

RATIONAL IRRATIONALITY:
NATURE OF SUICIDE BOMBERS CHOICE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the phenomenon of the suicide bombers' choice. There have been many studies made in analyzing the terrorist organizations but fewer talking about the individual level of decision-making. In this thesis I show that one of the prominent theories of choice explanation – rational choice theory – is not capable of explaining this phenomenon to the fullest need. Are the suicide bombers rational, or are they fanatics? None of the options available in the area are absolutely right and it is important to find out to what extent each of the major theories is useful in explaining suicide bombers' choice. A method of literature and available data analysis is used for creating a new approach to explain the phenomenon. As the result the black box framework is proposed, where black box is a metaphor, referred to a motivation system of an individual which in part is influenced by psychological and sociological conditions. The black box model stresses the need of combination of views that exist in explanation of the suicide attackers' motives for the sake of having a tool with stronger explanation power of the phenomenon.

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INTRODUCTION

It is this apparent readiness to sacrifice oneself, perhaps more than any other fact, which makes the threat of suicide terrorism so large and so incomprehensible

- Wintrobe, 2006 -

On 24 January, 2011 a man and a woman entered the baggage reclaim area of the international airport Domodedovo in Moscow, Russia with an improvised explosive device filled with about 5 kg of trinitrotoluene, the explosion of which resulted in the death of 35 people – nationals of 15 different countries. The motivations and reasons behind this horrifying act are still unclear, though the suspects are claimed to be the radical Islamist groups of the North Caucasus region.

The numerous events of such nature have taken place in the human history, starting with crusaders and Japanese kamikazes, ending with the anarchists and radical religious groups. Clearly, the suicide bombings are unfortunate and puzzling actions from all possible perspectives one may look at it. Many questions arise including a one of humanist nature of how someone can for a cover of a good reason kill innocent people? And of rational nature of how it is possible that someone prefers to blow him- or herself up for the sake of some, not clearly identified, beliefs and goals. Thus, such acts pose a great challenge to the rational choice theory following which it is hard to claim that suicide bombers are rational agents, even if it intuitively seems to be the right position. How come it might be an option to bypass a large part of one's future utility, when it is presumed that individuals act in such a way as to maximize their own utility?

Various theories of behaviors have been providing their view of the nature of suicide bombers' choice. The most plausible to a general public seem to be the idea of psychopathy

and high hatred level of the actors (Pittel & Rubbelke, 2009). However, recent findings show that this is not what motivates most terrorists (Wetherston, 2003) rather the feeling of belongingness to a group and presence of overall good purpose (Routledge & Arndt, 2008, Wintrobe, 2006). Therefore, some still argue that it is due to true belief system that suicide bombers have (Allen, 2002); others claim it is due to the financial remuneration their families will receive (Pape, 2003). The most diplomatic ones say that all of these factors and many more might be playing a role in decision-making and that it is strongly dependent on the case by case basis. Before going into profound discussion of the rationality and motivations it is necessary to define terrorist mission and particularly suicide terrorism.

Some authors think that the attackers use suicide bombing as one of the vital methods to fight against a much stronger enemy (Evans, 2005; Madsen, 2005; Pape, 2003, 2005). Others argue that the suicide bombing is the revengeful result of the constant humiliation of a certain group, be it nation or a social group, by their enemies (Altman, 2005; Haqqani & Kimmage, 2005). Thus, suicide bombers are seen as the only available army that might be of some effect against the enemy (Allen, 2002). Some of the scholars exclude the individual sets that make up a group of suicide terrorists and rather claim that the only important way to understand the motivations is to analyze the terrorist organizations (Gambetta, 2006; Pape, 2005) since it provides some sort of reliable data and sources; whereas, to analyze suicide bombers' behavior is difficult because 1) they ceased to exist and thus are physically unapproachable, and 2) it is an analysis of individuals and the nature of individuals has proved to be less consistent than that of an organization. Though I accept the idea that terrorist organizations play a vital role in such points as process of alienation and so-called "brain washing" of the actors who ally themselves with the organization's goals, still the actual actors are not just puppets in the hands of organizations; at least not in the beginning, when the decision of joining organization and at many times even becoming a martyr is

taking place. Ernest Evans (2005) believes that most of the suicide terrorists are rational individuals who have same desires, wishes and motivations as all of us.

Even though mostly suicide attacks are analyzed on the level of terrorist organizations, they still should be looked at on three, rather than one, levels of analysis: the individuals, the terrorist organizations, and the environmental levels (Moghadam, 2006). Actors from all these levels experience different motivations that drive this triangle of terrorist attacks. The level of analysis important for this paper, the individual one, is often expressed in suicide bombers' motivations "rooted in religious identities, nationalist appeals, group commitments, vengeance, or emotive factors associated with personal suffering and empowerment in the context of generalized helplessness" (Hafez, 2006: p. 51). The terrorist organizations use the social moods and promote the martyrdom culture in order to spread the idea of divine war; this engendering the idea of the heroic martyr in the society provokes the public debate and in many cases support. Thus, without a strong social support and popularity terrorist organizations and individual bombers would never be successful and would not be able to operate. (Atran, 2003).

Though suicide bombers are more studied in the structured group membership they still should be seen from one point as "individuals taking individual decisions to kill people" along with themselves (Timothy Spengler, as cited in Atran, 2003). Therefore, the most vital and conscious decision that a suicide bomber makes, as Ariva D'Erchi believes, "is not when to press the trigger, but whether to join a terrorist group" (Ariva D'Erchi, 2005). However, some authors such as Wintrobe (2004) find the semantic difference between the choice to enter a terrorist group and a choice to actually commit a suicide mission. First of all, if these two decision-making time periods are differentiated and terrorists do [or think that they do] have a choice in both situations then it is also plausible to claim that the person making

decision #1 to become a member of a terrorist group is the person who is making the decision #2, and is capable of being rational as the result of weighing the preferences, even though the motivations of the actors might be inconsistent and blurred. Thus, for example, Wintrobe (2004) does not find a problem of inconsistency of preferences such as when first decision could be based on feeling of interest, or purpose to be able to make changes, while the second decision might be based, as well more on the group bounds and duty to serve. He rather states the importance of the latter motivation as a driving force in making any decision for a suicide bomber.

Nevertheless this does not apply to acts of self immolation or hunger strikes for a particular cause as in case of Irish for a political status. The potential suicide bomber, thus can not be perceived as the same who conducts the act of immolation since the latter one is usually the case of the individual act while the suicide bomber is a strategically planned action that is aimed to use a human being as a living bomb that will kill a number of certain group's members. Surely there have been cases of being an individual suicide bomber, especially in Palestine during the second Intifada, but generally the potential human bombs have to become the members of the terrorist organizations first.

Definition of Terrorism

There is no single definition of terrorism. The purpose of the definition – statistical, policy-oriented, legal and other purposes – is one of the reasons why it is such a complex task to find one particular definition that will be plausible for everyone. The presented here definitions will be the most relevant to the topic of this paper.

U.S. Congress defines an act of a terror as one that is aggressive and/or is dangerous to human life, which violates the criminal law of the United States or any State and if committed on the territory of the USA; also the terrorism brings in intentionality of the act, which might

be to 1) coerce humans, 2) have an affect on the political decision by coercion, and 3) effect the government's instability and functioning through kidnapping or assassination (U.S. Congress Code, 1984). This is an idiosyncratic definition for the sake of the legal and court system of the USA. In this case the purpose of definition is to regulate the law and under law all are equal and any and all human life should be highly protected and valued.

However, it is important to distinguish between the attacks against *all* (i.e. including *military bases*) and those only against *civilians*. Since the US Congress is broader it as well includes attacks against its soldier combatants and other servicemen as terrorist attacks. Thus, it covers the terrorism in general, while in this paper it is important to narrow down the definition to non-combatant actors for the sake of clarity of argument and concentration on rationality of suicide terrorism in following chapters.¹ The initial term of *terrorist mission* in scientific area was coined in political terminology by Waldmann (2002) as it was aimed to achieve political change. He refers to terrorism as “systematically planned, shocking acts of violence directed from underground against a political order. They are designed to produce a general sense of insecurity and fear, but also sympathy and support” (Waldmann, 2002). Under Waldmann's definition the “political order” seems to be a bit misleading or too general, since usually it is conducted against members of the enemy group in order to influence the political order. The most plausible definition I found is given by Atran (2008) who describes terrorism as a “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience” (Atran, 2008) in an asymmetrical combat conditions. Therefore, an addition is that the terror is assumed to be used by a weaker party in a conflict (Bockstette, 2008).

¹ Otherwise it will be some sort of guerrilla war, which does not necessarily need the further development of the rationality of actors.

