image-url)
In addition, looking at the average number of collateral victims in incidents over time suggests that there is an increase over time, with the highest number of collateral victims occurring in 2008, and the lowest number in 2002 (see Figure 12.2). However, the peaks in the plot can be explained to some extent by a few cases with very high numbers of collateral victims. For example, in 2008 one incident resulted in 113 collateral victims. In 2005, one incident resulted in 141 collateral victims, and in 2003 there was one case where there were 100 collateral victims. In 2000 one assassination incident resulted in 70 collateral victims. Thus the increase in collateral victims over time is skewed by these cases, all of which are the result of bombing attacks (the 2005 and 2000 attacks were car bombs, while the 2008 and 2003 attacks were suicide bombings).

Figure 12.2. Average Number of Collateral Victims per incident, over time

These four cases are considered outliers (i.e. with very high numbers of collateral victims) and therefore they will not be included in this analysis. The first is the
assassination of Jose Francisco Querol, a Supreme Court judge in Spain, killed by a
car bomb, when he was outdoors, travelling to work by car. No responsibility claim
was made, but it was believed that ETA were responsible. The incident resulted in 70
collateral victims. The second case is that of Mohammed Baqir Al-Hakim, a Shia
religious leader killed in an outdoors place during his work hours, in Iraq by a
suicide bomb. This incident resulted in 100 collateral victims, and although no
responsibility claim was made, Sunni extremists were suspected. The third case is the
assassination of Jeyaraj Fernandopulle, where 113 collateral victims were killed or
injured. He was the Sri Lankan roads minister, killed by a suicide bomb, while at an
outdoor work event. Again, the attack was not claimed, although the Tamil Tigers
were suspected. The final case excluded as an outlier resulted in 141 collateral
victims. This was the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, the Lebanese politician and
former Prime Minister. He was killed by a car bomb, again while travelling outdoors
during his work time. Unlike the other outliers, a group calling themselves Jihad and
Victory in Greater Syria claimed this attack.

The fact that these very non-specific incidents are the result of bomb attacks suggests
that the type of weapon used is an area that may benefit from further investigation
(see Chapter 13). When the four outliers discussed above are removed, the graph of
collateral victims over time changes, as in Figure 12.3. Here it is clear that the
maximum average number of collateral victims is lower, with a maximum of around
six per incident, rather than the previous average of nearly 12 per incident. There are
also less exaggerated peaks and dips than in Figure 12.2.
Figure 12.3. Average Number of Collateral Victims per incident, over time (n = 376).

12.2.2 Data Coding — The Assassin Variables

As this chapter will examine the relationships between collateral victims and other aspects of assassination, the variables under examination will be recapped in this section. As discussed in Chapter 10, there are three categories of perpetrator of political assassination: ‘Government’, ‘Terrorist’, and ‘Individual’. Table 12.2 shows the frequency with which these occur in this sample.

In 201 cases (53%) there was no claim of responsibility, from a terrorist group, a government or an individual. Thus, in the majority of cases it is actually unknown who committed the attack. In 100 incidents (27%) a terrorist group was responsible for the attack. In 47 incidents (12%) evidence showed that a government was involved in the attack, and in just 28 cases (7%) an individual was found responsible for the assassination.
Table 12.2

Frequency of Perpetrator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No claim</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.2.3 Data Coding – The Main Target

Again, Chapter 10 detailed the identity of targets of political assassination. For this analysis the targets are coded simply as ‘Political’ or ‘Not Political’, where the political category incorporates politicians, those who were previously politicians or related to politicians, country leaders, government officials, diplomats and political activists. Table 12.3 shows that slightly more targets are non-political (56%) than are political (44%).

Table 12.3

Frequency of Victim Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Victim</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non political</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.2.4 Data Coding – The Attack

As demonstrated in chapter 11, the data on the actual attacks were coded using eight variables describing the location. These are again used here, and therefore attacks are coded as Inside/Outside, Transit/Stationary, or Work/Leisure, as shown in Table 12.4. In this sample of 376 cases, political assassination incidents primarily occurred when the target is outside (68%) rather than inside (32%). Attacks are more common during leisure time (63%) than work time (37%), and while the target is in transit (53%) rather than stationary (47%).
Table 12.4  
*Frequency of attack features*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attack features</th>
<th>N =</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work time</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure time</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This specificity study utilises one further variable related to the attack; that of the region of the world in which the attack took place, using the categories defined by the GTD (www.start.edu/GTD) (as in chapter 10).

Table 12.5  
*Region of attack*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>N =</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia and Newly Independent States</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America and Caribbean</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia and Oceania</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As in chapter 10, Table 12.5 shows the region in which the incident took place. The majority of incidents in this sample occurred in Western Europe (32.9%). Middle East and North African areas accounted for a further 23.7% of attacks, while Russia and the Newly Independent States account for 13.6%. Attacks in Sub-Saharan Africa provide 7.4% of the sample, and South American assassinations provide 4%. Similarly, 3.5% of the attacks occurred in Eastern Europe. Fewer attacks occurred in North America (1.6%), East Asia (1.3%), Central America and Caribbean (1.1%), Southeast Asia and Central Asia (each with 0.5%), and Australasia and Oceania (0.3%). In 0.5% of cases, the region was unclear or not reported.

12.3 RESULTS: SPECIFICITY AND ASSASSINATIONS

The number of victims in a political assassination attack can be represented visually, as Figure 12.4 shows. The analysis in this chapter will focus on the centre of the plot, where numbers of collateral victims in cases range from zero, to 50. As the scale demonstrates, the inner circle indicates cases where there are zero collateral victims (n = 245), with the concentric circles representing higher numbers of collateral victims as the points move towards the outer circles. There is just one point in this inner-most circle, as there can only be 1 ‘level’ of collateral victims in this region: all are zero. The second band includes cases with between one and ten collateral victims (n = 115), with the nine points representing the cases where there was one collateral victim, two collateral victims, three collateral victims, four collateral victims, five collateral victims, six collateral victims, seven collateral victims, eight collateral victims, and ten collateral victims. Individually, as with the analysis in Chapter 11, these points can each represent more than one case. For example, the point representing cases with one collateral victim represented 49 actual assassination incidents. The third band contains seven points representing cases with between 11 and 20 collateral victims (n = 9), the fourth band contains four points which have between 21 and 30 collateral victims (n = 6), and the sixth and outermost band contains one point which has between 41 and 50 collateral victims (n = 1). There is one band which contains no points, the fifth. This would contain cases which incurred 31-40 collateral victims, but in this sample there were no such cases.
Figure 12.4: Example Specificity Plot
An important feature of Figure 12.4 is that the range of collateral victims in this sample of political assassination incidents is not very broad. The majority of incidents fall within the narrowest central ring, meaning that there are no collateral victims. Beyond this central region, nearly one third of the attacks fall in the second ring, representing the attacks which resulted in between one and ten collateral victims. In general then, political assassinations are reasonably specific, with most attacks resulting in ten or fewer collateral victims. Just over 4% of cases resulted in more than ten collateral victims.

Other variables can then be overlaid onto this plot, to examine relationships between them. For example, the collateral victims of an attack can be sub-divided into bodyguard victims, and civilian victims. This variable can be overlaid onto the plot, to show both how many victims there are, and what type of victim these were.

12.3.1. Specificity and the Perpetrators of Assassinations
The first set of results in this chapter focus on the identity of the assassin, and the relationship of this variable with other aspects of assassination incidents. The purpose of this section is to identify differences between the numbers of collateral victims caused by the different types of assassin. The assassin is considered as either a terrorist group, a government, an individual, or another type of person/group. The type of victim is also considered in relation to the type of perpetrator, along with the regions of the world in which the different types of perpetrator act.

12.3.1.1. Specificity x Assassin Identity
This first plot (Figure 12.5) shows the level of specificity, depending on the type of perpetrator. As discussed in chapter 2, a key factor in the argument against including political assassinations as a type of terrorism is the identity of the victim. Some argue that political assassinations only target and kill the one person, and therefore do not have the wider victimisation that is required for an act to be terrorism. However, some political assassinations do kill individuals other than the target, and so it is useful to examine these real life political assassination incidents, and identify the number of victims caused by terrorist-perpetrated assassinations.
Figure 12.5. Specificity x Assassin Identity

Number of Collateral Victims
- 41-50 (n=1)
- 31-40 (n=0)
- 21-30 (n=6)
- 11-20 (n=9)
- 1-10 (n=115)
- 0 (n=245)
Figure 12.5 shows that the range of the number of collateral victims caused by a terrorist-perpetrated assassination was between 1 and 20. Terrorist-perpetrated attacks appear to result in the fewest collateral victims. Government perpetrated attacks resulted in a maximum of 21-30 other victims, while attacks perpetrated by individuals, or unspecified others have a range up to 41-50. Thus terrorist perpetrated assassinations do incur victims other than the target, although the number of victims seems lower than others. A Kruskal-Wallis test was used to examine the relationship between the type of perpetrator and the number of collateral victims, finding that number of collateral victims was statistically significantly affected by perpetrator type ($H_{(2)} = 45.658$, $p<.001$). Mann-Whitney tests were used to follow up this finding, with all effects reported at the $p<.001$ level of significance. It appears that government-sponsored attacks resulted in statistically significantly more collateral victims than both terrorist assassinations ($U = 997.5$, $r = -.530$), and assassinations perpetrated by individuals or others ($U = 2973$, $r = -.347$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the number of collateral victims in terrorist assassinations or those perpetrated by individuals/others ($U = 10645$, $r = -.081$). It is of course possible that this is because terrorist groups are reluctant to claim incidents in which there are a large number of collateral victims, due to their need or desire to retain the public's support for their cause. It is possible that the increased lethality of government attacks is due to the nature of the attacks, as government sponsored attacks are commonly carried out using weapons such as explosive devices, which can be less specific than other types of attacks such as shootings. This will be discussed further in chapter 13.

As in chapter 11, it is possible to look in more detail at the named terrorist groups groups who perpetrated attacks in this sample. There are two main groups who use assassinations most frequently: ETA, and the IRA. An analysis of just those attacks which were perpetrated by ETA ($n = 16$) shows that they resulted in an average of .37 collateral victims per incident, with a maximum of four collateral victims in ETA assassinations. A similar mean was found in the number of collateral victims in attacks perpetrated by the IRA ($n = 14$), with an average of .36 collateral victims per incident, and a maximum of just 1 collateral victim.
Thus these two terrorist groups, both of whom have been found to use political assassination as a tactic, result in relatively low levels of collateral victims. These two groups will be considered again in chapter 13, in an examination of the methods used in political assassinations.

12.3.1.2. Specificity x Assassin Identity x Victim Identity

Figure 12.6 again shows the relationship between specificity and who the perpetrator was, but also looks at whether targets are political or not. As in Figure 12.5, as the points move further away from the centre of the plot, the more collateral victims there were. Both political and non-political victims were targeted by all assassin types, with the majority of attacks clustered towards the centre of the plot. It should be noted that terrorist assassinations are targeted at both political and non-political individuals.

Those incidents with the highest numbers of collateral victims are those where political victims were targeted, with the target of the one case where there were over 41 collateral victims being an Algerian politician. However, there are cases where attacks on non-political targets also resulted in large numbers of collateral victims. It appears then, that the type of victim does not relate to the number of collateral victims.

The next section looks at where and when assassination incidents occur.
12.3.2 Specificity and Location of Assassinations

This section examines the relationship between the specificity of political assassination incidents, and the nature of the location of the attack. The purpose of this is to identify where collateral victims are likely to be incurred, in terms of the physical location (inside or outside, in transit or stationary, and at work or leisure). This is combined with the ‘type’ of collateral victim. For this section, the collateral victims are divided into the number of civilian victims (in the concentric rings on the plot, ranging from 0-50) and the number of bodyguard victims (in the segments, ranging from 0-10). This way it is possible to also see who is at risk in these locations. The figure used in this section is slightly different to that used in 12.3.1. Instead of bands representing the total number of collateral victims (civilian victims and bodyguard victims), they represent the number of civilian victims, and are then further divided into ‘segments’ on the basis of the number of bodyguard victims. Thus the frequencies are also different to those shown in 12.3.1. Currently the literature only shows that political individuals are killed in assassinations. In reality political assassination incidents result in victims other than just the target, meaning that other people are at indeed at risk in assassination incidents. Therefore the purpose of this section is to identify who these ‘other victims’ are. If they are bodyguards of the target, they are likely to already be aware of the risk. If civilians (i.e. not the bodyguards, nor the target) these individuals are likely to be less aware of the risk.

12.3.2.1 Specificity x Inside/Outside Location x Bodyguard Victims

The first combination to be examined is the type of victim, and whether the target was inside or outside at the time of the attack. Figure 12.7 shows this represented visually. The majority of cases have no collateral victims at all (i.e. no civilian or bodyguard victims, n = 245), represented in the inner-most band, in the first segment (labelled ‘Bodyguard Victims = 0’). There are fewer cases where there were no Bodyguard Victims but were civilian victims (in the same segment but outside of the innermost band, n = 103).

Where there are bodyguard victims, the majority of points on the plot indicate that these attacks take place outside rather than inside. Looking at the incidents where
Figure 12.7. Location of Attack
there were no bodyguard victims, but were civilian victims, the cases in the outer rings, with 31-50 civilian victims actually take place inside, rather than outside. Thus it appears that the type of victim varies with the location of the attack. Interestingly, statistically significant associations were found between the presence of bodyguard victims, and whether the target was indoors or outdoors at the time of the attack ($\chi^2(1) = 11.025$, $p = 0.001$). The odds ratios seem to suggest that an attack was less likely to incur bodyguard victims when the attack was inside than outside (OR = 0.072).

12.3.2.2. Specificity x Transit/Stationary Victim x Bodyguard Victims

Figure 12.8 builds on the examination of the location of the assassination incidents, and how these relate to the specificity of the attack. In 177 of the 376 incidents the target of the attack was stationary, rather than being in transit. It appears that in the incidents where there were no bodyguard victims, there are more attacks where the target is stationary, rather than in transit. In fact, there was a statistically significant association between whether the target was in transit or not, and the presence of bodyguard victims ($\chi^2(1) = 16.053$, $p < 0.001$), with the odds ratio suggesting that the attack was 8.333 times more likely to incur bodyguard victims when the victim was in transit than when they were stationary. This is shown on the plot, with the segments where there are bodyguard victims having more points where victims are in transit rather than stationary.

12.3.2.3. Specificity x Work/Leisure x Bodyguard Victims

Figure 12.9 shows whether the target was attacked during work or leisure hours. In general, incidents which took place during the target's working hours (mean rank = 207.88) actually are more likely to result in statistically significantly more victims than attacks during leisure hours (mean rank = 177, $U = 13806.5$, $p = 0.002$, $r = -.162$). It appears that where there are no bodyguard victims attacks take place during both work and leisure hours. However, in this segment the incidents with more civilian victims (31-50) are during leisure hours rather than work hours.
This section has examined the specificity of assassination incidents depending on the location of the attack (inside/outside, public/private), the behaviour of the target at the time of the attack (transit/stationary), and the time of the attack (during work/leisure hours). The next section will consider the differences in assassinations depending on the geographical region in which they take place.
Figure 12.9. Victim’s Behaviour
12.3.3. Specificity and Geographical Location

This section examines the specificity of political assassination incidents in terms of their geographic location. As shown in chapter 8, a key aspect of routine activities theory (RAT) is the idea of hotspots. These are areas where crime frequently and repeatedly occurs, creating a concentration of offending in one particular area. This section takes an exploratory look at this in relation to assassination, using the region in which the attack takes place to identify potential hotspots. Although the categorisation is broad, it may nevertheless highlight more at risk areas. This could highlight where potential targets are at heightened risk of attack, which would identify where more precautions such as security, vetting of people, or even avoiding certain regions altogether (where feasible), could or should be taken.

Figure 12.10 shows the specificity in assassinations according to the geographical location. In this section, the circles again represent both bodyguard and civilian victims. The segments represent a different geographical region. The least specific attacks occur in the Middle East and North Africa, with between 41 and 50 collateral victims in attacks in this region. Sub-Saharan Africa, Western Europe and South America also have less specific attacks, each with attacks resulting in between 21 to 30 collateral victims. The only region where there are no collateral victims is East Asia.
12.3.3.1. Specificity x Assassin Identity x Geographical Location
The next stage is to examine the geographical region in which the incidents of political assassination take place. This can be combined with the type of assassin, to establish whether there is any relationship between the identity of the perpetrator and the location in which they act. Figures 12.11-12.14 show the region in which attacks took place, combined with the number of collateral victims, and the perpetrator’s identity.

In four regions, (Central America and Caribbean, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Unknown) all of the attack perpetrators were classed as ‘other’, i.e. there were no known government or terrorist perpetrators. In one further region (Australasia and Oceania) an individual was the perpetrator, although there was just one incident in this region. In all of the other regions the perpetrators were a mix of terrorist, government, individuals and others.