Even though the last definition seems to be more plausible for the purposes of this paper, still all of the given three definition share some important common features of Terrorism – political goal orientation, wish to influence the psych of people and keep them in fear; violent act against individuals. However, as it was mentioned, excluding military agents is important from the consideration for the sake of scientific validity and avoidance of the additional factors' influence on the explanation and interpretation of the phenomena.

Definition of Suicide

Though there is a definition of terrorism it is still important to define suicide terrorism as well, since this is the main topic of this paper. Yet before defining suicide terrorism, it is important to identify suicide itself and be clear on this point. Suicide, thus put, is an “intentional termination of one’s own life” (Brandt, 1975). Intention to die plays a crucial role in identifying what suicide is, since there is otherwise a misunderstanding between suicide and highly risky missions. The latter refer to the cases where a person indulges him/herself into a high risk of dying (all the way up till 100% of death) for the sake of a more general good (usually) but does not wish to intentionally die her/himself. To put it shortly, it is a termination of oneself used as a means to achieve another, non self-concentrated end in its usual connotation. As an example lets take an army pilot who has to choose between saving himself and catapulting but killing some number of villagers where the plane is going to crash; or otherwise redirecting the plane but not being able to save his life as the result. Thus, here the important distinction is that the pilot does not intent to die but merely foresees his death as a cost for the sake of life of many other people who would otherwise die. Hence, his action can not be considered as a suicide because there is no presence of intentionality to die while there is a presence of a duty factor of the pilot to divert the plane (Brandt, 1975; Kant, 1763).

Definition of Suicide Terrorism

Bearing in mind the importance of intentionality of suicide we can construe the suicide terrorism as being surely intentional due to its name with two additional factors to it. Many scientists agree that suicide terrorism is referred to an act of self-demolition against civilians for the sake of the political change (Pape, 2005; Atran, 2008). In this paper, I as well follow this definition since it clearly states that in addition to *intentionality* characteristic the criteria for suicide bombers there are also criteria of necessary *attack of civilians* and aim to cause some *political change*. The first two factors are clear by this point; nonetheless I would like to pay more attention to the criteria of aim to political change. This in most cases means the withdrawal of occupying a certain territory enemy troops (Pape, 2005), release of terrorist groups' members. In addition political change goes along or presupposes a certain social pressure out of massive feeling of fear. Thus, though authors claim that the goal of the suicide missions is to kill as many people as possible, I would agree with Atran (2008) who states that the main target is to keep the audience in fear and make them influence the political decision of a certain state. This strategy to influence the political decisions through the suicide bombings is quite a recent historical phenomenon.

Moreover it is important to stress and differentiate between at least three types of terrorists: the sympathizers (the ones who support the ideas of terrorism but do not directly participate in any actions); the active terrorists (the ones who actually enter the organizations and promote its status, and work on its strategy); and the suicidal terrorists (the ones who actually kill themselves along with a number of innocent people for the sake of their groups objectives and beliefs). This paper will refer exclusively to the last group, though sometimes making statements about the active terrorists as well.

Roots of Modern Suicide Terrorism

Terrorism itself has a substantive historical background dating back to Jewish sects of Zealots in territory of Judea occupied by Romans, and by the Islamic Order of Assassins during the early Christian Crusades are few major examples (Atran, 2003; Lewis, 1967). One of the first modern suicide attacks was conducted in order to destroy Iraqi embassy in Beirut in 1981 as the result of which 27 people died and over 100 were injured. The practice of suicide missions soon spread to Sri Lanka, the Kurdish territories in Turkey, and Chechnya. The threat of suicide terrorism was highlighted by the numerous numbers of attacks during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly during the Al Aqsa intifada. The Al-Qaeda's international approach and goals led to the attention of the world community to the issue of the suicide terrorism.

Particularly after the shock of the 9/11 the problem and combat of terrorist missions, for the most part suicide terrorism became a priority task on the worldwide agenda. President George W. Bush back in 2001 declared that it was "the first war of the 21st century" against terrorism. However, this war was globally declared to an unknown actor, not to Iraq but to a terrorist organizations, which are hard to find and identify. Thus, the enemy had not been studied thoroughly prior to combating it and the combat has not proved to be strategically successful in the past years. However this is not the topic of the paper.

To reveal what paper is going to provide, I should start with what paper is not. There is no intention to analyze closely terrorist organizations, since mainly this paper is concentrated on the suicide bombers themselves; nevertheless, the organization and group pressure and influence on the potential suicide bomber will be discussed in all the chapters. Moreover this paper does not seek to find a single profile of suicide attackers and does not aim to have strong normative implications. And since this thesis drifts off from the traditional

research-based and provable claims and conclusions, I realize the methodological problems of it as well. The major problem, as already mentioned, is the impossibility of obtaining data from successful suicide bombers due to a simple fact of them being deceased. Thus, the only direct source of information for the research can be the interviews with the failed suicide bombers, the families of the deceased suicide bombers and of course, the existing literature and theories in social and human sciences tackling with this phenomenon.

To put it precisely, the main purpose of this thesis is to create a single broad framework that will enable people understand the phenomena of the suicidal behavior in case of suicide terrorism better. As the result the rather general framework of understanding will be built up, rather than reliance on a particular one theory or approach in explaining the behavior of suicide terrorists. In addition, I illustrate in this thesis that a single theory or approach, such as the rational choice theory in this paper, is not capable of explaining a multidimensional behavior of human beings.

This topic is important since usually suicide bombers are seen as either fanatics who hardly know what they do or as absolutely rational actors who commit an act based on the utility maximization factor. And, in this thesis I assume that both of these explanations are rather radical and the truth is somewhere in the middle. Thus, it is presumed here that the suicide bombers are rational while making their choices of action but however their motivation system should receive more attention for studies, which is also a part of this paper. The concept and assumptions of “rationality” provided by the rational choice theory will have to be overlooked as the result claiming its impossibility to argue for rationality of the suicide bombers unless other main theories in studying the phenomena of suicide terrorism are going to be consulted and integrated into the explanation process of such phenomenological behaviors.

Throughout the work I will refer to the metaphor of a “black box”, where black box refers to the motivations of human actors in making any decision. The rational choice theory in the frame of the black box explains behavior as a self-interested action. As the result, there is a pure utility maximization in the black box as a motivator for whatever might be the behavior. The assumption of utility maximization is rather given ad-hoc and is not discussed and neither filled with other motivations. However, this assumption is simply not satisfactory for explaining a rather complex behavior, which even contradicts the intuitions of the self-interest. Thus, over the course of the thesis I will explore the black box and state that there is more to a human behavior and choice than mere maximization principle; some motivations that might appear rather apparent for explanation of suicide bombers’ choice in daily discussions but yet, have not been discussed deeply in any written sources before; particularly in the content of creating a framework of different theories for better understanding of suicide bombers.

The structure of the paper goes so that the general questions and theoretical sum up of the rational choice theory is provided in the chapter I. Apart from general information of rational choice theory’s characteristics and assumptions, there will be also a discussion on the suicide and suicide missions from the perspective of the rational choice theory applied by Ronald Wintrobe; with a following discussion of weaknesses of this, rather narrow, application of the theory. Chapter II will concentrate on Jon Elster’s writings on rationality and beliefs. It will show in more detail why rational choice theory by itself can not be applicable in a general sense as it aims to be. Moreover, this will be followed by the actual reasons and underlying causes for suicide missions to take place and suicide bombers to choose and be a living bomb. The actual reasons will be studied in more detail through sociological approaches of explaining the suicide bombers’ actions in the chapter III. As well the deeper nature of the causes will lead to discussion of the psychological theories upon the

suicide missions, which in turn will fill in the gap that the rational choice theory leaves out in explaining suicide bombers' choice, followed by a conclusion of a complexity and the need of multi –dimensional study of such a phenomenon.

CHAPTER 1: CLOSED “BLACK BOX” AND RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

As was mentioned above the phenomenon of the suicide bombers’ choice as well as some other phenomena such as altruism, religious beliefs, and any other choices that put collective good over the personal gain, impose a serious challenge on the rational choice theorists. In this chapter I start with the discussion of the basics of the rational choice theory (RCT), starting with the standard homo-oeconomicus prototype of rational behavior of consumers and going into a rather broader understanding of rationality including some vital philosophical discussion of the RCT. As examples for the axioms for the broader rationality I will use the terrorist organizations’ behavior. In the second part on the other hand, I will show the application of the rational choice theory on the suicide bombers’ (SB) choice in particular as well as investigate what are the problems of the RCT and its limitations in trying to describe, explain or predict the behavior of such sort (See Harsanyi, John. Chapter 3 in Jon, Elster, 1986).

1.1 “Traditional” Rationality of Individual Homo Oeconomicus Behavior

Whenever someone refers to a rational behavior we usually think that it is a certain choice, which involves the choice of *best means* from available options to achieve the *desired end*. The rational choice theory usually involves the behavior of choice of one or more individuals, usually referred to as consumers and/or firms in the daily economic interactions. The RCT is exactly *how* buyers and sellers of oranges, for example, find an equilibrium in price for the commodity: (i) the sellers with ultimate goal to maximize the financial gain from selling oranges has to decide how many oranges to sell/produce and at what price; (ii) the consumer with the goal of obtaining a good pack of orange for a minimal price tends to face a trouble deciding how much of his or her income s/he should spend on oranges, (iii) the interaction of both of these desires of buyers and sellers determine the number and price of

oranges being sold on the market (See Greene, 2002). Thus, the rational behavior of homo oeconomicus consists of “the choices that best help them [both sides: i.e. buyers and sellers] achieve their objectives, given all relevant factors that are beyond their control” (Greene, 2002: p. 5).

But what does it mean *best means* for a desired end? Here I am going to employ the assumptions of the RCT in short that describe the idea of the process to find the *best means* to achieve a *given goal*. If we stay in the area of consumer decision making, it will be easier to elaborate on the classical assumptions of the RCT (See Mas-Collel, Whinston & Greene, 1995; Kreps, 1990).

- (i) **Presence of alternative choices:** There is a set of alternative choices to achieve a given goal
- (ii) **Completeness axiom:** For any pair of the alternative choices an individual has preferences or is indifferent towards them
- (iii) **Transitivity of preferences axiom:** If a person prefers A alternative to B alternative ($A > B$) and also prefers B to C ($B > C$), then in order to make a rational decision the person should prefer A to C ($A > C$). In case if the person is indifferent between the alternatives than s/he should be indifferent to all of them.
- (iv) **Choice:** A person chooses the preferred alternative or if no preferences shown than preferred to the others (socially acceptable)

This is usually what economists refer to when they speak of a rational behavior - a clear set of axioms that provide best means to achieve the given end. Certainly, there is much more involved in the process of decision making that will be discussed in the next part and which are not necessarily needed to understand the behavior of the homo-oeconomicus. The traditional rational choice approach is rather a behavioral theory that describes people's behavior without having the need to explain deeper roots of the behavior.

However, what would a social scientist think of when applying the RCT into the social phenomena? The attempts, and many cases rather successful ones, have been made in applying the initially economic theory into the social behavior of human beings. The

assumptions above also show that the RCT is a normative theory that tells people what they have to do in order to get to their goals in the best possible way (Elster, 1986: p. 3). It provides us with the best strategy to get to our given goal, no matter what the nature of the goal is. This implies that nature of the aims, such as good or bad do not matter for the RCT; it does not impose certain standards and, thus, does not play a role of a moral theory. Then what would be the understanding of rational behavior from the philosophical theorists' of social science point of view?

First, I find it important to say that even though the RCT is not a moral theory it has caused as much debate as any moral theory in the field of its application to the daily life and practices. One of the reasons for an ongoing debate is the complexity of the RCT itself. As a part of the complexity of the RCT nowadays is its combination with the theory of rational expectations (TRE). Currently, as I see it, the rational choice theory started to incorporate the ideas of the rational expectation theory, which is not contradictive but rather supplementary and gives a deeper understanding of rational behavior. And though I will proceed in combining both of the theories under the umbrella of the RCT I should give respects to both of these views as being initially and theoretically up till today different theories.

The theory of rational expectations was found by Robert Lukas, an American economist, who was awarded with a Nobel Prize back in 1995 for this valuable addition to the economics' theory. The main idea of the TRE is that on average individuals are capable of predicting future conditions in the right way and make decisions according to such expectations, even if they cannot understand the causal relationship to such expectations. As the result, the errors made as outcomes of decisions are simply the unforeseeable mistakes. I will talk more about the rational expectations further, but as a part of the RCT conditions that

have to be met for the rational behavior to take place². In the philosophy of social science the discussion of the rational choice and rational behavior goes in more complex discussion than mere description of the model of a rational human behavior, where the desires and beliefs of individuals are given more credit in the model of guiding the behavior. The rational choice explanation is seen as the intentional explanation of a particular behavior. This adds a valuable explanation power to the classical RCT in economics that is guided by the few rather simple but strict axioms.

1.2 Additional Axioms of Broader Rationality

Some economic theorists claim that RCT should include such vital factors as *responsiveness to incentives*, *narrow selfishness* of an agent be it a person or a group, and its *rational expectations* apart from the classical axioms given in the first part of the chapter (Sheffrin, 1996; Pesaran, 1987). These assumptions make up the so-called *broad rationality* explanation of the human behavior. Jon Elster (1983; 1986) argues that the broader version of rationality is a much plausible one, since it provides the ability to identify the intentions of the agents. Further developing his model of rationality that we will return to later in the chapter he argues that the actors of decision-making should have particular elements in order for the rational choice explanation to take place. Thus, the explanation of behavior equals to the relationship of:

- (i) the behavior (B),
- (ii) a set of cognitions that incorporate beliefs (C),
- (iii) a set of desires that include goals (D), and finally
- (iv) a set of evidence (E), in other words the information that supports the beliefs and desires of the actor.

It is important to remember that both desires (D) and beliefs (C) serve as *reasons for* (which

² This is the last mention of the theory of rational expectation in the paper as a distinct initial theory in economics. Further it will be incorporated into the RCT and its assumptions, since it is usually done so by various scholars writing on the rational behavior. For more information see Lukas, Robert. 1972. "Expectations and the Neutrality of Money". *Journal of Economic Theory*.

are *causes of*) particular behavior, meaning that the behavior (B) was the best way to realize the desire (D) under the circumstances of having particular set of beliefs (C). In short, a rational behavior - given a certain set of beliefs that is supported by the reasonable set of evidences - is the best alternative action weighted against all other possible actions in order to achieve a particular desire or goal (See Elster, 1986).

As the result, these four elements give a possibility for causal explanation of a behavior and it is crucial for a broader understanding of rationality since it incorporates the importance of desires and beliefs of decision-makers that serve as the reasons for a certain behavior. The traditional RCT model lacks this part in its explanation of human behavior. That is why the three above-mentioned assumptions along with Elster's model might serve for a better explanation of the phenomenological decisions and should be taken into account while applying the broader rationality theory in an intentional explanation. Shortly, I will talk about each axiom in detail with the examples of the terrorist organizations, particularly the Tamil Tigers, choice to employ the suicide missions as one of the major strategy to obtain their final goal be it independence or withdrawal of foreign troops³.

1.2.1 The case of Tamil Tigers⁴

The organization of the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam⁵ (LTTE) or shortly referred to as Tamil Tigers is a terrorist organization located in Sri Lanka operating since 1976. Until May 2009 it has been one of the most prominent entities involved in suicide bombing. However, in January 2009 the Tigers lost their de-facto capital city, Kelinochchi, in the war against the government army and by May the surviving part of the LTTE army

³ This is the only part I refer to the terrorist organizations and the rationality question. I believe it is important in order to learn in detail the behavior of a suicide bomber to, first, learn how the terrorist organizations come to a point of employing such a strategy. In addition, since the terrorists organizations are a vital part of study on suicide missions some part of this paper should concentrate on them, as a basis for the suicide bombers behavior.

⁴ To read more on LTTE see Heuer, Vera. 2008. "Strategic Suicide Campaigns: A Comparative Study of the LTTE and Hamas", and visit URL: <http://www.defence.lk/pps/LTTEinbrief.pdf>

⁵“Eelam” means “homeland” from the Tamil language

withdrew into the jungles (Anderson, 2011). As the result, officially the Tamil Tigers were defeated by the government process in 2009 and ceased its existence as an organization. However, the case of the Tigers is still very valuable for the study of terrorism and insurgency outbreaks. Moreover, it is important to remember that not all the Tamil Tigers were extinguished and that the government will need to be cautious in that region to keep power for a long time⁶. The goal of the Tigers is to form an independent state of Tamils on the territory of Sri Lanka. The Tamil Tigers are famous for using the suicide missions as the main strategy, carried out by a special group of its members in the past called Black Tigers. The case of the LTTE will be further discussed in the axioms of broader rationality.

Through the prism of Elster's model of rationality the LTTE had a (ii) strong belief that the Tamils had a natural right to self-determination and that they have been immorally pressured by the Sri Lanka's officials up to date that can be (iv) supported by vast amount of evidence of everyday life of Tamils in Sri Lanka and because of this the LTTE had a clear desire (iii) to become independent and form the Tamil sovereign state. In order to achieve its desire the Tigers exhibited the (i) behavior where they decided to employ the suicide bombing as their main strategy.