The least specific attacks occur in Middle East and North Africa. These were perpetrated by ‘individuals’, and resulted in between 41 and 50. The more specific attacks occur in all regions, and are the responsibility of all types of perpetrators: terrorists, governments, individuals and others.

Looking specifically at the regions in which terrorists have claimed assassination incidents, these are North America, South America, South Asia, Western Europe, Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Governments have been implicated in assassinations in eight regions, specifically North America, South America, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Western Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Russia and the Newly Independent States. Finally, individuals have been active in North America, South America, East Asia, South Asia, Western Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Russia and the Newly Independent States, and Australasia and Oceania, a total of 9 regions. Thus there appear to be no regions which are dominated by one type of perpetrator.
However, there are a number of regions in which no cases are perpetrated by terrorists, governments, or individuals. In four regions (Central American and Caribbean, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Unknown) all attacks were the responsibility of 'others', i.e. no one claimed responsibility for these attacks, and there was no evidence of who conducted them.

12.3.3.2. Specificity x Geographical Location x Victim Identity
This analysis examines the way in which geographical location interacts with the identity of the victim, i.e. whether the target of attack is a political figure, or not. A total of 144 attacks were targeted at political figures. Figure 12.15 shows that there are political victims in all regions in this analysis, showing that political figures are targeted across the world. The political victims are also spread across the plot, showing that the specificity of the attack does not appear to be influenced by the political standing of the target victim. Attacks on both political and non-political victims can result in collateral victims, across regions.
Figure 12.11. Region & Perpetrator Identity: Terrorist
Figure 12.12. Region and Perpetrator Identity: Government
Figure 12.13. Region and Perpetrator Identity: Individual
Figure 12.15. Region & Victim Identity

Key:
- Political
- Non-political
- Combination of Political & Non-political victims

Legend:
- 0 (n=245)
- 1-10 (n=115)
- 11-20 (n=9)
- 21-30 (n=6)
- 31-40 (n=3)
- 41-50 (n=1)

Regions:
- North America
- South America
- Central America & Caribbean
- South Asia
- Southeast Asia
- Western Europe
- Eastern Europe
- Russia & Newly Independent States
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Middle East & North Africa
- Australasia & Oceania
- Unknown

Number of Collateral Victims
12.4 SPECIFICITY IN RELATION TO SITUATIONAL VULNERABILITY

Having examined the specificity of attacks in relation to various other aspects, the previously modelled aspects (Accessibility and Victim Preparedness) can also be related to the specificity. Figure 12.16 shows the average number of victims incurred according to the scores on the Accessibility scale. The least accessible attacks (scored as ‘3’) incur the lowest average collateral victims per attack. The second least accessible attacks (scored as ‘4’) incur the highest average collateral victims per attack. Thus it would seem that in this sample the least accessible attacks are safest, in terms of the risk posed to individuals other than the target. However, the most dangerous types of assassination do still happen in low-accessibility areas, likely because more ‘forceful’ methods are required to ensure the target is reached in the attack.

![Bar chart showing mean number of collateral victims by Accessibility Score]

NB: Based on n = 376

*Figure 12.16. Average number of deaths according to Accessibility Score*
Supporting this, attacks where the target was at work and in a private location are shown to have statistically significantly more victims than attacks where the target was at leisure or in a public location (Table 12.6).

Table 12.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean rank</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>207.88</td>
<td>13806.5</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>177</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>174.72</td>
<td>15167.5</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>-.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Public</td>
<td>199.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a Spearman's rho was calculated, which showed that there was a positive statistically significant correlation between the Accessibility scale, and the number of collateral victims (rho = .155, p = .022). Thus as the accessibility of the attack increases, so too does the number of collateral victims (i.e. the Specificity reduces).

Figure 12.17 shows the average number of collateral victims according to the scores on the Victim Preparedness.
The fewest collateral victims are incurred where the Victim Preparedness was scored at ‘3’, i.e. victims were unprepared for attack, having experienced none of the three possible variables (threat or previous attempt or bodyguard presence). Interestingly the highest number of collateral victims is caused by attacks with the highest level of preparedness (score of ‘6’). It is possible that where the target has a bodyguard and has survived previous attempts, and has received threats, the perpetrator uses more destructive methods, e.g. explosives, to ensure that they achieve their aim of killing the target. However, attacks where the victim is scored ‘4’ on victim preparedness (i.e. they have experienced one ‘preparedness’ variable) also incur a high number of collateral victims per incident.

Interestingly, Mann-Whitney tests show that attacks where the victim had received threats before their death (mean rank = 163.7) tend to result in fewer collateral deaths than attacks where there were no previous threats ((mean rank =
192.48) $U = 7134.5, p = .037, r = -.108$), while attacks where the victims had a bodyguard at the time of the attack result in more collateral victims (mean rank = 261.62) than attacks where there was no bodyguard (mean rank = 174.62, $U = 5093, p < .001, r = -.345$). Again, a Spearman’s rho was calculated, finding a positive statistically significant correlation between the Victim Preparedness scale and the number of collateral victims (rho = .219, p < .001), showing that the more ‘prepared’ for an assassination a target is, the higher the number of collateral victims tends to be (i.e. the lower the specificity).

12.5 SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the level of specificity present in political assassination incidents. It was found that in general, political assassination incidents are specific, as they tend to have a low number of victims other than the target. However, there are nevertheless some interesting findings regarding different aspects of assassination incidents.

Incidents perpetrated or supported by a Government tend to result in more casualties than non-Government attacks. However, incidents which have been claimed by terrorist groups mainly have low numbers of collateral victims. It is possible that this finding is because terrorist groups are unlikely to claim non-specific incidents, due to the potential negative publicity, but it may also be because terrorist groups are better able to plan specific attacks, thanks to the resources available to them. In fact, incidents which are backed by terrorist groups also tend to have low numbers of bodyguard victims (a maximum of one per incident). This offers support to the theory that terrorist perpetrators are able to plan attacks when the target is likely to be vulnerable, and without protection. Equally, they may be very good at targeting the individual they want to harm. In addition, incidents which have been claimed by an individual also have no bodyguard victims. This is likely to be because those working alone may which to target those who are easier to access, i.e. without a bodyguard, or they may only wish to kill their target and actually intend not to harm others.
In terms of how the victim's behaviour and location affect specificity, it was found that incidents in which the target was in transit (i.e. moving) tend to have few cases of bodyguard victims. In addition, ambush attacks show a tendency to be specific (with a maximum of 20 collateral victims) but with a potentially high number of bodyguard victims. The overlap between these behaviour types should be noted, as ambushes must take place when the victim is in transit. Thus these transit attacks are likely to be specific, and where there are high numbers of bodyguard victims, it is likely that those attacks involve an ambush.

In terms of the factors relating to non-specific attacks, i.e. those with high numbers of collateral victims, the less specific attacks tend to take place in public places, and in outdoor locations. Common sense suggests that it is in such locations that there would most likely be more people (compared to private or indoor locations where numbers may be limited), and therefore more potential for collateral victims. In addition, there are more bodyguard victims in outdoor attacks than indoor attacks, suggesting that victims may feel safe enough to not require bodyguards when they are indoors. However, the fact these people are still targets suggest that bodyguards may be required at all times.

Political victims are the targets of the least specific attacks. As political individuals are likely to be higher profile than other potential targets, and potentially facing a higher risk of attack, it is possible that the low specificity reflects this. Rather than risk a targeted attack which may require close proximity to the target (e.g. a stabbing, beating etc), assassins may prefer to use a more 'hands off' approach, such as a bombing, where the bomb can be planted in advance and detonated while the assassin is absent from the scene. In such cases it is plausible to assume that a bomb would harm more bystanders/bodyguards than say, a shooting or stabbing. In addition, regardless of the nature of the weapon used, the assassins may be so keen to be successful in their attack that they use a more 'deadly' approach, to ensure their success.
The least specific attacks take place during the target’s work hours, rather than their leisure hours. It is likely that an individual’s work place would be easier to identify than their home address, particularly if they are a high profile individual. In addition, where the target is killed at a public event, such as a rally, it would be easy for the assassin to identify both their location, and the likely time that the target would be available.

Finally, there do appear to be some regional differences, in terms of worldwide location. There are clear frequency differences across regions, with some having very few attacks and others having a large number. Those regions with the least specific attacks were in Middle East and North Africa, Western Europe, and Unknown regions. It is possible therefore that these are the regions in which targets are most at risk, or that these are the regions in which the perpetrators are more concerned with killing the target, regardless of how many others they injure or kill in the process.

Here there may be some policy implication, in that when targets are in crowds/busy areas/at gatherings they could be warned to be vigilant for risks. Or, if the motivation is to reduce victim numbers, if a risk has already been identified it may be beneficial for the target to avoid crowds for a period.
13. Methods used in Political Assassinations

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 12 showed that in reality, political assassinations do not affect just the main target, but actually often result in the death and injury of bystanders and bodyguards. This chapter will build on the understanding of political assassinations by examining the methods by which the perpetrators commit these attacks. Wilson et al. (2010) examined the weaponry used in assassinations committed by the terrorist group ETA, suggesting that the weapon used may work as a measure of proximity between the target and the assassin, where for example, attacks can be highly proximal, such as a kidnapped victim shot in the head, through to ‘hands off’ attacks such as a remotely detonated explosive device.

This chapter considers the range of methods used in the present sample in order to better understand the way that assassinations are carried out. There are different types of weapon available to assassins, e.g. bombing, guns, and manual attacks, and the choice of weapon both influences and is influenced by the assassins’ presence at the scene of the attack, i.e. whether or not they are present at the scene, and whether or not they employ an ambush. According to rational choice theory, the assassin weighs up both the costs and benefits of options available to them and then selects the most beneficial/the one most suited to their needs. This forms a key part of understanding behaviour in political assassinations, from the assassins’ perspective. By examining the methods used in political assassinations it is possible to identify the most likely type of threat facing prominent individuals, and prepare better for that. It will also be possible to explore the relationships between weapons, situational vulnerabilities, and collateral victims.
13.2 METHOD

13.2.1 The Data
As discussed in chapter 9, data on political assassinations were collected and coded according to a series of variables, of which six are used in the following analyses, relating to the way in which the assassination was conducted in terms of weaponry and 'modus operandi'. Of the 400 cases discussed in chapter 9, 395 were included in this analysis. Cases of poisoning were excluded (n=4) due to the very low number of such cases, as well as one further case where the method used was not reported.

13.2.2 Data coding
The variables used in this analysis describe the weapon used in the attack, and the presence or absence of the assassin. The first variable, 'ambush', shows those cases in which an ambush was used, i.e. those cases in which the convoy in which the target was travelling was forcibly stopped by the assassin(s), in order to carry out the assassination. The second variable, 'assassin present', shows whether or not an assassin was present at the scene and at the time of the attack. In cases where there was more than one assassin (which is not coded here), this variable is coded as present providing at least one of the perpetrators was present at the time of the attack. The number of assassins is not included in this analysis, as although it offers a measure of manpower, this chapter is not looking at manpower and resources. Instead, it is examining the level of contact between target and assassin, and how this interacts with weapon choice. Thus, it is the presence of an assassin which is important, as opposed to the number of those assassins.

Table 13.1 shows the frequency of these variables in this sample. In the majority of cases the assassin was present at the scene at the time of the attack (86%), while an ambush was used in a minority of incidents (8%).
Table 13.1

Presence of the assassin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assassin Present</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assassin Not Present</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>395</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambush used</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ambush used</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>395</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining four variables describe the weapon used. Table 13.2 shows the ways in which targets were killed. Of 395 cases, a weapon was used in 384 cases. The majority of victims were killed by gun (72%), and the second most commonly used weapon was an explosive device (20%), with 3% being suicide bombs. The third most popular method was a manual killing (e.g. beating, stabbing, 9%). The total number of cases here sums to more than 400, as in some cases more than one method was used to kill the victim.

Table 13.2

Weapon used in political assassinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gun</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explosive device</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide bomb</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These four weapon types were coded for use in this analysis, as these account for the majority of the attacks. The variable ‘gun’ is self-explanatory: if coded as present then the target was killed by a gunshot. ‘Explosive device’ is also relatively clear, as it describes any form of explosive device, including, for example, car bombs, letter bombs, or suicide bombs. Suicide bombs are listed as a separate sub-type of
explosive device because they are considered qualitatively different to other bomb types, requiring the assassin’s presence at the scene, and close contact with the target. In this sense they are a ‘special case’; by the nature of a suicide bomb the contact between victim and target must be higher than another type of bomb. Thus they are highlighted in this analysis. The final weapon variable is ‘manual’, which may be less clear. A manual attack is any in which an automated weapon is not used and the assassin is required to be present, thus any incident where the victim is beaten to death (with or without an implement), stabbed (or killed in some other way with a knife), hung, smothered, strangled, or pushed from a building. Again, these subtypes are not included in this analysis. Although there are large differences between, say, strangling a person and pushing them off a building, at their most basic both require minimal or no weaponry, but do require physical contact between assassin and victim. The purpose of this variable is to reflect the complexity or otherwise of the ‘weapon’ or method used to cause the death of the target, rather than reflecting any underlying motivation. These weapon-related variables were selected as they describe the weapon used in the majority of incidents.

Each case was then content analysed, creating a data matrix (see Figure 13.1 for an example of the coding), which represents features of the attack numerically, with (2) representing the presence of the variable, and (1) representing the absence. This is then used as the basis for the analysis, where the inter-relationships between these six variables are considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Assassin Present</th>
<th>Ambush</th>
<th>Gun</th>
<th>Explosive Device</th>
<th>Suicide Bomb</th>
<th>Manual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Menn</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica Guerin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Gow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diego Turbay</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tareq Ayoub</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 13.1. Example of the Data Matrix coding*
13.3 RESULTS: METHODS OF ASSASSINATION

As in chapters 11 and 12, Multidimensional Scalogram Analysis (MSA) was used to analyse the data. The data matrix was used (as in previous chapters) to examine the relationships between both the different variables, and the individual cases in the analysis. Again, points in the plots represent different ‘types’ of assassination, with the possibility that each point represents more than one case. The plot is partitioned according to the presence or absence of each variable, with a straightforward partition meaning that the solution is a better fit. The coefficient of contiguity for this MSA is 0.926.

Figure 13.2 presents the variables describing the assassins’ behaviour, showing whether they were present, and whether an ambush was used.

Figure 13.2. MSA plot of assassination mode partitioned according to the behaviour of the assassin

Figure 13.2a. Shaded area indicates profiles where the Assassin was Present

Figure 13.2b. Shaded area indicates profiles where an Ambush was used

Both plots are partitioned diagonally, with Figure 13.2a showing that in nine out of the ten profiles the assassin was present (n = 340). In just one of the profiles (n = 55)
the assassin was not present at the time of the attack. It is perhaps surprising that assassin "removed" strategies are not more frequently used as they represent the 'safest' strategy for the perpetrator. Figure 13.2b shows that the variable 'ambush' also partitions the plot diagonally, with three types of incident where an ambush is used (n = 31). Overlapping Figure 13.2a and 13.2b show that, unsurprisingly, all of the ambush cases are a subset of the 'assassin present' variable.

Figure 13.3 shows the type of weapon used in this sample of political assassinations.

*Figure 13.3. Weapon*

*Figure 13.3a. Gun used*  
*Figure 13.3b. Manual Techniques used*  
*Figure 13.3c. Explosives used*  
*Figure 13.3d. Suicide Bomb used*
Figure 13.3a shows those points where a gun was used to kill the target with six points in this area (n = 286). The plot can be partitioned diagonally moving upwards from left to right, with all cases involving guns falling towards the bottom of the plot. Comparison with Figure 13.2b shows that in all of the cases where the target was ambushed, the victim was killed by a gunshot.

Figure 13.3b illustrates the cases where assassins used manual techniques. The category of manual techniques is broad, including incidents where the target 'manually' killed the victim without the use of automatic weapons, e.g. the victim was stabbed, hung, or beaten, with or without weapons. In this instance the plot is again partitioned diagonally, with the three profiles in which a manual technique was used falling towards the right of the plot. These three points represent 34 incidents.

Figure 13.3c shows those cases which involved the use of explosives. This includes all types of explosive devices, including remotely detonated bombs, suicide bombs, and timed bombs. The plot is partitioned in the same way as 13.3b, with all cases involving explosive devices towards the bottom left corner of the plot, with five points representing 80 cases. Finally, incidents of suicide bombing fall in the very bottom left corner of Figure 13.3d with two points representing 12 cases.

These six variables are now examined in relation to one another, in order to look at the way in which the different aspects of methods used to commit political assassinations relate to one another. As Figure 13.4 shows, the variables partitioning the plot in an upwards diagonal are whether or not an ambush was used, whether the assassin was present at the time of the attack, and whether a gun was used to kill the target. It is suggested that these variables may be combined to form a 'scale' showing the level of contact, or proximity, between the victim and the assassin at the time of the attack. This scale ranges from attacks with a high level of proximity, where the assassin is present and ambushes the victim at the far right of the plot, to more 'hands off' attacks where the assassin is absent from the scene of the attack at the far left of
the plot. In the middle of the plot are those incidents where the assassin is present, but there is no immediate contact between the assassin and the target.

![Diagram of Proximity in Assassinations]

*Figure 13.4. Proximity in Assassinations*

Attacks where an ambush is used are considered more 'contactful' than attacks without ambush, simply because it implies direct contact between the target and the perpetrator, in the commissioning of the ambush. Attacks without an ambush, but where the assassin is at the scene, may have direct contact between the target and perpetrator, but may not. For example where the target is shot by an individual in the crowd, the perpetrator does not come into direct contact with their victim.

The variable 'gun' may not initially appear to directly relate to the level of contact between victim and assassin, but it does play a part. The central area of Figure 13.4, where the assassin is present but no ambush is used, is divided by the presence or absence of a gun. The area towards the bottom right shows the presence of a gun,
suggesting a slightly higher level of contact, while the absence of a gun, more towards the top left, implies a slightly lower level of contact.

Figure 13.5 looks at the three remaining weaponry variables and shows how they relate to one another. When combined, they are considered to describe the complexity of the attack. The term complexity is used to refer to the complexity of the weapon used and ranges from explosive devices at the most complex end, to manual attacks at the least complex end. An explosive device is considered to be complex in terms of both the knowledge and materials required to make the weapon, while manual killings are simpler. ‘Manual’ describes relatively simple attacks which use either no weapon, or very simple weapons, such as blades, ropes or a tool to beat their target with. In no cases are these weapon types used together, and they fall at opposite ends of the plot showing that they are dissimilar in terms of the underlying concept of complexity. The area in the middle of the plot are cases where firearms are used, with no explosive devices or manual attacks.

\[\text{Figure 13.5. Complexity in Assassinations}\]
These two concepts can be combined onto one plot, as shown schematically in Figure 13.6, with the proposed proximity and complexity scales mapped on. This shows all six variables together, with 16 regions, of which ten contain cases. There are no cases in the remaining six regions. Some of these regions contain no cases because they are impossible combinations (e.g. suicide bomb with no assassin present), or just because they are excessively forceful methods (e.g. suicide bomb, plus gun, plus ambush).

![Figure 13.6. The Proximity and Complexity shown in Political Assassinations](image)

The category which has the most cases falls towards the bottom right of the plot, where a gun is used and the assassin(s) is present \( (n = 252, 64\%) \). Clearly, if a gun is to be used in an attack, the assassin must be present, but it should be noted that no ambush is used in these cases, and only the one weapon type is involved. It falls to
the middle of the complexity scale, as a gun is considered reasonably easy to obtain (if you are intending to be an assassin), and is easy to use with little risk to oneself. It also falls midway on the proximity scale; while the assassin is present at the scene they may or may not be close to their victim, it is possible that they are some distance away. In such incidents it is assumed that the perceived costs of being close to the victim (e.g. capture at the scene) are outweighed by the benefits of the closeness, and the relative simplicity of the weapon (e.g. ability to target the correct person, ease of obtaining and using a gun). Thus it is the most frequently used option in this sample of incidents.

The second most frequently used option, with far fewer cases, is that where an explosive device is used, and the assassin is not present at the time of the attack (n = 55, 14%). In these cases the weapon is considered to be highly complex, and there is no contact between the assassin(s) and the target. This complies with the theory about decision making: the use of a complex weapon has benefits which outweigh the costs. An explosive device is considered a more complex weapon for a number of reasons. First, they require at least some level of specialist knowledge and equipment, and it may be risky or difficult to get this. Second, it is possible that the assassin themselves may be injured when building the device, or when taking it to the target location. Third, it may not detonate at the correct time or it may not detonate at all, therefore there is a lower guarantee that it will hit the desired target. Fourth, it may be discovered prior to the attack, and defused. However, these costs are thought to be outweighed by the benefits of the assassin not needing to be at the scene of the attack, which reduces the likelihood of capture.

The third most commonly used method is that where the victim is killed manually, where the assassin(s) is present (n = 31, 8%). Like in gun attacks, in manual attacks the assassin must be present. However, the decision making here is in weapon complexity, which is minimal, and even non-existent in some cases (e.g. strangling by hand, throwing off a roof). Therefore these cases have the benefit of a simple, easy to obtain weapon, counterbalanced by the cost of a potentially high-risk, high proximity encounter.
An option used with slightly lower frequency is that where the assassin(s) is present, an ambush is used, and the weapon is a gun (n = 29, 7%). As discussed above, a gun is a relatively simple weapon, falling mid way on the complexity scale. However, this is a relatively high proximity method, but it is possible that the high cost involved in high contact is chosen because of the higher likelihood that the assassin(s) will achieve their goal of killing the target. It is also possible that such a method is selected where it is hard to gain access to the target, and as such a higher risk, more forceful strategy, such as an ambush, is required.

There are also some interesting points to note in the least commonly used strategies. There is just 1 case (0.25%) where the assassin is present, an ambush is used, and the weapon of choice is both a gun and an explosive device. Also infrequently used is that method where the assassin is present, and both guns and explosive devices are used (n = 1, 0.25%). These attacks are discussed together as they are so similar, and so infrequent. They fall at the highest points on both complexity and proximity scales, and are seen as weapon intensive methods. The complexity of the weapon means a greater cost to the assassin, in terms of the materials and risks, as discussed above. The high level of contact also poses a high cost to the assassin(s). This combination of factors may be unexpected; the close contact involved in an ambush may suggest that guns would be sufficient weaponry to achieve their goal, but perhaps the assassin felt it was necessary to be particularly thorough. However, this method is only used in two cases, and so clearly few assassins would consider that the benefits here (likelihood of success) outweigh the costs (risk of capture/danger to self posed by explosive devices etc).

Another rarely used method is that where the assassin is present, and uses an ambush and guns, as well as manual methods (n = 1, 0.25%). By taking a closer look at the data, it is possible to establish that in one of these cases the target was initially shot, and the assassin then held their throat to ensure that they had stopped breathing. The other incident where this method was used was in Gaza, where a Sheikh was stopped at a roadblock and beaten and shot. Thus in such cases the high level of contact is
possibly necessitated by the assassins’ desire to be thorough and ensure the assassination is completed.

13.4 SCALING COMPLEXITY AND CONTACT IN ASSASSINATIONS

This chapter has shown that it is possible to model two aspects underlying the method employed by the perpetrators of assassinations, describing the complexity of the attack, and the level of proximity between the target and victim. Having modelled these aspects, it is possible to examine the relationship between these two concepts. The complexity of attacks is reflected by the weaponry used. Manual attacks are considered the simplest form of attacks, and so are scored ‘1’. Attacks which involve guns are scored ‘2’, as they are somewhat more complex than manual attacks, but not as complex as explosive device attacks, which are scored as ‘3’ (Figure 13.7).

![Complexity Scale Diagram](image)

*Figure 13.7. Complexity Scale*

Figure 13.8 shows the frequency with which these types of attack occur in the sample. As may be expected, the most common weapon types used in these assassination incidents are guns. These are mid-way on the complexity scale, reflecting that assassins in this sample tend to avoid very simple methods (i.e. manual attacks) and very complex weapons. It is likely that very simple methods are avoided as they are likely to require more time, and more physical effort to ensure the target is killed (e.g. if beating a target to death it may take some time to ensure they are deceased), along with greater risks to the assassin. The more complex
weapons require more pre-planning and expertise, and therefore may be less preferred.

![Complexity Scores Frequency Chart]

NB: Based on n = 395, due to exclusion of five cases on basis of method

*Figure 13.8. Frequency of Complexity Scores*

In addition to examining the frequency with which the complexity scores occur in the data, it is possible to examine the average score over time, as in Figure 13.9. It appears, from Figure 13.9, that the average level of complexity in the weapons used in political assassinations is increasing. This is supported with the finding that the Complexity score is statistically significantly correlated with the year of attack (\(\text{rho} = .205, p < .001\)). It is possible that with the changes in technology over this time period, such as the development of the internet, more complex weapons are more accessible to perpetrators of assassinations.
NB: Based on n = 395, due to exclusion of five cases on basis of method

*Figure 13.9. Complexity Scores Over Time*

The other aspect of the Method of assassination is the level of proximity between the target and the perpetrator. As with the complexity scale, the proximity scale ranges from cases with a low level of contact, where the assassin is not present at the scene, and these cases are scored as a ‘1’, to incidents at the high end of the contact scale, where the assassin is present, an ambush is used and a gun is used, which are scored as a ‘4’. The middle options on this scale, where the assassin is present and no gun is used, or the assassin is present and a gun is used, are scored as ‘2’ and ‘3’ respectively. This is presented in Figure 13.10.
Figure 13.10. Proximity Scale

Figure 13.11 shows the frequency with which each of these ‘types’ of proximity appear in the sample. Attacks are most frequently scored as ‘3’, where the assassin is present, a gun is used, but there is no ambush.

NB: Based on n = 395, due to exclusion of five cases on basis of method

Figure 13.11. Frequency of Proximity Scores
This reflects the finding on the frequency of the Complexity scale, where the attacks using a gun are the most common. The least common attacks are those which score highest on the contact scale, which makes sense as these incidents are likely to put the target at highest risk of apprehension, or injury. Attacks with lower contact are also relatively infrequent, again because they risk being ineffective.

NB: Based on n = 395, due to exclusion of five cases on basis of method

*Figure 13.12. Proximity Scores Over Time*

Figure 13.12 shows the average score on the Proximity scale over time. Reflecting the finding on the Complexity scale, it appears that the level of contact is actually falling over time. A Spearman's rho shows that this is a statistically significant relationship (rho = -.225, p < .001), showing that as time goes on, the level of contact between victim and offender falls. This suggests that perpetrators of assassinations
are reducing the level of contact over time, perhaps as a protective measure to avoid capture or injury.

By scoring each case on both scales, it is possible to look at the relationship between scales, and therefore how aspects of the attack interact with one another. Spearman’s rho found a negative statistically significant correlation (rho = -.450, p < .001), showing that the two scales are indeed linked. This correlation shows that as the score on one scale increases, the score on the other scale tends to decrease, thus as the level of contact between assassin and target rises, the complexity of the weapon used tends to fall. At the same time, as the complexity of the weapon utilised by the assassin increases, the proximity between the assassin and victim can be reduced.

It is suggested that this relationship between the contact and weapon complexity involved in assassinations reflects an underlying element of decision making. When a complex weapon is selected by the assassin, it allows them to increase the distance between themselves and their target. The complexity of the weapon is likely to increase the risk posed to the assassin prior to the offence, e.g. in gathering the materials required to make a bomb, and being able to plant the bomb prior to the attack, but also affords a certain level of distance between the assassin and victim, thereby reducing their risk at the time of the attack. Thus, more preparation and potential risk prior to the attack, in sourcing and placing the weapon, is likely to lead to a lower level of risk at the time of the attack, as there is no risk of capture at the scene, and no need to be at the scene at the same time as the target. Conversely, a manual attack which is low in weapon complexity requires a higher level of contact, as at the very least the assassin must be present. For instance, an assassin cannot use very low complexity weapons (e.g. stabbing and/or manual attack) when the assassin is absent from the scene. Using these simpler methods means that the assassin is required to be present at the scene, and it necessitates a higher level of contact between the actors. Therefore at the low complexity end of the scale it may be easier to get the weapon and therefore less risk is incurred prior to the attack, but as it necessitates a higher level of contact at the time of the attack, this creates more risk and difficulty. An assassin who is present at the attack has to consider how they will
get access to the target, how they will disguise their identity to prevent future
detection, and how they will escape the scene. Thus although the weapon is lower
risk, in terms of the essentials needed to fall in this category, the risk of capture at the
scene is increased.

13.5 COMPLEXITY AND CONTACT IN RELATION TO SPECIFICITY AND
SITUATIONAL VULNERABILITY

Previously, the specificity and situational vulnerability of assassination incidents
were modelled (see chapters 11 and 12), and these were also related to one another
(see chapter 12). This section explores the relationship between both these aspects,
and the complexity and contact of political assassinations.

Figure 13.13 shows the average number of collateral victims according to each score
on the Complexity scale. The most complex attacks incur the most collateral victims,
which makes sense as these attacks use explosive devices, which are likely to result
in more damage than, for example, a stabbing.
Figure 13.13. Average number of collateral victims according to Complexity Score

Similarly, Figure 13.14 shows the average number of collateral victims at each point on the Proximity scale. The highest number of collateral victims result from low proximity crimes, which again makes sense: low proximity crimes tend to utilise explosive devices rather than other weapons. Interestingly, the lowest number of collateral victims is where the attack scores ‘3’ on the Proximity scale, with a slight rise at scores of ‘4’. It is possible that in the closest attacks require or enable the perpetrator to attack people with the target at the time of the attack, e.g. bodyguards, family, friends etc.

NB: Based on n = 371, due to missing collateral victim data, and exclusion of five cases on basis of method.
NB: Based on n = 371, due to missing collateral victim data, and exclusion of five cases on basis of method

Figure 13.14. Average number of collateral victims according to Proximity Score

Mann-Whitney tests show that attacks where the assassin used a gun (mean rank = 177.82) the attack tends to result in fewer collateral victims than attacks where there were no gun ((mean rank = 223.28), U = 11047.5, p <.001, r = -.217). Attacks where the attacker used manual means to kill their target (mean rank = 144.97) tends to result in fewer collateral victims than attacks where a manual attack was not used ((mean rank = 194.97), U = 4334, p = .003, r = -.152). Explosive devices result in statistically significantly more collateral victims (mean rank = 262.19) than attacks with no explosive devices ((mean rank = 174.03), U = 5879.5, p <.001, r = -.366). Suicide bomb attacks also result in statistically significantly more collateral victims (mean rank = 358) than attacks with no suicide bomb ((mean rank = 186.44), U = 162, p <.001, r = -.278).
As was discussed in chapters 10 and 12, two prominent terrorist groups, ETA and the IRA, were the two most prolific groups committing political assassinations in this sample. Chapter 12 found that terrorist group assassinations are more specific than government-sponsored assassinations, and in particular found that ETA and IRA assassinations were specific, killing on average less than one person per attack. A closer examination of the methods used by these groups shows that there is a lot of similarity in the way they conduct the killings. ETA uses three of the methods identified previously, tending to use strategies with higher proximity and with less complex weapons, that is they utilise firearms and are present at the scene (n = 14). Lower proximity incidents were used in three cases, with explosive devices and the assassin either present or not (n = 3). The types of method utilised by the IRA are similar, with the majority involving an assassin at the scene and a firearm (n = 11). The remaining three cases are those involving firearms and an ambush (n = 1), and explosive devices, with the assassin present (n = 1), with no assassin present (n = 1). In these cases specific attacks in terms of low bystander casualties are carried out with more specific weapon choices. These findings suggest that the where a target is at risk from one of these groups, the risk seems more likely to come from a gunman, rather than an explosive device. As such, it may seem prudent to take steps to ameliorate the risk from firearms attacks, rather than focusing resources on risks of bombings. However, these conclusions are tentative, as they are based on small samples, and only cases where the attack was completed. It is possible that explosive devices are used more commonly by these groups, but these cases are not sampled here.

In terms of the assassin’s presence at the scene, and how that affects the number of collateral victims, where the assassin is present at the scene of the attack, there are fewer collateral victims (mean rank = 182.34) than where the assassin is not present ((mean rank = 239.74), U = 6143, p < .001, r = -.214). Where an ambush is used there are more collateral victims (mean rank = 239.48) than where there is no ambush ((mean rank = 186.15), U = 3891, p = .002, r = -.156).
In addition to correlating the aspects of Situational Vulnerability, and the Method used, it is possible to correlate the aspects of situational vulnerability with complexity and proximity to identify if there is a relationship between these aspects of political assassinations. The results are shown in Table 13.3.

Table 13.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Victim Preparedness</th>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility</strong></td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victim Preparedness</strong></td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complexity</strong></td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>-.202</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proximity</strong></td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>-.459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold text indicates significance at the .05 level.

Spearman’s rho found a negative statistically significant correlation (rho = -.202, p < .001) between the Accessibility and Complexity scales. This correlation shows that as the accessibility of the victim rises the complexity reduces, and vice versa. There is also a statistically significant correlation between Accessibility and Proximity scale, (rho = .146, p < .001), this time positive, meaning that as one scale goes up, so too does the other. More accessible victims result in a higher level of contact between victim and assassin. In addition, the Victim Preparedness scale and Complexity scale show a statistically significant correlation (rho = .173, p = .001). These findings suggest that there are indeed links between aspects of political assassinations.
13.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has examined two aspects of the methods used in political assassinations, in terms of the weaponry used and the contact between the assassin and the target. The findings suggest that underlying political assassinations there are two scales, describing the level of weapon complexity, and the level of proximity between the assassin and the target. These two combine to create ten possible methods, with differences dependent on where one looks on the two scales.