1.2.2 Assumption of responsiveness to incentives

The first feature of a broad definition of rational choice is responsiveness to incentives, which technically speaking means that there should be a negatively inclined demand curve. In the ideal situation for rational actors the lower the costs to conduct an action the more is the probability they will be willing to do it. In case of the behavior of terrorist organizations that employ suicide attacks, the statistical data shows that "although suicide

⁶ In some cases I am going to refer to the Tigers in the present tense, since even though the organization was destroyed back in 2009, still the ideas of the organizations are carried on in the Tamil region that might or might not lead to continuous fight backs against the government.

attacks made up only 3% of all terrorist incidents from 1980 to 2001, they were responsible for 48% of all related deaths”⁷ (Pape, 2003, p. 5).

Moreover Hoffman and McCormick (2004, p. 259) said that initially the suicide missions (SM) spread because the first implementers of this tactic showed how cost efficient it was. For example, the Hezbollah’s SM in 1983 in Lebanon persuaded the soon to be actively involved group of Sri Lanka’s Tamil Tigers to employ these actions in their practice as well. That is why there is a wide spread arguments that since the suicide missions are effective, terrorist organizations will employ them, as they do not presuppose high risks for themselves (Caplan, 2005). Thus, since the tactic works organizations will keep employing such rational strategy.

1.2.3 Assumption of narrow selfishness

The second feature of broader rationality is – narrow selfishness of actors. What does this condition mean? What is exactly *narrow*? This assumption can be understood as mere pursuit of self-interest while making any decision or exhibiting any pattern of behavior. Unfortunately, this concept of narrow selfishness is neither fully nor clearly elaborated within the RCT. Many rational theorists are divided between camps of either necessity of the narrow selfishness or the camp of the illusion of narrow selfishness and simple presence of the pursuit of one’s preferences, which might or might not be selfish in nature.

For example, we most likely will agree that there is nothing irrational in non-market behavior, such as helping someone without expecting the return of the favor. Moreover, it might be even someone’s interest to pursue “empathy for family, friends, whales, trees, or random strangers” (Shepsle & Bonchek, 1997: p. 17). Thus, narrow selfishness presumes the pure action out of self interest, but not necessarily that those interests have to be of the selfish

⁷ For more information see Pittel & Rubbelke, 2009

or egoistic nature (Blau, 2011: p. 18). In respect to the LTTE, this assumption can be easily fulfilled, since they do have particular interest in becoming sovereign and, hence, as an organization employs the suicide missions as a strategy.

1.2.4 Assumption of possessing rational expectations

Last but not least is a complex assumption of rational expectations. This is something I have already talked about as the part of the theory of rational expectations above. Indeed for the broad understanding of rationality the presence and definition of *rational expectations* is very vital. According to theorists a rational expectation is one that has a high probability of happening (Sheffrin, 1996; Pesaran, 1987). But surely, since individuals are subject to having lack of information the errors can be made in expecting the future outcome to be the way one pictures it.

As a part of this assumption is the possession of satisfying proof of information that ensures that the choice being made is an informative one and is a best possible choice. However, how much of the information is necessary for making the informed decision with rational expectations? Therefore, the mere and only thing one can rely on while explaining behavior from a rational point of view is that the agent did reasonably believe in the expectations that were to be the possible outcome of a particular decision they made and had some amount of reasonable information to make a certain decision. Thus, the broader rationality consists of a more rigid framework where a rational act should be rooted in rational beliefs that have to be formed in the right way and should be based on rational evidence, meaning having sufficient information package prior to making the decision (Elster, 1986). For example, the LTTE as a decision-making agent had certain expectations as the result of all the suicide missions it was employing. The expectations could be one or all of the mentioned here: central government fear of strength of the insurgent groups of Tamils,

provision of the autonomy for the Tamil region in Sri Lanka, etc. Now are these expectations rational? Are the Tamil Tigers still can be considered rational agents, even after their bloody defeat? I would say that in the theoretical framework the expectations the Tigers had were very rational; and hence the LTTE surely was a rational organization. However, were the expectations rational for individual agents? Maybe yes, and maybe not. Even though when applying all the above mentioned expectations of rational act the Tigers as individuals do not seem rational due to a simple fact of not having enough evidence of their success in the future and lack of information, which in real world turned out to be their defeat by the government forces.

1.3 Application of the RCT to the Behavior of the Suicide Bombers

In discussion of terrorist organizations most of the scholars and general public agrees that they are rational actors since they use suicide bombings as one of the main and the most efficient strategy to get to their goals. What about the individuals who actually choose to be human bombs? That is why still many believe that suicide bombers are “crazed, cowardly, apathetic, or asocial” individuals (Atran, 2003). Indeed the idea of a person blowing himself or herself up along with killing innocent people around seems rather intuitively wrong and in parts even irrational. However, studies made at the end of twentieth and the current millennia show that suicide bombers are absolutely normal in psychological aspect (Atran, 2003; Hudson, 1999; Sageman, 2004). In fact, biographies of 430 suicide bombers of Al-Qaeda show that “these people are fairly well-educated, mostly middle class and not acting at all in despair” (Atran, 2003); 400 members of Al-Qaeda out of 430 mentioned above were studied by Marc Sageman, a psychiatrist in 2004 who found that “only 4 of the 400 men had any hint of a disorder“. Thus, he claimed that terrorism, particularly suicide terror is a very organized team work, where suicide bombers are not asocial individuals but rather active participants within their group.

Lately there have been attempts to explain SBs as rational actors through the prism of the rational choice theory. The theorists of the RCT face a major issue when trying to apply a pure RCT to suicide bombers' behavior – indirectly claiming the rationality of any sort of behavior, which logically will be perceived as non-rational. For instance, Ronald Wintrobe seems to be able to explain almost any behavior as rational including the suicide bombers choice. In his book on rational extremism (2006) his definition of rationality adds the importance of maximization of utility function of the agent.

The utility function maximization can be understood as computation of relative satisfaction of the agent, where the latter one tries to maximize this satisfaction or utility by the choices he or she makes. For example, in the case of suicide bombers Wintrobe (2006: p. 108) argues that person's utility function transforms as he or she internalizes the values and beliefs of the group. The reason to incorporate the values of the group is the need for the feeling of belongingness that is missing in daily life of the potential SBs⁸ (Wintrobe, 2006: p. 137). Thus, he provides a rational explanation on the ground that even though the content of the belief might be irrational, the choice still can be rational if the reasons to belief in that content are rational, such as to be more integrated and feel belonged to a group⁹ (p.119).

Following the logic of the Wintrobe's argument, the SBs are rational agents who make an informed decision that brings the maximum utility possible. The potential suicide bombers have to be individuals who search for sharing the beliefs with a group with high solidarity of the members. However, just like membership in any other group with strong ties, i.e. gangs, religious sects, potential suicide bombers will need to give up some of their autonomy for the sake of the gaining solidarity and acceptance within the group. As the result the leader of the

⁸ The question of SBs being isolated and not feeling a part of a certain group and lack of feeling loved is debatable and will be tackled later in the paper.

⁹ It is important that Ronald Wintrobe does not see any signs of altruism in the behavior and choices of the SBs rather it is mostly wish to be part of the group and be accepted that leads to the decisions of such nature.

group becomes the source of the utility function and maximization the leaders or rather groups' goals is a primary way to maximize one's own utility. Thus, the personal utility of each potential SB turns out to be the group's utility as such.

Though, Wintrobe's position is clear there is an important problem appearing to solve – the free-riding solution. For example, if one decided to become a part of the terrorist organization and further, for the sake of group interests and solidarity, gave up most of his or her autonomy to the leader of the group; still he or she should rationally opt out from the suicidal contract and not commit the act for the reason not only losing one's life but that the result this agent will bring by killing himself will be marginal comparing to solution of the problem. Hence, a person should feel that he or she is not bringing about much change by committing a suicide attack. Why then the number of the so-called free-riders is minimal? Wintrobe's explanation is somewhat simple – the reason why people do not opt out is because the process of internalization of beliefs happens. This means that the utility of the suicide bombers depends on the beliefs they vigorously hold and express. And due to the beliefs being as strong as they are the SBs do not think of free riding as an option.