The findings suggest that political assassins are indeed rational decision makers, who select their course of action via a series of rational decisions, reflected in the relationship between the complexity and proximity scales. In addition, it is possible to relate these scales to the findings of previous chapters. In terms of Specificity, the attacks scoring highest on the Complexity scale are found to result in more collateral victims than lower complexity attacks, while attacks lower on the Proximity scale result in more collateral victims. Relationships were also found between aspects of situational vulnerability and method. These, along with other findings, will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
14. Discussion

14.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis set out to further the understanding of political assassinations by analysing the behaviours of both the assassin and the victim. As the first study to look at assassinations in this way, the project set out to clarify who the victims of assassinations are, who the perpetrators are, and where political assassination incidents take place. Political assassinations are a serious problem, with this study alone finding an average of 22.2 attacks per year (see chapter 10) even within a small subset of all assassinations worldwide. As some have begun to acknowledge, with the existing research focusing on profiling attackers of senior politicians in the US (e.g. Kirkham et al., 1970, Fein and Vossekuil, 1998) or politicians and royal family members in Europe (e.g. James et al., 2007), there is a requirement for broader research. The search for the ‘assassin personality’ is likely to be fruitless, and it seems that instead there are a number of factors in the assassination which are more worthy of research. Thus, rather than trying to identify the elusive ‘assassin personality’ this project took a wider sample of assassinations, in terms of location, nationality of victim, and profession/identity of the victim. This sample included assassinations, which occurred worldwide, against a whole range of victim types (including, but not restricted to politicians, diplomats, academics, and terrorists), and committed by individuals, terrorists and governments. Data were gathered from publicly available sources, and content analysed to provide numerical data for further analysis. Inferential statistics, and multidimensional scaling techniques were used to model certain aspects of assassinations, i.e. the situational vulnerability of the target, the specificity of political assassinations (in terms of the other victims of attacks), and the method used to kill the target.

The project has a clearly defined rationale for the choice of methodology (Yin, 2003, as discussed in chapter 7). There is a clear set of inclusion criteria, defined in chapter 9. This specified that incidents would be completed attacks, rather than a combination of completed, attempted or threatened assassinations. This decision is
supported by Fein and Vossekui (1998) who found that many attackers do not make threats, and many threateners do not commit assassinations. However, there were some incidents in which the victim had received threats prior to their death, and this offers an opportunity for future research.

This thesis makes a valuable theoretical contribution to the understanding of political assassinations. Three models have been developed, which describe the Situational Vulnerability of victims of assassination (with the underlying dimensions of their Accessibility and Preparedness), the Specificity of political assassinations, and the Method of assassination (with the underlying dimensions of weapon Complexity and Proximity between target and offender). These models, and the dimensions which comprise them, provide the first steps in developing the knowledge regarding political assassinations, and how the behaviours of victim and assassin combine to result in different styles of assassination attack. The current chapter discusses the findings from the analysis, in light of the existing research, and in relation to one another. The limitations of the research are discussed, and suggestions are made for further research. Finally, the practical implications of these findings are discussed.

14.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS IN LIGHT OF THE LITERATURE

This section discusses the findings of the research, in light of the aims set out in chapter 9, and the existing research. Table 14.1 provides a summary of the key findings. As discussed in chapter 9, the first aim of the research was to understand more about the behaviours of the perpetrators of political assassinations, and so, echoing the work of Fein and Vossekui (1998), the focus of this research was less on the background and personality characteristics of the assassin, and more on the behaviours during the assassination. By not profiling the assassins themselves, this research has avoided many of the problems inherent in such research, as discussed in chapter 7.

However, some background characteristics were examined, and an interesting contrast was found with the existing research (with the exception of that by Fein and
### Table 14.1

**Key Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Model of Accessibility</td>
<td>Can be modelled, using four variables, showing that there are 15 different ‘types’ of accessibility in this dataset, out of a possible 16 types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Model of Victim Preparedness</td>
<td>Can be modelled, using three variables, showing that there are eight ‘types’ of victim preparedness in this sample, meaning that all possible combinations were found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Model of Situational Vulnerability</td>
<td>A combination of Accessibility and Victim Preparedness, although these scales are not statistically correlated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Model of Specificity</td>
<td>Government-sponsored attacks result in statistically significantly more collateral victims than those perpetrated by terrorist groups. All types of perpetrator target both political and non-political individuals, with no statistically significant difference in the type of victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Specificity &amp; Accessibility</td>
<td>The most Accessible attacks are least Specific, and the least Accessible attacks are most Specific.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Specificity &amp; Victim Preparedness</td>
<td>Attacks with the highest score on the Victim Preparedness scale resulted in the highest number of collateral victims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Method of Attack</td>
<td>Comprised of Complexity (of weaponry) &amp; Proximity (between target and assassin). Ten ‘types’ of method were identified in this sample. There is a negative statistically significant relationship between Complexity and Proximity. Proximity appears to be falling over time. Complexity appears to be increasing over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Victim Preparedness &amp; Complexity</td>
<td>There is a positive statistically significant relationship between Complexity and Victim Preparedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Accessibility &amp; Complexity</td>
<td>There is a negative statistically significant relationship between Complexity and Accessibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Accessibility &amp; Proximity</td>
<td>There is a statistically significant relationship between Proximity and Accessibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vossekuil, 1998). The cases in this sample show little evidence of mental illness, whereas much of the previous research (e.g. Kirkham et al, 1970, Clarke, 1990) argued that mental illness was a key feature of those responsible for committing assassinations. It is possible that this difference arises because such details were not reported, and therefore were not present in the data used as the basis of the research. However, it does seem that in cases where the mental illness of the perpetrator was a feature of the attack (e.g. the killing of Anna Lindh) it is reported. However, as Fein and Vossekuil (1998) suggest, where planning was involved in assassinations, it is unlikely that mental illness is a prominent feature of the assassinations. The argument that assassins who are suffering with mental illness are not capable of planning the attack is offered further support from Rational Choice Theory (Clarke and Cornish, 1985), which suggests that crime is based on the rational decision making of offenders, which is unlikely to be possible for seriously mentally ill individuals. The findings of this research do suggest a level of planning, or structure, in incidents of political assassination.

As discussed in chapter 7, the existing research on political assassinations focuses on attacks which are perpetrated by individuals working alone or in small groups. There is little research available which looks at the types of assassination conducted by terrorist groups, or governments. Thus, in addition to findings related to terrorist assassinations, this study also incorporates government sponsored assassinations. This is a difficult area, and is fraught with issues regarding how to define government sponsored assassinations, and the politics of them. Research seems focused on the legal, theoretical and ethical aspects of government sponsored assassinations, rather than an examination of the behaviours present in them as another type of political assassination. For example, Israel is known to use assassinations as a tactic, describing them as ‘targeted killings’, rather than assassinations (Katz, 2006).

Victim behaviour/previous research

The second aim of the project was to look at the situations in which targets are most often killed, and how their preparedness can be quantified. In order to further the understanding of political assassinations, it is important to look at the behaviours of
the victims of the attacks, as these are related to, and have an influence on, the perpetrator's behaviour. As Biesterfeld and Meloy (2008) found in their study of terrorist perpetrated political assassinations, the target's behaviour both influences and moulds the perpetrators' plans. Routine Activity Theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979) also argues that the behaviours of the target can influence choices made by the offender (e.g. Birbeck and LaFree, 1993).

Situational Vulnerability – Accessibility
Chapter 11 showed that the victims' accessibility at the time of the assassination could be modelled, using variables which describe whether the target was outside or inside, in a public or private location, and in transit or stationary at the time of the attack, along with whether the attack was during the victims' work or leisure time. At a basic level, it was found that targets who were in transit were less likely to be in a private place than when they were stationary, although this was likely to be an artefact of coding, as when the target was travelling in a car, so long as they were not on private land, they were also considered to be in a public location. Chapter 11 also showed that when the victim was outside at the time of the attack, they were more likely to be in transit than if they were inside. Again, this is likely to be due to the fact that travel outdoors (e.g. driving home from work) is far more common than travel indoors (e.g. walking between rooms). When the target was outdoors, they were less likely to be in a private location than when they are indoors, again this is likely to be simply because outdoor public locations are more common than outdoor private locations. In terms of the timing of an attack, when the victim was killed during their leisure time, they were less likely to be travelling than those who were attacked in work time. Relatedly, attacks during leisure time were also more likely to be in a private place than attacks during work time. Together, these findings suggest that attacks in leisure time are less accessible overall.

In the multidimensional analysis of the Accessibility variables, it was found that there are 16 theoretical categories of accessibility, with 15 of these containing cases of assassination. The one remaining category (Inside/Private/Work/Transit) is possible, but less likely to occur. Most commonly, the assassination incidents in this sample occur in public, outdoor locations, while the target is in transit, and during
their leisure hours. Conversely, the least frequent attacks occur in public, indoor locations, while the target is in transit, during work hours. Thus it would appear that attacks more frequently occurred in more accessible locations, and were less common in the least accessible locations.

The findings of this thesis offer support to the rational choice theory belief that a more accessible victim is more vulnerable to attack, as the majority of the attacks in this sample are in the more accessible locations. However, there are also attacks in less accessible locations, so the assassins clearly do not restrict their attacks on the basis of accessibility, or to just the simplest options available. It is possible though that they are influenced by other aspects, for example the weapons available to them, which may offer them the resources to target difficult to access victims. Birbeck and LaFree (1993) look at the selection of the situation in which criminals act, with offenders whose crimes are premeditated assessing various locations. It seems from this thesis that the location of attack is an important aspect of assassination, being related to both the complexity of the weapon, and the level of proximity between the perpetrator and the victim.

The effect of the accessibility of the target on perpetrator behaviour was also examined by Fein and Vossekuiil (1998) who found that assassins were somewhat opportunistic, and took the accessibility of the target into account. Again the findings in this thesis echo this, as the victims of this sample are most commonly attacked in the most accessible locations. Similarly, James et al. (2007) also found that 22/24 cases were at public functions or public places, that is, in situations which were more accessible to perpetrators of assassinations.

Situational Vulnerability – Preparedness

The victim’s preparedness for an assassination was quantified by three variables in this sample: the existence of threats prior to their death, whether or not the victim had survived previous attempts on their life, and whether they had a bodyguard with them at the time of the attack which killed them. These were selected as they were perceived to reflect both the previous experiences of the target (threat/attempt), and the level of protection they had employed (bodyguard). The presence of these
variables in this sample was low (most cases had no experience of any of the three variables), suggesting that either the targets had little experience of prior threats/attempts and did not employ protection, or that this was not reported. In addition, it is possible that in some cases a bodyguard was employed in some, but not all situations. In future research, it would be of interest to examine this in more detail: where targets of assassination have protection in some situations, it may be possible that they are targeted when the bodyguard is off duty. However, this was not within the scope of this research.

Initial findings show that previous attempts were more likely if the target had also previously received threats, than if there were no threats, suggesting that the previous experiences were related. In addition, where the target had a bodyguard, they were more likely to have survived a previous attempt than if there was no bodyguard. Thus it is possible that targets do learn from their previous experiences, and where they have a bodyguard it may be influenced by their survival of a previous experience. However, there was no relationship found between the existence of previous threats, and the presence of a bodyguard, suggesting that threats may not influence target behaviour. This echoes the findings of Fein and Vossekuil (1998) who argued that those who threatened did not actually attack their target, and so those receiving threats are not at risk. However, as these individuals are in this sample, they were killed in an assassination, and so this warrants further investigation, for example, in terms of whether the threats were from the same person that committed the attack, or from different perpetrators.

The multidimensional analysis of these variables showed that there are eight ‘types’ of victim preparedness, all of which are present in the current sample. Most commonly though, the victim had none of the ‘previous experiences’, with no threats, no attempts, and no bodyguard. The fact that most had not received threats prior to their death supports Fein and Vossekuil’s (1998) finding that threateners do not tend to become attackers, and that attackers do not tend to make threats. There are few cases where the target had received threats, survived a previous attempt, and employed a bodyguard, with this type forming the least frequently occurring type of attack.
Birbeck and LaFree (1993) consider the victims’ role in crime, in terms of the presence of a guardian. Targets are more attractive to offenders when they are less well guarded. Again, this is found in the analysis of victim preparedness, with most attacks happening when there is no bodyguard present. James et al. (2007) had similar findings, in looking at attacks on European politicians (1190-2004). They found that “the presence of personal protection officers did not prevent eight of the attacks, including two of the most serious woundings” (p.339). In fact, in all fatal cases in their sample, the victim was unprotected. In addition, in the current sample, attacks more commonly occur outside than inside. Thus guardianship is important, in the form of both people and objects, with bodyguards and buildings providing an element of protection. The victimisation is also said to relate to what the target means to the perpetrator, symbolically or materially (Birbeck and LaFree, 1993). As others have discussed (e.g. Clarke, 1990) the target of assassination is selected because they represent a hated authority, or because of the office or position they represent (e.g. Kirkham, Levy and Crotty, 1970). Thus it appears that evidence to support RAT is present in political assassinations.

The presence of threats was also included in the ‘preparedness’ analysis, as it is seen to provide a warning that assassination attempts may occur. Fein and Vossekuil (1998) find that it is rare for direct threats to be made to either the potential target of the attack or to law enforcement about the target. This thesis has found that the victim’s accessibility is not statistically significantly related to the preparedness. If threats are rarely made, then this makes sense, as they would have little relationship to other aspects of situational vulnerability. In addition Dietz, Matthews, Van Duyne, Martell, Parry, Stewart, Warren and Crowder (1991a) found no relationship between verbal threats and likelihood of approach (with celebrities). Dietz et al (1991a) felt that the finding that there is no relationship between verbal threats and approach was contrary to the assumptions made regarding the “harassing communications” (p.208) received by their sample, in terms of assessing whether the police should be notified, security increased, or an investigation conducted. Thus they thoroughly tested this finding, using a variety of aspects of the threatening statements in their sample, but repeatedly found that there was no relationship between threats and approaches. While the presence of threats was minimal in the current sample (which may be a
sampling problem) the findings of Dietz et al (1991a) do suggest that these threats may be coincidental, rather than related to the attack itself. In a study of communications to congress members, Dietz, Matthews, Martell, Stewart, Hrouda, and Warren (1991b) found that writers who included threats were statistically significantly less likely to approach the target, which was later supported by Fein and Vossekuil's (1998) similar finding. Therefore it is not just the contact that is important, but also the content of the contact. In fact, those who threaten may be less likely to attack, so perhaps the existence of previous threats in this study reflects the low frequency of previous threats in completed attacks. This should be explored further (see 14.4). Similarly, Fein and Vossekuil (1998) argue that threats do not relate to subsequent attacks. It is likely, if the findings of research such as Dietz et al (1991a, 1991b) and Fein and Vossekuil (1998) are correct, that the cases where threats are made form another sample entirely, resulting in fewer deaths.

*Situational Vulnerability*

The findings relating to the Accessibility of victims of assassination and the Victim Preparedness were also scaled in chapter 11, assigning each case a score dependent on their experience. This showed that the most common score on the Accessibility scale was not the highest (i.e. most accessible) as would be expected, but instead was the second lowest. This suggests that there must be another factor underlying the decision making in selecting where the targets should be attacked, for example the methods (and resources) available to the assassin. Conversely, as is expected, the least prepared victims are most commonly targeted, in this sample, and the most prepared victims are least frequently targeted, in this sample. This may be an artefact of the coding, but it could also be that where attacks are targeted at the most prepared victims, they are unsuccessful, and therefore are not a part of this sample (i.e. the targets do not die). Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is no relationship between these two aspects of Situational Vulnerability, that is there is no relationship between the accessibility of the victim at the time of the assassination, and their preparation for the attack. However, it is possible to examine the locations in which the best prepared victims are targeted, with chapter 11 showing that the higher the Victim Preparedness score, the fewer different location ‘types’ that attacks take place in. However, the highest prepared victims are not targeted in the most accessible
locations, but instead fall mid-way on the Accessibility scale. It is possible that the prepared targets do not often go into the most accessible types of regions (although it is not possible to show that from this sample), or it is possible that where a target of assassination has survived previous attempts, in subsequent attacks assassins ‘up their game’, choosing to target less accessible locations, where targets may have lower expectations of attack, or be less protected. Of course, it could also be the case that these targets, who are well prepared, are just very high profile or very high risk individuals, and so are likely to be targeted repeatedly (although again, this was not quantified here).