1.3.1 Problems with rational explanation of suicide bombers' choice

Indeed to certain extend the idea of Ronald Wintrobe sounds plausible and suitable in explaining the behavior of SBs as rational one. However, his arguments appear to be ignorant of other forces that guide the decision of a potential suicide bomber to become the actual one¹⁰. Interestingly the Wintrobe's position seems to be generalizable towards any suicide bomber who made it to a successful finish line. However, it is vital to understand that suicide bombers are not of a particular typology and do not necessarily belong to terrorist groups. Atran in his talk at the Beyond Belief 2.0 conference in 2008 clearly argues that the terrorist

¹⁰ More on Wintrobe's position see: See Breton and Wintrobe (1986) or Wintrobe (1998), chapter 13 or Wintrobe (2004) or Wintrobe (2006) or visit URL: <http://136.159.142.206/Guest-Lecturers/Wintrobepaper.pdf>

organizations are not real organizations in the sense we think of them. Most of the suicide bombers are soccer teammates who mobilize themselves with a common strong moral beliefs system¹¹. Thus, the perception of having a particular way of getting on the path of the SB (via terrorist organizations and the recruitment) is highly debatable.

Moreover, Wintrobe I believe overemphasizes the desperate need of the potential suicide bombers for the group bonds and solidarity, for which they have to give up certain autonomy and internalize group's values. Even though Atran (2008) might agree that the feeling of bondness in the group of usually 8-12 young men, is important and they tend to share common values and beliefs, the SBs have not been recorded of being asocial or having lack of social bonds with their families and friends. Here, apart from not being able to explain the choice of SBs, Wintrobe conducted an attribution bias. The attribution bias in this case refers to the judgment of SBs being belongingness "hungry" as seen by Wintrobe, who is not involved in the action and thus, can have a rather distorted understanding of other's behavior; through his own prism of explanation (See Block & Funder, 1986). And thus, many of the suicide bombers proved to be normal¹² units of their own societies and have social bonds just like any other person in their neighborhood.

Apart from possibility of conducting the attribution error, Wintrobe argues for the maximization of utility. However, in case of SBs and particularly the importance of the interests of the group and its leader being more important than the decision-maker's, the utility maximization does not explain much. Even if we assume that the main drive is feeling of belongingness, still maximization of utility and RCT do not explain much since according

¹¹ Interestingly, the religion is found not to play a crucial role for the SBs to choose the suicide. See talk by Scott Atran at the *Beyond Belief 2.0 Conference*. Available at URL:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dc7iT75P2I&feature=related>

¹² I personally do not like the expression „normal“ and the notion of „normality“. However here it seems to be used in a comprehensive way as to refer to a usual, not different from others patterns of behavior and social bonds.

to the RCT it should have explained how the suicide attack is the most effective way to achieve person's utility in group belongingness? And the suicide can hardly seem to be the best way to connect to the group.

To look even deeper into the Wintrobe's content of argument – belongingness – I have to say that the fact of considering such a motivation is already challenging for the RCT itself since this belongingness drive is not cognitive but emotional, as it is a feeling. Thus, the discussion of the feeling as an appropriate drive for utility maximized action is not relevant to the idea of traditional RCT. It rather serves as a cause of the behavior which is a deeper level of motivational forces, while the RCT operates on the level of motivations that are more explicit.¹³ This leads to the last but not least of Wintrobe's issues - a classical application of the RCT to the suicide bombers' choice is based on the application of the weaker form of the RCT, not based on the broader rationality principles. The Wintrobe's arguments are based on purely economic assumption of means-ends strategy with the ultimate goal of maximization of utility. Surely, there is nothing wrong in applying these factors of the RCT to a decision-making process of a human being. However, I think that the narrow approach to rational explanation sort of rules out the explanatory power that otherwise could be present. In fact the Wintrobe's position of the rationality assumptions seems to equalize, for instance, such different decisions as weather to have tea or coffee in the morning with the choices of a much stronger and deeper context as weather to die and give up one's autonomy for some clear or not so clear goal. This is surely the strength of the RCT, that they accept the equality of choices. However, there is internal inconsistency due to the fact of equalizing choices. For example, for the RCT it would be acceptable if person who believes in *woo-doo* wants to kill his enemy by sticking pin in a doll acts rationally. The RCT stance on this case can be summed up in phrase "if the person truly thinks it is the best possible way for him to achieve

¹³ More on causes and motivations in the Chapter II

the end, then it is rational”. But there is a clear problem with such interpretation in this case and, hence, the biggest risk of applying the mere descriptive position of the RCT to a very complex and phenomenological decision-making process – is oversimplification of the theory and the human nature as such.

Here I would like to turn to the Elster’s position on such explanations as Wintrobe provides in his papers of the suicide bombers. Elster as well criticizes the RCT for lacking the ability to explain any sort of behavior and decision-making; it is only a normative theory to give us ways to achieve goals but cannot explain the human behavior, though many rational choice theorists actually have tried to explain the behavior through the prism of the RCT. For instance, the above described position of Wintrobe is a good demonstration that the RCT actually tries to project its success in the economic sphere of explaining behavior into a social area with a complex phenomenological actions, such as suicide.

In my position the suicide bombers’ decision can be referred to as rational, but not through the prism of a classical RCT features. Rather a more profound approach of understanding human behavior has to be considered. Jon Elster in series of his works (1984, 1986) talks about the important factors of any decision – the beliefs and desires of an agent. The beliefs and desires form, as stated above, the *reasons* for a particular behavior. And in order to be able to make any explanation of suicide bombers’ behavior / choice his reasons for the actions should be studied in detail. The reasons serve as motivations for a SB to commit a terror act and the next chapter is dedicated to the detailed research of reasons and motivations behind suicide bombers’ choice.

CHAPTER 2: OPENING THE “BLACK BOX” - MOTIVATIONS, REASONS AND CAUSES FOR SUICIDE MISSIONS

The previous chapter showed how the rational choice model sees the suicide bombers actions to be rational, but also how it fails to thoroughly convince on the rational ground. And if suicide bombers are viewed as rational agents who do not have any psychological abnormalities then why do they decide to blow themselves up along with innocent people? What are those motivations that make people choose the path of martyrs, or the assassins, the crusaders, and others in the past?

This chapter concentrates on opening up the black box of action motives via answering these and some other vital questions highly debated currently in the area of terrorism studies. This chapter goes beyond the simple rational explanation of behavior as a utility-oriented action. In this chapter one may find that the black box, in other words reasons and motivations of human behavior is not merely utility driven and in addition it being an emotion-based behavior. Rather the deeper reasons and causes which might be of irrational nature just like the beliefs in general and those of the suicide bombers will be discussed as source for action. The examples will make it clear that the reasons and causes particularly are hard to tackle only equipped with the rational choice theory. Thus, the need for the psychological and sociological theories and approaches will arise in explaining the phenomenon in a better way, which is going to be done in more detail in chapter III. So what are the reasons and motivations of the psychologically healthy individuals to commit to a bombing act?

2.1 Motivations and Reasons for the Choice of Suicide Attackers

The explanation of such factors as motivation inevitably leads to studying in detail the nature of emotion that triggers the individual's behavior. Generally speaking, emotions serve

as a base for the further action and intensify it (Tosini, 2010). As one of the major tendencies linked to the suicide bombers' choice is the "desire for revenge caused by emotions such as anger, indignation and hatred" (Tosini, 2010: p. 405). Undeniably, the high experience of emotional distress and anger due to the fact of dishonor and murder of closest ones or members of the same community based on ethnic or religious belongingness factors are often behind a revengeful act (Rosenberger, 2003; Tosini, 2010). As an example, the reader may refer back to the Chechen widows discussed above, who driven by vengeance of killed husbands and children conducted suicide missions against the Russian authority. Such examples may be found throughout almost all the suicide attacks' history, where individuals are driven by strong negative emotions that trigger finding reasons for committing an act of the suicide attack.

Are the emotions necessarily the motivations for the actions? In his article "Motivations and Beliefs in Suicide Missions" Jon Elster introduces a distinction between reasons and causes in more detail, where both forces drive suicide terrorists towards making their vital choice. Though in philosophy the concept of reason and cause do go together and mean rather the same phenomena¹⁴, Elster distinguishes between them, which is quite useful for the discussion in this paper. Reasons are rather the motivations and beliefs of the suicide bombers that are not to say formed but definitely intensified by the causes that lie deep in the roots of personality of each suicide bomber. The reasons can be the political reasons such as liberation, military withdrawal from the occupied territories, while the causes are deeper feelings such as resentment and hatred.