Overall, the situational vulnerability analysis enabled identification of locations and times when targets of political assassination may be at risk. This is the first time that the accessibility of victims of assassination has been examined. In addition, the victim’s preparedness for an attack, in terms of their previous experiences and the presence of a bodyguard, has never been examined in this manner, although the relationship between threats and attacks has been considered (e.g. Fein and Vossekui, 1998, James et al., 2007). Chapter 11 showed that there are few cases where the victim of assassination had been threatened prior to their death, and few where they had actually survived a previous attempt on their life. However, as mentioned above, this may be related to the data source, where threats and attempts may not be known about by the general public (and so the news media), or may not be reported by the news media. This is an area that certainly warrants further research, particularly because of the conflict between the existing research, with no consensus on whether threats really are predictive of future violent behaviour. In addition, further research looking at the presence of threats, previous attempts, and the presence of bodyguards in both completed assassinations and attempted assassinations would be beneficial to further the understanding in this area of political assassinations.

Specificity – Type of Perpetrator
In light of the discussion in Part 1 regarding assassinations as a form of terrorism, it seemed important to consider the wider impact of political assassinations, in terms of victims other than the intended target. Much of the debate centres around the identity
of the victim/target of assassination. Schmid, Jonhman and Stohl (1988) have argued that as assassinations are aimed at a very specific individual, they are not terrorism, as terrorism is aimed at a wider audience than assassinations. However, in Jenkins’ (1975) famous statement that “terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead” (in Pape, 2003, p.4) there is a suggestion that terrorists may find political assassinations a viable tactic, as they are thought to kill just one person. Thus political assassination seems a good tactic to use, in order to draw attention to the cause without incurring a lot of victims. However, an examination of the data suggests that political assassinations often tend to result in many victims other than the immediate target. In the current sample, roughly one third resulted in victims other than the immediate target, and this appears to be increasing over time. Wilson et al (2010) examined the specificity of the political assassinations conducted by terrorist group ETA, and found that very few attacks had low specificity, i.e. most had just one victim. Therefore the specificity of political assassinations was examined, in particular in relation to the type of perpetrator.

**Specificity – Perpetrator Identity**

The specificity of each assassination incident was examined in relation to the type of perpetrator behind the attack. The perpetrator was classified as either a terrorist group, a government, or an individual/other, as discussed in chapter 9. The results presented in chapter 12 show that government-sponsored attacks result in statistically significantly more collateral victims than those perpetrated by terrorist groups, individuals, or others. This is obviously a finding to be treated with caution, due to the difficulty in establishing government involvement in assassinations. However, it does suggest that although governments may find benefits in assassination, they may be less beneficial for those in the same area as their targets. This finding, regarding the low specificity of government-sponsored assassinations, may be surprising at first, but may be in large part due to the type of weaponry used. These attacks tend to use explosives, in the form of grenades, armed drones, and rockets, which could all be considered rather destructive weapons (for further discussion of specificity in relation to weapon types see chapter 13), and tend to result in more collateral victims than other weapon types.
The finding that terrorist-perpetrated assassinations do result in victims other than the immediate target shows no support for Schmid et al’s (1988) argument, often incurring the death or injury of up to 20 individuals other than the target. Thus terrorist-perpetrated incidents are more specific than other types of assassins, rather than causing large numbers of casualties. However, it is possible that attacks which had higher numbers of casualties were terrorist-perpetrated, but were not claimed, as terrorists may be wary of associating themselves with very destructive incidents, as this may result in a loss of sympathy for their cause. This relates to the importance of terrorists’ maintaining the support of their community (Wilson and Lemanski, 2010).

In addition, Schmid et al.’s (1988) ‘wider audience’ refers to the amount of attention a violent act will draw for ‘the cause’. Interestingly, much assassination research (e.g. Clarke, 1990) argues that (individual) assassins want the attention, which is reflected from the death of their target. Thus in both fields the attention given to the cause/the perpetrator is a key aspect of the incident. Although not studied here, assassination obviously draws attention, as all cases in this sample were reported in the media. The after effects of these cases is certainly worthy of further research (see 14.4).

Specificity – Type of Victim

As well as the type of perpetrator, the type of victim was also considered in the analysis of specificity. Government-sponsored assassinations result in statistically significantly more collateral victims who are bodyguards than attacks perpetrated by other types of assassin, while terrorist groups are statistically significantly less likely to result in bodyguard victims than non-terrorist attacks. However, as discussed in chapter 12, it is possible that this is simply because the individuals targeted by governments are proportionally more likely to have a bodyguard than the individuals targeted by terrorist groups. This is likely to be because those targeted by governments (e.g. terrorists) would employ protection, meaning that bodyguards would be present in order to be harmed. Also, this finding may reflect the type of target chosen by terrorists, as they were less likely to have a bodyguard victim. Thus terrorist attacks do not appear to be more dangerous to the general public than non-terrorist attacks. Alternatively, it may be that those with bodyguards simply do not get killed so often as those without bodyguards, due to the increased level of
protection afforded them. Terrorist groups may wish to target prominent figures (i.e. those who are likely to have bodyguards) but do not due to the presence of a bodyguard.

In addition to the distinction between bodyguard victims and other victims, the type of victim was also divided into political, or non-political. The findings suggest that all types of perpetrator target both political and non-political individuals, and it appears that there is no statistically significant difference in the type of victim targeted by perpetrators. Thus it seems that it is the perpetrator that is more important regarding the specificity of assassinations, rather than the type of victim. This seems intuitively correct, as it is the perpetrator who selects the location of the attack (although this may well be influenced by the target), and the method of the attack.

Specificity and Geographical Region

The geographical region in which the attack took place was examined, in order to identify potential 'hotspots'. The concept of 'hotspots' comes from Routine Activities Theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979), and suggests that there are certain places in which crime frequently occurs. In this sample, assassination incidents were spread across 13 regions, plus a category for attacks where the region was unknown. However, the region did not appear to differentiate between specificity of attacks, nor between the type of victim (in terms of whether the target was a political figure or not).

Specificity – with Accessibility

The specificity of the attack was also examined according to the variables utilised in the analysis of accessibility (see chapter 11), in order to identify the locations and times in which collateral victims are more likely, and so where individuals other than the target are likely to be more at risk. It appears that the type of victims (in terms of bodyguard victims, and others) varies depending on whether the target of assassination was inside or outside at the time of the attack. Attacks are less likely to incur bodyguard victims when inside than when outside. It is possible that this is because targets of assassination tend not to employ a bodyguard when they are likely to be inside, as they are not considered at risk in this location. This relates to Birbeck
and LaFree’s (1993) discussion of guardianship in crime more generally; where targets are indoors, it is possible that the building itself is considered to provide guardianship for the target, while outdoors a bodyguard is required as a guardian. In addition, when targets are in transit, there are more likely to be bodyguard victims than when the target is stationary. Again, it is possible that this is where bodyguards are employed by targets of assassination, as they are perceived to be more at risk when travelling. Finally, during working hours assassination incidents result in statistically significantly more collateral victims than attacks which occur during leisure hours. It is possible that this is because targets who are attacked while working tend to have more people around them, and so more opportunity for the attack to incur collateral victims. Alternatively, it may be that in order for the target of assassination to be killed during working hours, more destructive methods are required. It is suggested that future research should look at who the collateral victims are in more detail, in order to establish who is at risk from political assassinations (beyond the immediate target), and where they are.

In addition, it is possible to compare the Accessibility of attacks with the Specificity, using the Accessibility scale identified in chapter 11, and discussed above. This found that the most accessible attacks are least specific, i.e. they resulted in the highest number of collateral victims. This is likely to be a feature of the location, as accessible locations are more likely to be open to everyone, and therefore there is the potential for more people to be at the scene of the attack. The least accessible attacks are the most specific, i.e. they have the fewest collateral victims. Again, this is probably due to the nature of the location, as these are private places, fewer people have the opportunity to access the location, and where they are indoors they may also be smaller spaces, and therefore limit the potential victims in that way.

**Specificity – with Victim Preparedness**

In the same way, the scores on the Victim Preparedness scale were compared with the level of specificity in assassination incidents. The lowest average number of collateral victims was incurred when cases scored ‘5’ on the scale, which was highest but one, i.e. when victims were reasonably well prepared for an attack (experiencing two of the three preparedness variables), the attack was specific, resulting in few
collateral victims. However, attacks with the highest score on the Victim Preparedness scale resulted in the highest number of collateral victims. It is suggested that the perpetrators of assassinations utilise the most destructive methods (bombs etc) to get through the ‘preparedness’ or to ensure that the attack is completed, since the target has previously survived attempts on their life.

**Method of attack**

Having established that political assassinations do result in victims other than the immediate target, the next step in this research was to look at the way the attacks are carried out. The method of assassination was modelled in chapter 13, finding two underlying concepts: the complexity of the attack, in terms of the weapon used, and the proximity between the target and the assassin. In this sample, it was found that in the majority of cases the perpetrator was present at the scene of the attack, but there were very few cases in which an ambush was used. In terms of the weapons used, firearms were the most commonly used, but explosive devices (including suicide bombs) and manual methods (e.g. strangulation, beating) were also used. A total of 16 different types of method were identified in chapter 13, of which ten were present in the current sample. In the most common type of attack in the sample, the assassin was present at the scene of the attack, and a gun was used to shoot the target.

The weapon used is argued to form a scale of Complexity, which reflects the complexity of the weapon used, ranging from the simplest manual methods, to the most complex explosive devices. The majority of the cases in this sample scored mid-way on the Complexity scale (i.e. the weapon used is a firearm), with the average level of Complexity shown in assassinations appearing to increase over time. In other research fields, the weapon used is suggested to reflect underlying aspects of the offender or the attack. For example, Fritzon and Brun (2005) suggest that the use of a manual weapon reflects that the perpetrator is “acting out internal pressures, rather than targeting a specific victim from whom he stands to gain directly” (p.60). With political assassination research finding that the victim of assassination is incidental to the assassin, rather than being selected because of any direct relationship between them (Fein and Vossekuil, 1998), it is possible that the methods chosen also relate to motivation for perpetrators of assassinations. Manual attacks
have been shown to require a closer level of proximity between perpetrator and victim, and it could be argued that these require a lower level of planning and therefore may be reflective of a more spontaneous or impulsive attack than those with more complex weapons, requiring more planning. Thus manual attacks may reflect a more personal, less planned, attack. Similarly, in Salfati and Canter’s (1999) examination of expressive/instrumental aggression, they discuss the perpetrator’s use of a manual weapon being due to “the power inherent in a weapon was not needed to incapacitate the victim” (p.401). This appears to be the case in assassinations, as the preparedness of the victim falls so too does the complexity of the weapon used, suggesting that the where the victim is less expectant and less guarded, a less complex weapon is required. Salfati (2003) develops the work of Salfati and Canter (1999), suggesting that particular features of homicide are indicative of a more impulsive and emotional attack. For example the victim being found with multiple wounds to one area of the body, the victim being found face up and uncovered, and the victim not being moved after the attack are all suggested as representative of a “frenzied” (Salfati, 2003, p.503) attack, prompted by an argument of some kind, rather than an organised, planned attack. Interestingly, the government and terrorist attacks tend not to use manual weapons, suggesting that these may be the more planned and organised attacks, which also makes intuitive sense.

Pape (2003) also considered the methods used by offenders, in this case examining terrorist groups’ use of suicide bombers. He suggests that suicide bombers are able to gain access to heavily guarded targets more easily because they do not need to escape after the attack. Suicide bombs are used in this sample, and it is possible that this is part of what differentiates them from the other types of explosive device. Pape (2003) suggests that the purpose of suicide terrorism is not just to hit the target, but it is much more about making the “opposing society” (p.346) think that they are vulnerable to future attacks. This relates back to terrorism definitions in that terrorism is designed to induce fear. Pape (2003) also argues that suicide terrorism largely targets civilians. Considering this in relation to political assassination, suicide terrorism does seem to be used specifically to hit targets, i.e. the politician/public figure, and suicide bombers tend to get closer to their target in order to kill them. While Pape (2003) suggests that civilians are the main target of such attacks, when
they are used in political assassinations it may offer dual benefits, that is the main target is killed, and bystanders are also wounded. Thus there may be a subset of suicide bombers who have a specific target, and are trying to ‘kill two birds with one stone’, harming these at the same time as the civilians. Enders and Sandler (2005) found that following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, although the number of terrorist incidents did not increase, “the composition of events” changed, “with terrorists relying on deadly bombings to a greater extent than ever before, and engaging in a very low proportion of complex hostage-taking missions” (p.260). Similarly, the findings from this project suggest that there is in fact an increase in the complexity of weapons used in assassinations over time, although obviously this sample is not solely terrorist.

The existing research looks at individual perpetrators of political assassinations, and tends not to include group attacks (although Fein and Vossekuil, 1998, include six attacks where a group was responsible, rather than a single individual), terrorist perpetrated attacks, or government sponsored attacks. In one of the few studies which examine terrorist perpetrated assassinations, Bisterfeld and Meloy (2008) suggest that there may be a subgroup of assassinations which are terrorist perpetrated, and the findings presented in this thesis support this; approximately one quarter of the sample are claimed by terrorist groups. Aside from this research, in other fields there is much discussion about the use of assassinations by terrorist groups. For example, Enders and Sandler (2006) suggest that terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda may prefer acts such as bombings as they are found to be logistically simple, when compared to assassinations, which are logistically more complicated. While at first this makes sense, it does not address the issue of assassinations where a bomb is used, which are not mentioned by Enders and Sandler (2006). Chapter 13 examined the method of assassination, arguing that in fact a bombing is a complex method of attack, due to the nature of the weapon and the knowledge and materials needed to create a bomb. This obviously contradicts Enders and Sandler’s (2006) conclusion, but it is possible that although bombs are the most complex form of assassination, they are also the least complex form of terrorism, as shown in Figure 14.1.
The least complex acts of assassination are far simpler than the most complex acts of terrorism, comprised as they are of manual killings with no, or very basic, weapons. Thus bombings are one of the most complex weapon types in terms of assassination. As Figure 14.1 suggests, the bombings are where the two types of violence overlap. The range of acts which comprise terrorism can be far more complex than bombings (e.g. hostage taking incidents). However, it appears that the terrorist incidents in this sample tend to use the less complex weaponry, with ETA and the IRA more commonly using firearms than bomb attacks. These result in more specific attacks, with fewer collateral victims. This contrasts with the arguments presented in the ‘new terrorism’ literature (as discussed by Crenshaw, 2006), which argues that modern terrorists have little concern for civilian life and are happy to kill many individuals. Thus the use of assassinations by terrorist groups appears to be a complicated area, particularly when considered in relation to other types of terrorism, and the relevant outcomes.

The other aspect of the method of political assassinations considered in this thesis was the proximity between victim and attacker, with findings suggesting that this varied with the type of weapon used. The majority of attacks in this sample have reasonably high levels of contact, and similarly, James et al. (2007) found that in 20 out of 24 cases of (attempted and completed) attacks on European politicians the perpetrator and target were in close proximity (within 2m). In terms of the Proximity scale, most cases in this sample score reasonably highly, with the level of Proximity in assassination incidents appearing to fall over time. In addition, the Complexity of political assassinations has been found to increase over time. It is suggested that this increase in complexity may be because of the increasing availability of information, via the development of the internet and modern technology, and so more complex
weapons can be used by the assassin. By increasing the complexity of the attack, the perpetrator can reduce their proximity to the victim, thus reducing their risk of apprehension at the scene of the assassination (as they are less likely to be at the scene). With the two scales proving to be negatively correlated, the implication is that there is some kind of ‘trade-off’ between the proximity and complexity, thus indicating that there is some element of rational decision making in assassinations, in that assassins appear to weigh up the costs and benefits of the various methods available to them.

Method & Specificity
As with the other aspects of political assassinations, the method was considered in relation to the specificity of the attack. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most complex attacks resulted in the most collateral victims, as the most complex weapons are explosive devices. An explosive device has more potential for causing collateral damage than, for example, a manual attack where the target is strangled or stabbed. Attacks where guns are used result in fewer collateral victims than non-gun attacks, and manual attacks result in fewer collateral victims than non-manual attacks. Conversely, attacks where explosive devices are used (including suicide bombs) result in higher numbers of collateral victims than attacks where non-explosive devices are used.

In terms of Proximity and Specificity, the assassination incidents with the lowest proximity result in the most collateral victims, and the incidents with the highest proximity result in the fewest collateral victims. This is intuitive, with the attacks with most contact between assassin and victim incurring the least victims, as there is both a lower likelihood of mistakes, and the weapons used tend to be less destructive (e.g. strangulation), whereas the less proximal attacks, by their nature, use explosive devices, which are more destructive. Looking more specifically at weapon types, Pape (2003) found that suicide bomb attacks are typically more destructive than other types of terrorism. This is supported by these findings, with suicide bombs being in the most complex category of attacks. Further to these findings, where the assassin is present, there are fewer collateral victims compared to attacks when the
assassin is not present, although this is likely to be related to the weapon choice, as described previously.

Finally, the scales of Complexity and Proximity were examined in relation to the Accessibility and Preparedness scales identified in chapter 11. A negative, statistically significant correlation was found between Accessibility and Complexity, suggesting that assassins may take aspects of the victims’ location into account, and therefore that aspects of the victim can influence the assassins’ decision making. Accessibility was also statistically significantly correlated to the Proximity scale, with more the accessible victims experiencing a higher level of proximity, and vice versa. This suggests that assassins compensate with more complex weapons when the target is in a less accessible region. Lastly, Victim Preparedness and Complexity are statistically significantly correlated, with the more prepared targets being targeted with more complex weapons, presumably to ensure the death of the target, and because the less prepared victims require less complex attacks.

14.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Despite the valuable contribution that this research makes to the understanding of incidents of political assassination, there are limitations to these findings. The use of newspaper articles in this study may be criticised for inaccuracy, or for providing biased accounts of events. In the case of political assassinations, it is not feasible to use direct data collection techniques, such as questionnaires or interviews, because the victim is dead, and the attacker is unreachable either because they are dead, incarcerated, or unknown.

Witnesses and bystanders may seem like a positive option for collecting data on political assassinations, as they are present at the scene and witnessed exactly what happened. However, it has been demonstrated that eyewitness testimony can be unreliable (Semmler and Brewer, 2010), and this has been highlighted by the number of cases in the US (more than 200) where DNA evidence has exonerated those convicted of and incarcerated for serious crimes, on the basis of eyewitness
testimony (Innocence Project, 2007). The research has found that there are many factors which influence the witnesses’ recollection of a crime, including physical aspects of the location, and aspects of the perpetrator. For example, the bigger the distance between the witness and the crime, the less likely the witness is to be able to identify the offender in a photo array, and the less detailed and accurate their description of the offender will be (Lindsay, Semmler, Weber, Brewer and Lindsay, 2008). The exposure time, during which the witness sees the offender, is an influential factor on the accuracy of memory (Memon, Hope and Bull, 2003, Valentine, Pickering and Darling, 2003).

In terms of features of the perpetrator, offenders with unusual looks are easier to identify, which although may seem beneficial, can lead to witness overconfidence, which is not supported by the accuracy of their statement (Read, 1995). Witnesses are also more likely to remember offenders who act in an unusual manner, or who say unexpected things (Tuckey and Brewer, 2003). The ‘cross-race’ effect shows that when witnesses are trying to identify an offender from a different race, they are less likely to recognise the offender in a photo array, and when the actual offender is not present in the array, they are more likely to incorrectly identify and innocent person (Meissner and Brigham, 2001). Similar findings are also present across age differences, and gender differences (e.g. Wright and Sladden, 2003). Changes to the offenders hairstyle, or the addition or removal of glasses, can both significantly influence accuracy in witness recognition of faces (Patterson and Baddeley, 1977, Read, 1995), and the wearing of a hat to disguise a hairline can reduce the witnesses’ accuracy in identification of the perpetrator (Yarmey, 2010)

Whether or not the offender is carrying a weapon also influences their value as an eyewitness: when a person witnesses a crime committed by a person carrying a weapon, they are less likely to be able to identify the offender. It is suggested that this because the witnesses’ attention is drawn to the weapon, rather than the face of the offender (Loftus, Loftus and Messo, 1987). In political assassinations, weapons are extremely likely to be present (particularly as the majority involve firearms), and so there is a big risk that the witnesses will be affected by this. Stress or anxiety experienced by the witness during the event is also shown to have an effect on
memory, although not necessarily in the expected manner. Stress can actually increase the accuracy of recall of ‘central details’ of the event, although it can also reduce the level of detail that is recalled about ‘peripheral details’ (Christianson, 1992). As witnesses and bystanders in political assassinations are likely to have experienced some distress at being present during such events, it seems that this especially may affect the value of their recall. However, in this area there are mixed results, highlighting the difficulty of not only conducting research in this area, but also the difficulty in understanding what it is that influences eyewitnesses.

Interactions with other witnesses can also influence witness reports, where they take place prior to police interviews. This is likely to be a problem within political assassinations, because in such high profile or dramatic events, witnesses are bound to discuss what they saw. In particular, the first witness report is likely to influence or even change the report of the second witness (Gabbert, Memon, and Allan, 2003). Loftus (1992) found that television reports and newspaper accounts can also cause witnesses to acquire new information about the event or the perpetrator during the retention interval. This is related to the ‘post-event misinformation effect’, which describes what happens when a witness is given new information or details after they have first given their account. It is found that this new information is incorporated into the witnesses’ memory, and they are likely to subsequently report this as something which they actually saw (Gerrie, Garry and Loftus, 2005). This proves problematic as the police tend to view corroboration between witness reports as an indication of reliability. If the first witness was incorrect, or the media reports were inaccurate, this may lead the investigation to follow the wrong avenue. In research, it would result in research being based on inaccurate data. More specifically, when witnesses speak to the police regarding events, one of the most important aspects is the description of the offender. One of the weaknesses of the current data source is the lack of information regarding the offender. It may be thought that eyewitness accounts may offer a way to build on this, but research shows that witnesses tend not to give detailed accounts or description of the offender (Meissner, Sporer and Schooler, 2007).
Clearly then, eyewitness testimony has its drawbacks, and as in the current research it is often not possible to conduct direct research with such individuals. Police or security files containing information about the incident would be a preferred data source, but such sources are not available due to security concerns. Without these data sources, this study, like many others turned to the use of newspaper and other credible reports. Broadsheets in particular are used as it is likely that they will give a more reliable and unbiased account of events. Tabloid newspapers tend to "sensationalise the stories", and as Schaffer (1995) reports, tabloid newspaper reports are often unreliable in terms of the news value of features. In addition, other research using newspaper articles as data has shown that there are highly structured patterns of behaviour, for example in the literature on hijacking (Wilson, 2000). As Wilson (2000) points out, it is important when analysing data from newspaper articles that the absence of a particular feature in a report should not be taken to mean that it did not happen. Rather, it could just mean that it was not reported. Thus, although newspaper reports are the best data source available for such research, they should be used with caution, and while considering that they are unlikely to contain all details of these events. Nevertheless, the success of numerous previous studies using newspaper reports, or data bases derived from newspaper reports, overcomes the potential shortcomings of the data, and the models developed can be tested by security/law enforcement personnel with their own in house data to see whether the principles stand (Wilson 2000).

A further potential limitation to the data sources used here is that they were limited to UK-based news sources, which are likely to show bias in the political assassination incidents they report, in terms of the location of incidents. The majority of attacks in this data set come from Western Europe. It is likely that, rather than Western Europe being a hotspot for assassinations, the sample shows some bias due to the data sources. Although nearly three quarters of the sample is from other regions, it would certainly be beneficial to expand the data sources to include international news sources, thereby broadening the population from which cases are drawn. The use of internet resources should also be considered, for example online news websites such as the BBC and CNN. These may provide a fuller picture of the incident, and allow for more complete data analysis. In addition, it may be wise to review the coding
scheme used: for example, any incident where the victim was moving was coded as 'in transit'. However, incidents in which the target is simply walking through their home, stepping into a lift in their apartment building, etc, is a rather different incident to that where the target is driving between locations, or walking down the street. Thus this variable may benefit from a revision, although it should be noted that the coding scheme did achieve a good level of inter-rater reliability (see chapter 9).

Part of this research has highlighted the locations in which assassinations most commonly occur. However, there is no data on how many times likely targets are actually in these locations, i.e. although 10 people may die in location A, the significance of this finding varies depending on whether 20 people attend location A and do not die (a 50% chance of death), or 100 people attend location A and do not die (a 10% chance of death). Thus the addition of this information would enhance understanding of just how risky certain places are. In addition, as the research suggests that planning seems to happen, and that attacks are premeditated, it is possible that one aspect of this would be to observe and/or investigate the target prior to attack. Therefore likely targets (along with staff, friends, and family) should be advised to maintain a sense of alertness to people they do not recognise, or who seem out of place.

14.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this thesis has produced a valuable insight into the nature of political assassinations, there is still much research to be done in this field. First, and perhaps most obviously, a comparison of attempted and completed assassinations should be carried out. Scholes and Wilson (2011) have begun to look at the methods used in terrorist-perpetrated assassinations, and whether these vary according to whether the assassination was completed, or was an attempt. This thesis has examined some aspects of completed assassinations, and the next stage is to see where the unsuccessful assassinations occur. This would show, for example, whether there are situations or locations in which attacks are less likely to be completed. It would also be interesting to examine the identity of perpetrators of attempted assassinations, to
see if, for example, terrorist groups (who are experienced in planning and carrying out acts of violence) have a better success rate than individual assassins. The identity of the targets of attempted assassinations is also of interest, that is whether the same types of target are subject to repeated attempts, and whether some are more likely to survive attacks than others. Also, where a target is subject of repeated assassination attempts, it would be of use to determine whether these are repeated attempts by the same perpetrator, or single attempts by multiple perpetrators. In addition, where the repeated attempts are by the same perpetrator, is there any evidence of 'learning' from failure, and improvement of strategies. In other types of offending, Social Learning Theory (SLT) has been used to explain behaviour, arguing that individuals see certain behaviours in others around them, learn both the reactions to and consequences of these behaviours, and then replicate (or avoid) these, in order to gain the same outcome (Bandura, 1969).

The examination and comparison of completed and unsuccessful attacks would also be beneficial to further understanding of how the victim's preparedness for an attack influences the offender behaviour. As chapter 11 discussed, the presence of previous threats, attempts, or the presence of a bodyguard was low in this sample, and it was found that the majority of attacks were against targets who had none of these features. In future research, both types of attack (completed and unsuccessful) should be examined, to identify whether the more prepared potential victims are simply not targeted at all (explaining their non-appearance in the current sample), or whether attacks targeted at more prepared individuals are simply unsuccessful, with the target surviving the attack. This would offer more insight into the ways in which threats and previous attempts can be used to identify the likelihood of subsequent attacks.

Although the offender's actual internal decision making process cannot be determined, it is possible to look at what they do and see whether that reflects any element of rationality. To a certain extent, it could be argued that, from the assassin's perspective, all decisions made regarding the attack (at least in this sample) are 'good', because all cases in this sample resulted in the death of the target. In attempted assassinations the decision making may not be so good, as, again from the assassin's perspective, the decisions do not result in a positive outcome. In addition,
if decisions are made that do not have positive results, at least in the early stages of planning, it is possible that they are never known about, as nothing ever comes of these bad decisions.

The issue of threats made to targets of assassination are also worthy of more research. Although Fein and Vossekuil (1998) found that threateners rarely attack, and attackers rarely threaten, some of the victims in this sample did receive threats prior to their death. Investigation of threats would take two forms. First, analysis of the threats themselves: the form they take (i.e. letter, telephone calls, emails), who they are from, and most importantly their content. Dietz et al (1991a, 1991b) have studied the communications made to celebrities and politicians by stalkers and approachers. For example, in celebrity cases, writers who approach their target write significantly more letters, although there is no relationship between the presence of verbal threats, and the likelihood of an approach being made (Dietz et al, 1991a). In a study of communications to members of the US Congress, Dietz et al (1991b) found a significant relationship between the presence of identifying information in the communication, and the likelihood of approach, although there was a difficulty in linking the writers of the anonymous letters received with the identity of the inappropriate approachers. In terms of the type of communication, Dietz et al (1991b) found that where letter writers also telephoned members of Congress, they were significantly more likely to approach their target. Thus there is likely to be a lot of interest in the communications towards victims of political assassinations. Unfortunately this research is beyond the scope of this study, as access to the threatening materials would be required. The second aspect of studying threats relates to the identity of the threateners. In light of Fein and Vossekuil’s (1998) findings, it would be worthwhile to look in more detail at the threats received by members of this sample. There is little detail available about the threats, and it would be useful to know details such as whether the threateners were the same people as the attackers, and whether the threats related to the subsequent attack.

The motivations for assassinations have been considered by a number of researchers (e.g. Fein and Vossekuil, 1998), with the suggestion that some assassins are motivated by a desire for political change. This is echoed by Kirkham et al. (1970),
who suggest that a criteria for classing an act as a political assassination is that it has a political impact. However, this political impact is not quantified in any way, and the resulting political change is not evaluated. Thus here is an area for development. The outcomes of assassination are unknown, for example, whether change does happen following an assassination, in what ways that change might occur, and whether the assassin is satisfied with the changes. In particular, given that terrorist groups are driven by a desire to induce political changes, it would be of interest to determine whether terrorist perpetrated assassinations have different outcomes to non-terrorist assassinations. Where governments use assassinations, it tends to be as a method of inducing regime change, and thus understanding if this happens is valuable in establishing whether the motivations of the perpetrator are met by the act. Relatedly, the outcome for the assassin is of interest. Again, this was not addressed in this thesis as the outcome for the assassin was rarely reported, but using other sources (e.g. court records) it may be possible to see if the perpetrators were identified, apprehended, charged, convicted, and so on. In particular, it would be of interest to investigate whether the nature of the assassination incident affected the likelihood of the perpetrator being caught, with certain ‘types’ of assassination placing assassins at higher risk of apprehension.

Finally, the understanding of how and why victims of assassination are targeted should be examined in future research. Fein and Vossekuiil (1998) suggest that targets are selected on the basis of what the target can offer the attacker (i.e. how much attention will be reflected onto the assassin because of the position of the victim), rather than because of any relationship (perceived or actual) between the victim and offender, or because of any personal reasons held by the assassin. Conversely, others suggest that the assassin is driven by a generalised hatred for authority, and that the target is selected on the basis that they are representative of the much-hated authority (e.g. Clarke, 1990). Again, research intending to understand the selection of victims of assassination would require access to the assassins themselves, which, as discussed previously, would be difficult to achieve.
14.5 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

There are a number of practical implications that can be drawn from the findings of this thesis. First, looking at the accessibility of victims of assassination, it is clear that individuals are targeted in a range of locations, both public and private, and indoors and outdoors. Although this does suggest that there are no ‘safe places’, it also highlights the need for potential targets to be vigilant in all areas, rather than assuming that they may be safer in certain places, and lessening safety precautions. In particular, the finding that victims are often targeted in private, indoor locations suggests that precautions should be taken here, for example extra physical security or ensuring that cars are checked for devices before using them. This relates to the finding that Accessibility is related to Complexity: the more accessible a victim is, the less complex the attack tends to be. Therefore, when a potential target is in less accessible places, it may be prudent to be alert to the likelihood of a bombing (e.g. a car bomb, or a letter bomb sent to a home or work address). When in more accessible places (and this also relates to Proximity), it may be beneficial for potential targets to be aware of those around them, and to be vigilant of any individuals who they perceive to be acting unusually. In addition, this research has found that the more prepared a victim is for an attack (in terms of threats, attempts, and presence of a bodyguard), the higher in complexity the weapon tends to be. Therefore, individuals who have received threats, who have survived attempts in the past, or who have a bodyguard (in any combination) may be more at risk from an explosive device than a manual attack. Therefore, relevant precautions should be taken. Equally, if they have not experienced any of these behaviours, they may be at more risk from manual attacks, and so should be cautious of individuals who approach them.

In addition, this research has shown that, in contrast to the focus of previous studies, the threat of assassination does not just come from individuals, but also comes from terrorists, groups of individuals, and governments. Thus assassinations should be incorporated in the consideration of terrorist threat. Although these incidents are seemingly different to ‘traditional’ terrorism, they are used as a tactic by terrorists. In addition, they are actually less dangerous (with fewer collateral victims, as discussed in chapter 13) than non-terrorist attacks. Where the threat does not come from
terrorist groups then, authorities should be prepared that there may be additional casualties, and take precautions to avoid this. Of course, terrorist incidents do cause victims other than the target, but they tend to be fewer than assassinations committed by other types of perpetrator.

Examination of the perpetrators of political assassinations also found that governments do conduct such attacks, and that somewhat controversially, these appear to result in more collateral victims than non-government assassinations. As discussed previously (14.4), assassinations tend to be used by governments in order to effect regime change, or as a way to remove those perceived as ‘dangerous terrorists’. It is likely that, particularly in regime-change situations, a government employing these tactics would want to maintain the support of the local community. Given the apparent lack of success in the specificity of targeting measures in the current (admittedly small) sample, it would seem wise for governments to explore alternative methods before resorting to these types of assassination.