There might be all sorts of reasons for suicide bombers to actually justify their actions. Their motivations and beliefs such as to liberate their country or to get respect and family

¹⁴ Meaning that reasons are causes in philosophy, even though it is also true in philosophy that not all causes are reasons since there is a division of causes into proximate and ultimate ones, where some reasons tend to be close to proximate causes while ultimate ones are rather vague. More on causes can be found later in this chapter.

benefits, are the examples of reasons for their choice; the things we can actually observe and hear from various people and suicide bombers who are justifying their acts, for instance on video tapes recorded prior to their missions. In addition, there was a significant debate between Pape and Elster who have had opposing views on this matter in the context of the motivation of the suicide missions during the second Intifada in Palestine. Pape (2003) up to date claims that terrorist organizations use the suicide missions as a means of rational strategy; while he does not refer much to individual decision-makers such as suicide bombers, his idea of terrorist agents being rational is clear from which follows that the individual suicide bombers also deliberately and rationally choose the suicide as the means to achieve their goals, no matter what the latter might be. Moreover he refers to the means of suicide terror mission that is used not as the last resort but as the most efficient way of achieving the political goals.

Elster on the other hand, states that the suicide bombers in this particular case most likely to be driven by the “revenge and retaliation in response to specific Israeli actions” (as cited in Crenshaw, 2006: p. 10). The argument is based on the metaphor of this thesis – the black box – where Elster explains that there is more than rationality in its narrow or even broader definition to such phenomenon as suicide missions. As the result there are forces behind the observed motivation of the behavior, for instance, feeling of retaliation and revenge.

At the end of the day though, both Pape and Elster are right and they rather complement each other than oppose. How can two rather different explanations be complementary? Here I believe, Pape and Elster operate on different levels of explaining behavior or choice of suicide bombers. While Pape sees the surface of the conflict and motivation or the proximate cause, in this case, of suicide missions such as bombing being a

logical way of combating in certain circumstances and limits, Elster goes deeper and operates on the psychological level of explanation of individual motivations and reasons to commit suicide missions. It is more as Elster (2005) says that the fact that beliefs are irrational poses a significant threat to RCT that argues that beliefs of agents have to be realistic. As the case of *woo-doo* described above illustrates, RCT has little explanatory power and should stick to the broader rationality vision where the beliefs of actors should be formed in the right way and based on rational and sufficient evidence. Moreover to emphasize again, in RCT the beliefs are taken for granted as well as their content and process of formation, which according to Elster (1987) is very important for the presence of rational action. Nevertheless, actions based on irrational beliefs may lead to still might be absolutely rational, in terms of implementation. As an example, we can take a look at the Hitler's irrational hatred of Jews based on the superiority and inferiority complex, but still he managed to organize a massive, strategic, logical and successful campaign – the holocaust. This is exactly what Pape states without talking about the beliefs since this topic is too indistinguishable and hard to argue upon. While Pape preferred to stay out of what cannot be studied with significant results, Elster decided to go down to human mind and belief system formation to try and explain the SBs phenomenon from a different, rather psychological side.

Elster (2005; 2006) goes deeper and gives quite a detailed list of reasons for suicide bombers' choice, including religious factor, material remuneration, liberation of the nation, and other possible motivations and beliefs of the individuals. Important to note that it seems to be true that such motivational factors as material remuneration or life in heaven afterwards or even the social appraisal are not the true motivations of most of the suicide bombers; rather the factors of liberation of the nation based on idea of doing “the right” thing are the motivations behind the their choice (Riaz, 2009; Rosenberger, 2003; Tosini, 2010). At the same time the individuals might be driven by far less observable feelings such as revenge or

hatred. For example, in case of Moscow hostage taken in theatre in Dubrovka, the Chechen women confessed that they came there to die and enjoy the revenge for their killed husbands and children in the war (Elster, 2006: p. 241) and, additionally in this particular case, suicide attackers had nothing to lose, apart of course their own lives, which in conditions of rational thinking is a very valuable *good* but in this case I believe, women had no one left to live for and thus found their lives not worse living but rather worth dying in harming the enemy who had caused their humiliation and desire for revenge. In the current context, many of the suicide attackers are found to belong to the ideological trend of pan-Islamic nationalism that is spread in the Islamic countries as an opposition to western domination (Tosini, 2010: p. 409). Thus, socially there seems to be no need for recruitment and propaganda since this pan-Islamism has already created a pool of volunteers who share the ideological beliefs to liberate their nations. As the result, “when they [young people] see the news and what is going on in the Islamic countries, they themselves feel that they have to go to fight jihad. Today, you don’t need anyone to tell the young men that they should go to jihad, they themselves want to be martyrs.” (Interview cited in Mekhennet and Moss, 2008; cited in Tosini, 2010). As the result such motivations as revenge and freeing the homeland along with strong beliefs grounded in religion and nationalism can successfully trigger the suicide-homicidal behavior for the valuable purpose.

The revenge is not the only hidden motive as well as not the only reason to liberate one’s own territory. Sometimes the suicide missions can be driven by the fear of the superior power, and loyalty to leaders of their groups. Milgram’s experiment that started in mid 1961 on people’s obedience towards the authority made two major discoveries: *the conformist theory* and *the agentic state theory* (See Milgram, 1963). The first finding of the conformist theory deals with conformist behavior of an individual within a group. Throughout the number of experiments Milgram came to a conclusion that a person, especially at times of

crisis will leave the decision-making process to a group's leader. In addition the individual follows the authority and its command because the latter one has more competency in the eyes of individual. The agentic state theory in addition, states that an individual tends to follow authority's instructions and obey since they see themselves as mere tools for a good cause and do not hold oneself responsible for actions, but in many cases leaders. A good example for this is the case of Japanese kamikazes that "voluntarily" committed themselves to orient their planes into the enemy places, where the authority power played a big role in making a decision to participate in the suicidal flight attacks (Hill, 2006). In contemporary suicide attacks it is usually argued that suicide bombers are excluded from the rest of the society and if not brain-washed than for sure kept away from the contra argumentum ideas. Even at last the terrorist groups and leaders can impose the fear for opting out of the contract by promising death and even family members' suffering. Adding to this there is a certain peer pressure in groups of terrorists and as the result all of these can be served as a reason to commit the act of dying to kill. Another reason for action in this group is shame; shame in the eyes of peers, which might be used a lot in the peer pressure analogue.

Aristotle discussed the motivations of a real warrior in his writings that are summarized by Elster (in Gambetta, 2005). While lots of soldiers do not opt out from battles due to above revealed drives – shame and fear, the good warrior and man should not be driven by these miserable emotions. A good man should be driven by the idea of intrinsic goodness of the action (Elster in Gambetta, 2005: p. 239). This can be referred to as motivation to suicide bombers and their choice – they truly believe in the value and goodness of their act, since they volunteer for the act rather than being recruited or coerced as in the case of Kamikaze pilots. However, it will be unfair and certainly wrong to claim that SBs are volunteers who do not change their mind due to the strong belief in the rightness of their act of death. Thus, from the individual view the belief in the "rightness" of his deed might be

understood as a post-decision rationalization process¹⁵. On the organization's side, authors argue that once a potential martyr joins the terrorist organizations there is a strategic plan to create a point of no return. In the today's terrorist attacks, "there is no return [for suicide bomber] without really losing any self-respect, the respect of others" (Merari, CBS News, 25 May 2003). There is as such no way out of the commitment since the organizations also create a so-called point of no return, when a potential suicide bomber writes last letters to family, friends; creating videotapes that are distributed to the public (Merari, before US Congress, 2000). This puts up a pressure of not choosing to refrain from the martyr's path, as their reputation which is vital in martyr's culture, otherwise would be ruined. And after all the good-byes are manufactured, the person is being referred to as a living martyr, *al-shahid al-hai*, which means that the SB is only temporary alive in the human flesh, but he is already dead. Some other organizations, such as PKK, the Kurdistan Workers' Party in Turkey, happened to employ the rather harsh measures by executing a SB who did not wish to commit the attack in front of other living martyrs (Ergil, 2002: p. 118). Thus, the SBs tend to be aspired individuals of fighting for their homeland and freedom, and even religion who volunteer to enter the terrorist organizations, but who also are rather manipulated during their training period in special camps through various means of coercion such as shame and possible unhonorable death.

As for the motivation of the afterlife pay-off for the sacrifice in the current Islamic terrorisicide mission, it should be said that the religious certain support for the martyrdom, particularly in the Shiite branch of Islam, does not certainly imply the martyrs' belief and expectation of the salvation. Though, surely this statement is too ambiguous as well. There might be suicide bombers who truly believe in afterlife salvation as well as those who do not consider this as an important argument to commit the bombing. However, this particular

¹⁵ This rationalization processes are discussed in more detail in Chapter III

motivation is rather not possible to argue for or against, since no factual data can be found. Nevertheless, scholars seem to agree that the desire for the salvation and paradise is not a motivation for the SB to commit the act of martyrdom, but rather a certain bonus as the result of a successful commitment (Elster in Gambetta, 2005; Reuter, 2002).

Consequently there are rather strong motives for individuals to choose the suicide attacker's path – willingness to free the homeland, true belief in the right cause and goal and feelings of revenge, shame, and fear. There are as well less of important factors for SBs to choose their fate such as religious remuneration. Some of these motivations and reasons, such as revenge, homeland freedom can easily be a part of the classical RCT model explanation of behavior. However any other possible explanation power of the RCT can be enhanced only by accepting that there are motives of human behavior other than mere maximization of utility.

2.2 Causes of the Choice of Suicide Bombers

The most exciting and rather unknown part of explanation of human behavior is the underlying causes, or deep feelings experienced by each agent of an action. As it was mentioned above, usually two types of causes are defined in literature: proximate and ultimate causes (Alessi, 1992; Thiery, 2005). While proximate causes may sometimes be referred to as reasons explained above the ultimate causes are some forces that underlie the reasons and are not visible or clearly stated. They provide the intensity of the beliefs and motivations stated by the suicide bombers and terrorist organizations. They are like an action taking place behind the back of the individual himself, since it has to be an unconscious process of dealing with deeper emotions. For example, feelings of inferiority or frustrated expectations actually lead to finding the reasons in the outer world for conducting the terror act. Some of the other cited causes usually are: gender, age, poverty, lack of feeling of belongingness, and others that rather refer to the proximate causes and which are in addition forms of causes of the suicide

missions have been shattered lately with finding of the scholars on the little if any influence of the socio-economic background on the causes of choosing suicide mission as a field of an interest to commit oneself. Moreover gender also shows no difference in creating causes for the participation (Pape, 2003).

Prior to 9/11 apart from being perceived as mentally disoriented, the typical suicide bomber's profile had the following causal overview: a single young man, uneducated, with possible sexual starvation basis (Elster in Gambetta, 2006). This was a clear correspondence bias from the attacked societies who at that time perceived SBs as completely irrational and psychotic men. However as stated above the empirical evidence shows that the SBs are far from being mentally challenged and do not have causal correlation with such factors as education or poverty or even age and gender. Mostly though it is found that people who tend to commit suicide attack are relatively educated and economically well-off; the problem then seems to be in the deprivation account. Particularly this educated layer of the poor society feels the unfairness of what it has and what it could have had if not the occupiers. Thus, the attackers might be as well under the attributional error as well as they see their enemies in a particular negative way.

In general, the gap between the expected and actual experiences triggers the negative feelings that lead to actions (Frederick and Loewenstein cited in Elster in Gambetta, 2006). The most relevant cause, at least in the Middle East and Sri Lanka seems to be the feeling of inferiority and resentment of the group of people (Elster, 2006: p. 245). For example, Elster talks about the Palestinian case of feeling of inferiority and resentment: apparently for centuries many Israelis are sure that "all Arabs are lazy, cowardly, and cruel" (p. 245). The feeling that someone views one as someone of a lower nature causes the inferiority complex on the group level. The situation gets out of hand even more while the direct interaction of

people of two worlds with their stereotypes and ideas. According to Crenshaw (2006) the desperate individuals are driven by feelings of humiliation which most probably are generated by the outer world or to be precise the media, community, etc. In order to make the distinction between reasons and causes vivid here is the example of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centers. Nineteen hijackers were claimed to be motivated by religious convictions, political protests and belief of killing the “evil” (motivations and beliefs) while some analysts (Khosrokhavar, 2005; Sageman, 2004) say that these motivations were caused and intensified by alienation, loneliness, feeling of inferiority, and other deep reasons (causes). The causes thus are best studied by the psychological and some sociological theories and the suicide bombers choice can be best explained from the cause’s point of view by the psycho-sociological approaches.

The inferiority complex usually derives from the comparison of oneself with someone else, while resentment is rooted in the interaction with that “other”. The inferiority complex is usually an envy towards, for instance, America’s wealth and prosperity by the pilots, responsible for the 9/11 tragedy. The resentment is a much stronger and deeper and thus, stronger (Elster, 1999). For example, the envy of the USA’s wealth is not going to motivate many SBs, but the resentment based on humiliation in the interaction of Palestinians with Israelis may well serve as a powerful trigger to start the revenge. Elster stands for these two major causes – inferiority complex and resentment – that he beliefs might help explain the choice of a suicide attacker. However, there are some more possible causes that should be added to the list. One of such causes is the witnessing the poverty in general. For example, Engels was from a very well-off family, however it did not prevent him from standing for the poorer strata of society that he had witnessed in his life. Thus, I would say the experience of social poverty that surrounds a person can be a successful trigger in standing up against the common enemy of their society.

Elster's discussion and point of view indeed shows that rational choice theory has much to develop or even loosen up its assumptions of the rational actors if it seeks to be more powerful in explaining human behavior, particularly of a phenomenological and rather exclusive nature. The irrational reasons and beliefs, which are stated in the motivations of the suicide bombers should be further explained in the next chapter by the psychological and sociological approaches; along with the deep causes and feelings of humiliation are covered by the purely psychological theories of human behavior and motivation of the latter.

CHAPTER 3: THE “BLACK BOX” MODEL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The previous chapter illustrated the discussion of the presence of reasons as motivations and causes as deeper rooted feelings of suicide bombers that drive them to the choice of becoming human bombs. Thus, the black box of human motivations was explained in a bit more detail which shaped the proximate and ultimate causes along with some surface motivations that are well observable in SBs' goodbye tapes and notes. In this chapter I will unpack even more the black box and show that the psychological theories explain the causes and irrational beliefs of the suicide bombers in a way that gives opportunity to the rational choice theory to consider for its possible better application to the case of suicide and suicide bombers in particular. It will provide the way the reasons can serve as rather rationalizations of the causes, of something lying under the layer of proclaimed motivations. Moreover, the sociological theories will provide the social explanations such as pressure and group identity importance in the process of decision making of suicide bombers.

3.1 The Psychological Perspective on Suicide Bombers' Choice

The very first approach in explaining the suicide attacks and their carriers within psychology was the psychoanalysis. With this, slightly amateur and complicated tool for such phenomenon, the conclusion was made of suicide bombers being the people with certain pathology based on the parental hatred and any other events rooted in the childhood. However over time, psychologists realized through many experiments that suicide bombers are not actually psychopaths but rather “normal” individuals who do not fit any typology of a suicide attacker provided before (see Victoroff, 2005). Since then the psychodynamic theories have stayed out of the explanation of the suicide bombers' behavior.

3.1.1 Cognitive psychological theories and cognitive dissonance

Out of non psychoanalytical psychological theories on suicide terrorism the cognitive theories tend to be the most applicable. The cognitive theories work with the mental functions of human body such as memory, attention, language, and learning abilities of the individuals. This area of psychology is rather young and experimental in its nature where psychologists try to link a certain emotion and behavior to a particular part of the brain function. The most important idea at the moment is the concept of *cognitive style*, in other words the way of thinking of an individual. This cognitive style is particularly based on such ideas as biases, and prejudices one has for outer world. There is a substantial area of evidence that shows that violent actions of an individual are rooted in his or her way of thinking (see Bryant, 1984; Kandel, 1988; Satterfeld, 1998; Ernst, 2003).

As a part of the cognitive theories is a risk that all individuals run into facing – the cognitive dissonance, which is a very uncomfortable feeling that comes from holding two or more absolutely conflicting ideas. The theory goes as deep as to say that people in such uncomfortable situations tend to decrease the dissonance in any way possible. The usual tactics used by the mind¹⁶ are denying, rationalizing, blaming or justifying a particular idea against the other. The state of dissonance is a very tricky situation when an individual more than ever tends to think of his or her ideas and opinions as the right ones. The explanation power of the cognitive dissonance is very useful when dealing with a factual or seemingly irrational and destructive behavior such as that of a suicide bomber.

How is this theory relevant to the choice of a suicide attacker? Firstly, a suicide bomber takes on the decision in the condition of controversy. The person knows the consequences of a successful campaign to be his or her own death along with the death of

¹⁶ It is important to bear in mind that cognitive dissonance as most of other cognitive processes, is an unconscious one and the agent is not aware of going through the stage of dissonance.

other people. The dissonance in the first phase of decision making seems to be between the value of life and the value of final goal, be it free land or proclaimed hero, or any other goal that goes along with the price of own life for it. In addition, the value system of an individual should be strongly linked to the goal that is valuable for the value he or she holds. In this case the so-called over-justification effect occurs when future suicide bombers live for the final goal, which is more valuable than anything else existing at that time. The intrinsic motivation of the act merges with the extrinsic motivation of conducting the act for the people and god, if such is put into justification of terror action as for example in Palestine.