As discussed in chapters 12 and 13, it may be possible that the tactics used by individual terrorist groups could be identified. Looking specifically at the political assassinations committed by ETA and the IRA in this sample, it is possible to see that they tend to utilise shootings, with an assassin at the scene, rather than attacks based on explosive devices. These types of attacks have been shown to be more specific than other types of attacks (in both weapon type, and compared to other types of perpetrators). They also suggest that if the source of the threat is known, it may be possible to tailor the precautions taken on the basis of their known behaviours. For example, if it is known that ETA rarely use bomb attacks, but frequently use firearms attacks, resources could be directed towards prevention of these kinds of attacks. Of course, this research is based on small sample sizes, and as such should be treated with caution; however, Wilson et al. (2010) have come to similar conclusions. Leaving the issue of small sample sizes to one side, the models developed here can be taken and applied to studying any terrorist group of interest, and their current strategies for attack ‘mapped on’ to the models. This would allow analysts to compare different groups to one another or to examine how a named group may be changing their behaviour over time.
The type of attack used by terrorist groups may also relate to the identity of the target. It is possible that assassinations are used by terrorist groups as a particular means of removing specific individuals. In this sample, and particularly in the attacks claimed by the IRA, the targets are chosen for a specific reason. For example, because of a grievance, a disagreement, or because of action by the target which has annoyed the group. Thus the purpose of the attack was to kill that individual, or to send a message to a particular group, rather than to send a terror-laden message to the general public. Thus in some instances, assassinations may be used for very particular purposes, and this is something that may benefit from further research.

This research has also shown that assassinations are not always specific. Existing research looks at the immediate target of the attack, and neglects consideration of any other victims as a result of the attack. This project has shown that there are other people killed and injured in assassinations, both bodyguards and non-bodyguards. Hence assassinations pose a risk to a wider group than the immediate targets. This should be examined in more detail, as at present the category of ‘civilian victims’ does not differentiate between completely innocent bystanders, and others who were at the scene because of their link to the immediate target (e.g. family, support staff). This was not done in the present study due to data limitations, but it is worth investigating, to establish whether innocent bystanders really are at risk. Regardless, authorities should be aware that attacks do result in other victims. Perhaps when it is believed that targets are under threat, they should avoid crowded locations. Although this may not necessarily remove the risk to them, it may reduce the risk of other deaths.

The analysis of weapons used in assassinations found that the majority of attacks utilise guns. It is possible that body armour may afford targets an extra level of protection against such attacks, particularly when outdoors and so most at risk. Also, as the most common attack is shooting precautions could be taken, such as implementing metal detectors in locations the target attends, scanning the area for shooters, etc. Bombs are also widely used, although less common than guns. Checks for bombs can be relatively simple, for example (as mentioned above) checking under cars of targets, or checking parked cars. As some victims were killed by car
bombs left on roadsides, it is worthwhile potential targets changing their routines (as often recommended by embassies, and other high risk employers) and taking a variety of routes between work and home. Suicide bombs are also used, and these tend to require close contact between target and assassin, so it may be wise (particularly for high profile individuals) to keep members of the public away from the target, for example setting up barriers during public events, and avoiding unnecessary contact.

14.6 CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has provided the first empirical study examining incidents of political assassinations, in terms of both the victim and the offender behaviour. The thesis began by considering the ways in which ‘political assassination’ has been defined in the past, in the literature specifically on political assassinations, the homicide literature, and the literature on terrorism. Analysis of real-life assassinations, homicides, and terrorist incidents highlight the importance of drawing on the each of these areas in order to further the understanding of political assassinations.

Part 2 of this thesis required the creation of a new database, containing behavioural information on political assassination incidents, and this provides a useful data source which can be built on and used in future research. The first empirical analysis of the accessibility of victims of assassination was conducted, finding that assassinations occur in a wide range of different settings. In fact, the majority take place in private locations, rather than in public locations, and during leisure time rather than work time. This has highlighted the need for potential targets to be vigilant at all times, rather than assuming that they are afforded a level of protection by virtue of being indoors, or ‘off duty’. The previous experiences of the target were also considered, along with the presence (or otherwise) of a bodyguard. The research found that the majority of victims in this sample had received no previous threats, had not experienced previous attempts on their life, and tended not to have a bodyguard. It is suggested that more research is undertaken in this area, in order to
establish whether assassins target individuals who are not prepared at all, or whether they target everyone, with just those who are prepared for an attack who survive.

Again, this thesis has provided the first analysis of the ‘collateral victims’ of political assassinations, i.e. the individuals who are killed or injured aside from the immediate target. The analysis of the specificity of assassinations showed that, in this sample, assassinations do result in the death and injury of individuals other than the immediate target. In particular, government attacks result in more collateral victims than those conducted by terrorist groups, and individuals/others.

Finally, the first analysis of the method used by political assassins has been conducted, in terms of their proximity to their victim and the complexity of their weapon. These two aspects have been modelled, finding that they are statistically significantly related to one another, and suggesting that rational choice theories of crime can be applied to political assassins. Their use of highly complex weapons enables them to be absent from the scene (removing likelihood of apprehension at the scene), while the use of less complex weapons (reducing their risk of harm or apprehension prior to the attack) requires their presence at the scene. In addition, different weapons have been shown to be related to the specificity of an attack, with explosive devices proving to result in the least specific attacks. In addition, the use of methods by the most prolific terrorist groups was examined, finding that they tend to use similar methods, which tend to result in low numbers of collateral victims.

The models identified (Accessibility, Victim Preparedness, Complexity and Proximity) were compared, and it was found that these are related to one another. Accessibility is statistically significantly correlated to Complexity and Proximity, suggesting that the location of victim and time of the attack is related to the method selected by the assassin. Victim Preparedness is also statistically significantly correlated to the complexity, again suggesting that aspects of the assassination victim influence the behaviour of the assassin.

In conclusion, this thesis has shown that assassinations are structured events, seemingly organised and conducted by rational decision makers, who are influenced by their own aims, and using strategies tailored to the vulnerabilities of the target.
The research has set out a number of models of assassin behaviour that will form the basis for more systematic research in the future.
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APPENDIX A
Table 1

*List of variables*

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<th>Variable</th>
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<td>Victim Name</td>
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<td>Assassin Present at Scene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assassin Stayed at Scene</td>
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<td>Break In – Work</td>
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<td>Motive Contract</td>
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<td>Event</td>
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APPENDIX B
CODING DICTIONARY

Part One – Assassinations as Assassinations

Specific/Unspecific
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attack was specific, and code 1 if the attack was not specific. Specific attacks kill only the intended target, and unspecific attacks kill individuals other than the target (e.g. bystanders).

Victim Type
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 3 if the target of the attack was a public figure. Code 2 if the target were both public and private figures. Code 1 if the target was a private figure, with no public figures killed/injured.

Offender Type
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the offender was a repeat offender, and code 1 if the offender was a first time offender. If the perpetrator was a group, only code 2 if it is clear that the individual was the same each time.

VO Relationship
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim and offender were known to one another prior to the attack. Code 1 if there was no prior knowledge.

Motive
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the target has a political motive (identified via their own statement, or conclusion drawn by law enforcement officials, and to include religious motivations as well). Code 1 if there is a non-political motive.
In this case, political should be taken to refer to a desire to implement some kind of change in government policy/society/the way the country is run. It should include any attempt to change the government/ruling body itself, or the social/religious policy of a country.

*Part One – Assassinations as Homicide*

**VORelationship**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 3 if the victim and offender were strangers to one another, and had no prior relationship. Code 2 if the victim and offender were acquaintances, but were not related to one another. Code 1 if the victim and offender were related to one another.

**NumberVictims**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if there was more than one victim in the particular incident. Code 1 if there was just one victim in the incident.

**SerialAttacks**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attack was part of a series, committed by the same offender(s), over separate time periods. Code 1 if the attack was not part of a series.

**MentalIllness**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the offender was suffering from any form of mental illness. Code 1 if there is no evidence that the offender had no mental illness.

**Motivation**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 3 if the offender(s) was motivated by an instrumental need (i.e. they kill to achieve a particular goal). Code 2 if the offender was personally
motivated. Code 1 if the offender was politically motivated (identified via the 
offender’s statement of their own motive, a claim from a terrorist group, a court case 
ruling a political motive, or security services/police reporting evidence a political 
motive).

In this case, political should be taken to refer to a desire to implement some kind of 
change in government policy/society/the way the country is run. It should include 
any attempt to change the government/ruling body itself, or the social/religious 
policy of a country.

*Part One – Assassinations as Terrorism*

**Threat/Act**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the incident was an act of violence. Code 1 if the incident is a 
threat of violence.

**TargetType**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 3 if the target(s) of the attack was targeted specifically because of 
who they are. Code 2 if the target(s) of the attack was selected because they are 
representative of a larger target. Code 1 if the target(s) of the attack was selected at 
random.

**Deaths**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the incident resulted in deaths. Code 1 if the incident did not 
result in any deaths.

**FinancialLosses**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the incident resulted in financial losses. Code 1 if the incident 
did not result in any financial losses.
TerroristGroup
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the perpetrator of the incident was a member of/working on behalf of terrorist group. Code 1 if the perpetrator was not a member of/working on behalf of a terrorist group.
Part Two – Features of Victim & Demographics

**Case**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Number to serve as identifier for each case.

**NameVictim**
Type: String
Definition: Enter the name of the victim, along with any aliases.

**Age**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Enter the age of the victim when they died.

**AgeRange**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Select the group which the age of the victim falls into.

**Country**
Type: String
Definition: Enter the country in which the attack took place.

**Date**
Type: String
Definition: Enter the date on which the attack took place.

**Region**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Select the region in which the attack took place

1 North America
   Canada, Mexico, United States
2 Central America & Caribbean
Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, St Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Virgin Islands (U.S.)

3 South America
   Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Falkland Islands, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela

4 East Asia
   China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan

5 Southeast Asia
   Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, South Vietnam, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam

6 South Asia
   Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka

7 Central Asia
   Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

8 Western Europe
   Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Corsica, Denmark, East Germany (GDR), Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Great Britain, Greece Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Isle of Man, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, West Germany (FRG)

9 Eastern Europe
   Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia-Montenegro, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Yugoslavia

10 Middle East & North Africa
   Algeria, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, North Yemen, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Yemen, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza Strip, Western Sahara, Yemen

11 Sub-Saharan Africa
Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Kinshasa), Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rhodesia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

12 Russia & the Newly Independent States (NIS)
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Soviet Union, Ukraine

13 Australasia & Oceania
Australia, Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa (Western Samoa), Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna.

Date
Type: String
Definition: Enter the date of the attack in the format DD/MM/YYYY.

Year
Type: Numeric
Definition: Enter the year in which the attack took place in the format YYYY.

Source
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 1 if the source of information was newspapers only, code 2 if the source of information was only the Mickolus books, and code 3 if information came from both sources.

VictimGender
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was male, and 1 if the victim was female.
PreviousThreatsGeneral
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim previously reported receiving threats directed at themselves or their friends and family. Threats are anything in which the victim is told they (or their friends/family) will be harmed. Threats can be written or verbal. Code 1 if there is no evidence of any threats being reported.

PreviousAttempts
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if previous attempts on the victim’s life have been reported. Code 1 if been no previous attempts have been reported.

VictimFollowed
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if there is evidence/it is reported that the victim was followed or watched by anyone prior to the attack. This may have been reported by the victim or someone else. Code 2 also if the individual/group responsible reports following or watching the victim. Code 1 if there are no reports/no evidence that the victim was followed.

PrevBhvr
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if any of the previous 3 variables are coded 2 (i.e. if the victim was previously threatened, survived a previous attempt, or was followed). Code 1 if none of these behaviours are present.

PoliticianVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim is currently a politician. Also code 2 if the victim is the leader of the country, such as Prime Minister or President. Code 1 if the victim was not a politician at the time of their death.
PreviousPoliticianVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim has served as a politician in the past. Code 1 if they have never worked as a politician.

LeaderVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim is the leader of a country, e.g. Prime Minister, President. This should include military rulers, dictators etc. Code 1 if they are not the leader of a country.

RelatedPolitician
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was related to a politician, alive or dead. Those who have married into the family are to be included in this category. Code 1 if there are no familial ties reported.

GovernmentOfficialVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim worked for the Government, other than as a politician. This includes those who worked in the intelligence services, advisers to the government, and other civilians working for the government. Code 1 if the victim was a member of the police or military, or if they were part of the criminal justice system (judge, prosecutor etc) of the country.

MilitaryVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim is a member of the military or police. This is to include officers of the military and police. Code 1 if the victim is reported to be a member of the intelligence services, or if they are not a member of the military/police.
**ForeignDiplomatVictim**

Type: Numeric

Definition: Code 2 if the victim was a foreign diplomat or ambassador. Code 1 if the victim was not a foreign diplomat or ambassador.

**UNVictim**

Type: Numeric

Definition: Code 2 if it is reported that the victim worked for the UN at any time. Code 1 if the victim has not worked for the UN.

**CivilServantVictim**

Type: Numeric

Definition: Code 2 if the victim was a civil servant. Code 1 if they were not a civil servant.

**ActivistVictim**

Type: Numeric

Definition: Code 2 if the victim was a political activist/campaigner. This should include those individuals who campaign for a political cause, or who are reported as activists. This should include victims who were actively working on such campaigns. Also include those who fund activists/campaign groups. Code 1 if there is no evidence that the victim was involved in political activism or campaigning.

**CommunityVictim**

Type: Numeric

Definition: Code 2 if the victim was a leader of a particular community, such as an ethnic group, or of a particular tribe, etc. Does not include religious officials, members of political parties, or activists. Code 1 if there is no evidence that the victim was a leader of such a community.
ReligiousVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was a religious official of one of the five major religions – Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism or Sikhism, male or female. This is to include officials at all levels, including nuns, priests, vicars, Imams, etc. Code 1 if they were an official of another religion, or if they were only a member of the church, and were not an official of the church. Code 1 if the victim was not a Religious official.

CharityVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim worked for a charity, or as an aid worker, in any capacity. Also code 2 if the victim was a doctor. Code 1 if the victim did not work for a charity, or was not a doctor.

LegalVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was a legal professional, such as a lawyer, prosecutor, judge. Code 2 if the victim was reported to work in the legal profession in the past. Code 1 if the victim has never been involved in the legal professions.

BusinessmanVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim worked in business, either their own or someone else’s. Code 1 if the victim was not a businessman.

JournalistVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was a journalist. Also code 2 if the victim is a photographer working for/with the press, or for/with a journalist. Code 1 if not.
PrintVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim worked on, was editor of, publisher of, or owner of a newspaper. Also code 2 if the victim was an editor/publisher of books. Code 1 if the victim was not an editor or publisher.

WriterVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was a writer. This category includes script writers, poets, and novelists. Code 1 if they were a journalist, and code that within the JournalistVictim category. Code 1 if the victim was not a writer.

Academic Victim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim is a teacher/lecturer/academic. Code 2 also if the victim was a historian. Code 1 if they were not.

ExileVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim is an exile/refugee from another country’s government. Code 1 if the victim is not in exile.

TerroristVictim
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim is reported to be a terrorist, or a member of a terrorist organisation. Code 1 if the victim is not a terrorist.

Protected
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was protected by bodyguards at the time of the attack, even if the bodyguards were involved in the attack. Code 1 if there is no evidence that bodyguards were present.
DiedImmediately
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if it is reported that the victim died immediately, or if not reported were it is obvious that they could not have survived the attack. This should include situations were they were bombed or shot repeatedly. Code 1 if the victim was alive after the attack, for example to be taken to hospital.

OtherVictimCivilian
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if others (who were not the intended victim’s bodyguards) were killed or injured in the attack. Code 1 if there were no other victims of the attack.

NumberCivilian
Type: Numeric
Definition: State how many civilians were killed/injured in the attack. If there are different numbers reported, record the highest. If not otherwise specified, code all victims as civilians.

OtherVictimBodyguard
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the intended victim’s bodyguards were also killed or injured in the attack. Code 1 if there were no bodyguards injured in the attack.

NumberBG
Type: Numeric
Definition: State how many bodyguards were killed/injured in the attack. If there are different numbers reported, record the highest. If not otherwise specified, code all victims as civilians.
Part Two — Weaponry

DescribeDeath
Type: String
Definition: Briefly describe the death.

WeaponUsed
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if any weapon was used. Code 1 if there was no weapon used.

Gun
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was shot. Code 1 if the victim was not shot.

ShotMoreThanOnce
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was shot more than once. Code 1 if the victim was not shot more than once.

Blade
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed with a blade. This includes the use of scalpels, knives, swords, and any other blades. Code 1 if the victim was not killed with a blade.

StabbedMoreThanOnce
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was stabbed more than once. Code 1 if the victim was not stabbed more than once.
Hands
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if hands were used to kill the individual. Code 1 if the victim was not killed with hands.

Beaten
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was beaten to death, either with a weapon or by hand. Code 1 if the victim was not beaten.

ExplosiveDevice
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if a bomb/rocket/missile/pilotless drone was used to kill the victim. Code 1 if there was no explosive device, or if the bomb used was a suicide bomb.

SuicideBomber
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if a suicide bomber killed the victim. Code 1 if the victim was not killed by a suicide bomber.

PlaneCrash
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed in a plane crash. Code 1 if the victim was not killed in a plane crash.

Suicide Bomb
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a suicide bomber. Code 1 if the victim was not killed by a suicide bomber.
Incendiary Bomb
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by an incendiary bomb, i.e. a firebomb, Molotov cocktail. Code 1 if no kind of incendiary bomb was used.

Letter Bomb
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a bomb delivered in a letter or parcel. Code 1 if no letter/parcel bomb was used.

Suitcase bomb
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a bomb left/placed in a suitcase or briefcase. Code 1 if there was no suitcase/briefcase bomb.

Car bomb
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a bomb in a car. This includes bombs left in and under cars, regardless of how they are detonated (e.g. wired into the car itself or detonated remotely/on a timer etc). Code 1 if no car bomb was used.

Landmine
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a landmine. Code 1 if the victim was not killed by a landmine.

Rocket attack
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed in a rocket attack. This includes rockets fired from planes/helicopters/from the ground. Code 1 if the victim was not killed in a rocket attack.
Unknown missile
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed in a missile attack where it is not known how it was fired. Code 1 if no missile was used, or if the type of missile is known.

Manned missile
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a manned missile. By this it means that the victim was killed by a missile fired by a person from a helicopter or plane.

Unmanned missile
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by an unmanned missile. By this it means that the victim was killed by a missile fired remotely, i.e. using an unmanned/pilotless drone, or fired remotely from the ground.

Timed Bomb
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a bomb detonated with a timer. This may overlap with other categories such as car bomb, where a bomb was placed in a car and detonated by a timer. Code 1 if the victim was not killed by a timed bomb.

Remote bomb
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a remotely detonated bomb. This can overlap with other categories of bomb, such as car bomb, where a bomb was placed in a car and then remotely detonated. A remotely detonated bomb is placed in the desired location prior to the attack and then detonated by remote control at the required time of the explosion. It is not the same as a timed bomb or missile. Code 1 if no remotely detonated bomb was used.
**Roadside bomb**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a bomb left at the side of the road/pavement. Code 1 if they were not killed by a bomb left at the roadside.

**Unknown bomb**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a bomb but the type is unknown. There should be no overlap between this variable and other ‘bomb’ variables. Code 1 if the victim was killed by a known bomb, or not killed by a bomb.

**Other bomb**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a specific type of bomb which is not listed separately here. Code 1 if the type of bomb is already specified, unknown, or the victim was not killed by a bomb.

**Grenade**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by a grenade regardless of whether it was thrown or left at the scene. Code 1 if there were no grenades involved in the attack.

**Shot**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was shot to death. Code 1 if there was no shooting.

**Knife**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was stabbed with a knife (any kind of knife). Code 1 if the victim was stabbed with an unknown tool/sword/axe/other blade.
Sword
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed with a sword, through stabbing, beheading etc. Code 1 if the victim was not killed with a sword.

Throat cut
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim had their throat cut. Code 1 if their throat was not cut.

Axe
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed with an axe. This may be through cutting or beating. Code 1 if no axe was involved in the attack.

Other blade
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by stabbing/blade injuries, but the blade is not a knife, sword, or axe. Code 1 if this is not the case, or if the blade is unknown.

Unknown blade
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by stabbing/blade injuries but the type of blade used is unknown. Code 1 if the victim was not killed by stabbing or if the blade used is coded above.

Radioactive poison
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed with radioactive poison. Code 1 if radioactive poison was not used.
Chemical poison
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed with a chemical poison. Code 1 if they were not killed with a chemical poison.

Biological poison
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed with a biological poison. Code 1 if they were not killed with a biological poison.

Unknown poison
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was killed by poisoning but the type of poison used is unknown. Code 1 if the victim was not poisoned or if the type of poison used is known.

Other poison
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was poisoned and the poison was not radioactive, chemical or biological. Code 1 if the victim was not poisoned or if the type of poison used is already coded.

Beaten hands
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was beaten to death and the killer used their hands, rather than an object/weapon. Code 1 if the victim was not beaten, or was beaten with another object.

Strangled
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was strangled. Strangling may involve a weapon or may be done with bare hands. Code 1 if the victim was not strangled.
Thrown
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was thrown to their death, e.g. from a balcony. Code 1 if the victim was not thrown.

Smothered
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was smothered. This is different to strangulation or hanging, and involves suffocation of the victim. Code 1 if the victim was not smothered/suffocated.

Beaten blunt
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was beaten to death using some kind of blunt instrument, i.e. anything other than their hands. Code 1 if the victim was not beaten to death, or was beaten with hands or it was unknown.

Beaten unknown
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if you know the victim was beaten to death but there is no information on whether they were beaten by hand or with an object/weapon. Code 1 if they were not beaten, or if they were beaten by hand/object.

Hung
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was hung. This is a separate variable to strangulation or smothering. Code 1 if the victim was not hung.

Plane crash
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim died in a plane crash. This does not include where a bomb killed the victim and subsequently caused the plane to crash. It should only be
coded as 2 where the plane crashed and it was that that caused the death. Code 1 if the victim did not die in a plane crash.

**Car_crash**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim died in a car crash. Code 1 if the victim did not die in a car crash, or if a car or roadside bomb was the weapon of death.

**Run_over**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was run over by a car or other vehicle. Code 1 if the victim was not run over.

**Drowning**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was drowned. Code 1 if the victim was not drowned.

**Number_Weapons**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Enter the number of type of weapons used.

**WeaponLeft**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the weapon was left at the scene after the crime had taken place. Code 1 if the weapon was not found at the scene of the crime.
Part Two — Features of the Attack

AssassinPresent
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker was present at the scene of the attack. Code 1 if the attacker was not present.

AssassinLeft
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if there is evidence that the killer left the scene once the attack had taken place. Code 1 if there is evidence the killer stayed at the scene. Code 1 if the killer was apprehended or arrested at the scene, so did not leave for this reason.

HowLeft
Type: String
Definition: Enter how the attacker left the scene, such as on foot, by car etc.

AssassinStayed
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if there is evidence that the killer stayed at the scene of the attack. This is to include killers who stay at the scene if they are apprehended or arrested. Code 1 if there is evidence that the attacker did not stay at the scene.

Ambushed
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was stopped using an ambush. This is to include being stopped by a roadblock, being forced to stop by a large group of people, or being stopped by a person/people who were previously hidden. Code 1 if the victim was not ambushed.
**InsideOutside**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 1 if the victim was inside a building when they were attacked. Code 2 if the victim was outside.

**WorkLeisure**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 1 if the victim was working when they were killed. Code 2 if they were not working, and therefore were at leisure.

**Transit**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was in transit when they were attacked. Code 1 if they were not.

**Private**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was in a private location at the time of the attack. This is to include private homes/buildings, and private planes. Code 1 if they were not.

**SemiPrivate**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was in a semi-private location at the time of the attack. This is to include if they were in a car in a public place, or, if they were in a building, if they had to be permitted access to the victim. Code 1 if they were not.

**Public**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the victim was in a public location at the time of the attack. This is to include public spaces both inside and outside. Code 1 if the victim was not in a public location at the time of the attack.
**BreakInHome**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killers broke in to the victim’s house. This should be coded 2 if the killers used force to enter, or snuck in without the knowledge of those in the house. Code 1 if the killers were permitted entry to the building.

**BreakInWork**
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killers broke in to the victim’s building of work. This should be coded 2 if the killers used force to enter, or snuck in without the knowledge of those in the building. Code 1 if the killers were permitted entry to the building.
Part Two – Features of assassin/group

NumberAssassins
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 1 if there was just one attacker at the scene. Code 2 if there were 2-3 attackers. Code 3 if there were 4 or more attackers at the scene. If the specific number of attackers is unknown, code 4.

PrimaryAssassin
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker was at the scene of the crime. This refers to a person at the scene who killed the victim. If there was no attacker at the scene of the crime, code as 1.

SecondaryAssassin
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if there was a collaborator at the scene of the crime. This refers to an individual who did not commit the killing, but who was at the scene of the crime. Code 1 if there was no collaborator at the scene.

TertiaryAssassin
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if there was a collaborator/planner who was not at the scene of the crime. Code 1 if there were no collaborators who were not at the scene.

MaleAssassin
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker(s) were male. Code 1 if the attacker(s) were not male. Code 3 if the sex of the attacker is unknown.
FemaleAssassin
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker(s) were female. Code 1 if the attacker(s) were not female. Code 3 if the sex of the attacker is unknown.

PoliceAssassin
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker(s) was (were) a member of the police or military at the time of the attack. Code 1 if there is no evidence that the killer was a member of these organisations at the time of the attack.

GroupResponsibility
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if a terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Code 1 if no group has claimed responsibility.

WhichGroup
Type: String
Definition: State the terrorist group which has claimed responsibility.

IndividualResponsibility
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if an individual is responsible for the attack. Code 1 if no individual has been found responsible for the attack.

BothResponsibility
Type: String
Definition: Code 2 if both an individual and a terrorist group were responsible for the attack. Code 1 if neither, or just one or the other were responsible.
NeitherResponsibility
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if no one has claimed responsibility for the attack (individual, govt, or terrorist group). Code 1 if an individual or group has claimed responsibility, or if an individual has confessed to the attack.

SuspectedResponsibility
Type: String
Definition: Enter the name of the group or individual who is reported to be suspected of killing the victim, but they have not admitted responsibility for the attack.

Membership
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killer was a member of a terrorist group. Code 1 if the killer was not a member of a terrorist group.

GroupName
Type: String
Definition: Give the name of the terrorist group the attacker was a member of.

GovernmentInvolvement
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if a government was involved in planning or carrying out the attack. The government may be any government, not necessarily that of the country in which the attack took place. The involvement is likely to be along the lines of a “death squad”, or an order by the military/ministers/politicians to kill. Police involvement is coded elsewhere. Code 1 if there is no evidence that a country’s government/ruler was involved in the planning or commission of the attack.

WhichGovernment
Type: String
Definition: State the government which was involved in the attack.
PoliceInvolvement
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the police were involved in planning the attack. The police as attacker should be coded in PoliceAssassin. Code 1 if there is no evidence that the police were involved in the planning of the attack.

MilitaryInvolvement
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the military were involved in planning the attack. Code 1 if there is no evidence that the military were involved in the planning of the attack.

Conspiracy
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if there is evidence that the decision to kill the victim and/or the planning was made by a group, which is not a terrorist group. Code 1 if there was no evidence of a group making this decision. Also code 1 if there is evidence that a terrorist group decided the victim should be killed/planned the attack.

MotiveContract
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the actual killer was paid to kill the victim. The killer should be motivated solely by the money, and not because he/she is part of a terrorist group. Code 1 if there is no evidence that the killer was paid to kill.

InsideCooperationAssassin
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killer was working covertly with the victim. This should include any attacker who worked for or with the victim, who intended to kill them. Code 1 if the killer was unknown to the victim, and did not work with him/her.
InsideCooperationCollaborator
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if one (or more) of the collaborators (not killers) was working covertly with the victim. This should include any attacker who worked for or with the victim, who intended to plan to kill them. Code 1 if the killer was unknown to the victim, and did not work with him/her.

HistoryViolence
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if it is reported that the killer has a history of violent behaviour, which can include self-reported violence or a history of violent offending. Code 1 if there is no evidence of previous violence.

HistoryOffending
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if it is reported that the killer has a history of offending, of any kind of offence. Code 1 if there is no evidence of an offending history.

MI
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker has ever been diagnosed with a mental illness, either before, during or after the attack. Code 1 if there is no evidence to show that the killer had ever experienced mental illness.

Known
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if there is evidence that the killer was already known to intelligence services at the time of the attacker. Code 1 if there is no evidence that the intelligence services had been aware of the killer prior to the attack.
Part Two – Result

ApprehendedScene
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker was apprehended at the scene of crime. This can include them being arrested by police, or apprehended by a member of the public. Code 1 if they were not apprehended/arrested at the scene.

AssassinPresentLeft
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker was present at the scene, and left (i.e. was not caught). Code 1 if the attacker was present and did not leave, or if the attacker was not present.

LaterApprehended
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker was not apprehended at the scene of the attack, but was apprehended at a later date. Code 1 if the attacker was not apprehended at all, or was apprehended at the scene of the crime.

AssassinKilledScene
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker was killed at the scene of the attack. This is to include killing by police/military/bystanders/protection officers/their collaborators. Code 1 if the killer was not killed at the scene of the crime.

StoppedScene
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the perpetrator was stopped at the scene of the attack. Code 1 if the perpetrator was not stopped at the scene (including because they were not at the scene).
AssassinKilledAfter
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killer was killed at any time after the attack. Code 1 if the killer is still alive, or if this information is missing.

Confessed
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killer made a confession to the killing. Code 1 if no confession was ever made.

RetractedConfession
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killer confessed to the killing, but later withdrew the confession, at any stage for any reason. Code 1 if there was no confession, or if the killer never withdrew the confession.

AssassinConvicted
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killer was convicted for killing the victim. Code 1 if there was no conviction.

AssassinPrison
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killer was sentenced to prison after their conviction for the murder. Code 1 if they were not.

DeathSentence
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker was sentenced to death. Code 1 if they were not.
AssassinSuicide
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the attacker committed suicide, any time after the attack. Code 1 if they did not.

AssassinNeverIdentified
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killer was never identified. Code 1 if the killer was identified.

ConspiratorApprehended
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the conspirator was apprehended. This should be coded as 2 if this was at the scene of the crime, or if not. Code as 2 even if not all of the conspirators were arrested. Conspirators should be considered as any individual who was involved in deciding to kill the victim, or in planning to kill the victim. This includes those who were at the scene of the killing, but who did not actually physically attack the victim. Code 1 if there were no such conspirators (i.e. the killer worked alone) or if the conspirator(s) were never caught.

ConspiratorConfessed
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the conspirator confessed to being involved in the decision to kill, or the planning of the killing. This should be coded as 2 if an individual person confesses. If a group confesses and takes responsibility, this should be coded under “GroupResponsibility”.

ConspiratorConvicted
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the conspirator was convicted for deciding to or planning to kill the victim. Code 1 if there was no conviction.
ConspiratorPrison
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the killer was sentenced to prison after their conviction for the murder. Code 1 if they were not.

ConspiratorReleased
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the conspirator was released from prison, either on appeal, or because they were given amnesty. Code 1 if they have been released because they have served their sentence.

ConspiratorNeverIdentified
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if the conspirator(s) was (were) never identified. Code 1 if the conspirator(s) was (were) identified.

RewardOffered
Type: Numeric
Definition: Code 2 if a reward was offered to help find the killers and/or conspirators. Code 1 if there is no evidence of any reward.

RewardWho
Type: Numeric
Definition: Specify who offered the reward, and the sum.
APPENDIX C
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
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APPENDIX D
COMMUNIST/SOCIALIST
- Red Brigades for the Construction of the Communist Combatants/Construction of a Fighting Communist Party
- Breakaway faction of the Irish People's Liberation Organisation (aka INLA)
- ETA
- INLA (Irish National Liberation Army)
- Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front & Lautaro Youth Movement
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
- Red Army Faction
- Shining Path
- November 17

NATIONALIST/SEPARATIST
- Breakaway faction of the Irish People’s Liberation Organisation (aka INLA)
- Abu Nidal/Kach movement/Kahana Hay movement
- ETA
- INLA (Irish National Liberation Army)
- IRA
- Loyalist Volunteer Force
- LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam)/Tamil Tigers
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
- Red Hand Defenders
- Ulster Defence Association (UDA)/Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF)
- Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)
- Martyrs of the al-Aqsa Intifada
- November 17
- Unspecified Militant Separatist Group

ANTI-GLOBALISATION
- November 17
RACIST
- Abu Nidal/Kach movement/Kahana Hay movement

RELIGIOUS
- Abu Nidal/Kach movement/Kahana Hay movement
- Al-Gamaa al-Islamiya (the “Islamic Group”) (aka al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya (GIA))
- Al Qaeda
- Islamic Action
- Taliban
- Islamic militants, likely Islamic Liberation Organisation

LEFTIST
- Dev Sol (Revolutionary Left)
- Dev Sol & Turkish People’s Liberation Party Front

UNCLASSIFIED
- Al-Awja (Palestinian org.) (appears in Mickolus)
- Committee for the Release of Moshood Abiola
- Al-Jama’ah of International Justice (appears in Mickolus)
- Direct Action Against Drugs (allegedly a front for the PIRA)
- First Panthic Committee
- Islamic Revenge
- Jihad & Victory in Greater Syria
- Loyalist Defence & Retaliation Group
- (N.Ireland) Loyalists
- Mafia/Cosa Nostra
- Mexican Front Against Government Corruption (appears in Mickolus)
- People’s Army (killed in Senegal)
- Strugglers for the Unity and Freedom of Levant
- Youth of the Armed Struggle
- Unspecified group