In addition to the over-justification effect once the decision has been made the future suicide attacker should as well experience the post-decision dissonance (Pink, 2005). In the condition of post-decision dissonance an individual, particularly in making difficult choices between life and death, face the additional problematic consequences of the decision possibly being wrong. However, psychologically the mind of a human being will automatically try to find ways to make the decision that was made look more attractive (Peci, 1995). For example, in the case of suicide bombers they will apply the over justification effect here as well, since the intrinsic value of their action will be valuable and the correctness of their decision should lead their thinking in a more positive way of making the decision to be the right one. Moreover, usually this process takes place already in training camps where the leaders of terrorist groups have the power to influence the future martyrs. Thus, the leaders have the role of minimizing the cognitive dissonance of the group members since, as was discussed in chapter I and II, the leaders tend to alienate the future suicide bombers from the rest of the society in order to narrow down future martyr's attention to the final goal and correctness of his choice. In this way the possibility of dealing with the post-decision dissonance becomes "easier" and more predictive that the person will not try to opt out of the contract he entered to.

3.1.2 Humiliation – aggression theory

Humiliation as described in chapter II as well, is another psychological idea that is thought to influence the motivation of the suicide bombers to commit the terrorist attack. The aggressive behavior or revenge for the humiliation is in fact popular in the ancient historical events and their explanation (Victoroff, 2005). For example, the oppression of Christians in the early times that was depicted in the Christ on the cross symbol, served as a powerful motivation for the Christian movements that led to the Crusade wars (Armstrong, 2001). Usually the humiliation comes through the constant communication or interaction with the actor that actually is a source of humiliation. For example, in the case of Palestine and its young suicide bombers who are widely motivated by the humiliation in their daily life that comes from interaction and subordination to the Israeli authorities, followed by fear. Eayd el-Sarraj (2002), a psychiatrist in Palestine shares the vision and findings that humiliation is a vital factor in triggering the suicide bombers' choice, particularly the choice of the younger people.

Daily revenge is not considered to be of an anti-social behavior by some authors (Brock & Parker, 1995; Victoroff, 2005). Instead it is usually oriented towards the particular group preferences and can, of course, be based on the ingroup vs outgroup behavior model, which is not an asocial behavior. In addition, Brock & Paker (1995) claim that it is even rational to free oneself from the constant feeling of humiliation and fear – through aggression, revenge since “revenge is an emotion that is probably deeply rooted in the adaptive instinct to punish transgressors who violate the contracts of social species: hence, it is a motivator that often serves not only the goals of a vengeful individual but also the goals of his group” (Clutton – Brock & Parkercited in Victoroff, 2005). Hence, from this point of view the revenge can be quite a social phenomenon for the sake of the group's or even society's interests with the cost of one's own life, which makes the deed even of an altruistic

nature which has been found to be rational (see Elster, On Rationality of Altruism and Marriage). The question remains on how and why the suicide bomber is willing to pay a high price to be able to punish the transgressors. The research has showed that individuals are ready to pay quite high price for being able to punish their transgressors (De Quervain et al., 2004). Interestingly during this study the activity of the brain was studied that showed that during punishers' activity the deep sub-cortical part of the brain was activated which might have well inhibited the activity of the rational cortex. As the result, it seems that even though it is rational to strive for revenge and altruism it should be irrational to be a punisher in the condition when the costs are too high (such as one's life) since even the neuroscience shows the suppression of the rational part of the brain during the decision-making with too high costs. However, can there still be a way to see how the cost of someone's life is a rational cost for the purpose one strives for? Joseph Henrich (2010) discusses this question in his article where he concludes that the available research in the area suggests that individuals are ready to punish the transgressors for a very high cost for themselves for a reason of fair trial and fair punishment for the transgressor which is held by the punisher. Still the question of rationality of such punishment behavior is unanswered by the experiment results. Some sociological theories will shed more light into this area.

3.2 The Sociological Perspective on the Suicide Bombers Behavior

It is well-known that the terrorist organizations armed with the human bombs heavily depend on the community support of their comrades (Tosini, 2009: p. 78). The community support for the suicide bombers' choice can be to a certain extend explained by particular sociological theories. It sure does not make the phenomenon of suicide missions easier to explain or understand; however, it broadens the view of the phenomenon's explanation which clearly by this point can not be explained by one single theory, be it sociological, psychological, or rational choice. Out of the following wide range of sociological theories that

have tried to explain the suicide bombers' behavior: social learning theory, relative deprivation theory, frustration – aggression hypothesis, oppression theory, and national cultural theory – only the first two will be discussed in detail, since I find them being the most sound in the argumentation of their positions.

3.2.1 The relative deprivation theory

Even though it was found that the economic status does not have an effect on the suicide bomber's choice it was still mentioned above that rather the gap of deprived goods that an individual feels makes him or her act from feeling of unfairness and misery. The relative deprivation theory was introduced back in 1949 by Sam Stouffer in *The American Soldier* where he claimed that the rebellious behavior comes to place whenever individuals cannot bear the misery they have been experiencing (Walker & Smith, 2001). The same works with the societies that might feel deprived or exploited by other societies. For example, the case of south – north division of the world where the north is seen as an exploiter of the south in material and resourceful way. The mutual dissatisfaction of the group of people comes from the feeling of misery due to the fact of knowing that the life individuals have could have been better off, if not the i.e. occupiers, infidels, etc. As the result this leads to the hostile individual and social behavior and choices.

The relative deprivation theory has been in political science for a long time in order to explain such phenomena as social movements and deviational behavior such as that of suicide attackers. The idea behind this theory in the case of suicide bombers as the group of people within a society is that they are particularly sensitive individuals of rather middle class who realize the gap they have had for years due to unfair treatment or occupation of their territory that did not allow for economic growth and opening up more opportunities for people. Of course, this theory works through comparison of the status-quo of what individuals have now and what they could have had but also the comparison of what others out of their world have

in comparison to them: for example, how well off are the rest in other parts of the world without being better than the potential suicide bombers. As the result of comparison the relativity of the deprivation arises that in its turn ends up in triggering the motivation of an individual to serve as a human bomb.

Why and how then can it make their choice seem more rational? The question is rather complex, but the answer can be quite obvious. The experience of negative feelings, particularly of the unfair nature makes people think of some values of fairness and makes them want to fight for the fair consequences or at least to punish those who are in charge, in their mindset. These motivations do not seem unreasonable in order to fight for one's fair treatment. However this still cannot approve the possibility of conducting the suicide bombing out of the feeling of misery and deprivation. It still does not make it rational that is why we need the other social theory on learning and normalization of violence in the society.

3.2.2 The social learning theory and normalization of violence

The social learning theory has roots in psychology developed by Albert Bandura in 1977. This theory explains the human behavior to be learnt from the outside environment through observational learning¹⁷. In the sociological sphere this theory¹⁸ transformed into criminology in the attempts to explain the criminal behavior as the result of learning from the surrounding environment of the criminals. The criminal behavior as well as the suicidal behavior is considered to be of a deviant nature; thus, the actors are showing the deviation from a "normality" point. However, it might happen that the sense of normality inverts and the "senseless taking of one's life, an act that is usually negatively regarded as aberrant, if not abnormal – becomes accepted and commonplace, with demonstrably positive connotations"

¹⁷ The observational learning speaks for itself – i.e. imitation – is „a type of learning that occurs as a function of observing, retaining and replicating novel behavior executed by others“ (Bandura, 1977)

¹⁸ The theory is also called the social learning theory; however, there is a possibility to refer to it as Differential Association Theory in a sociological field.

(Hoffman, 2006: p. 157) within a particular community. For example in the case of Palestinian intifadas, as described by Tosini (2009) in his work on “A Sociological Understanding of Suicide Attacks” the society perceived the suicide bombers as martyrs, or heroes and their families are highly respected within the community. An interview with a Palestinian woman who explained the reasons that caused her support of the suicide missions of three of her sons, explains in more detail as she said: “believe me, when it comes to my sons, I am one of the most compassionate mothers. But this [martyrdom] is a sacred duty, which no emotion whatsoever can supersede...But he [son] is not throwing himself to death or to perdition. This is not death. This is not called death. It is called martyrdom” (p. 79). Thus, the culture of martyrdom and its wide acceptance in the Palestinian society and number of other Islamic societies actually justifies and encourages to participate in suicide attacks, making it the Nobel duty to die for the good cause and God’s will.

The tendency of normalization of the violence is quite often supported by the terrorist organizations through material and spiritual encouragement provided to both the suicide attackers and their families and setting an example to the rest of the community of exemplary choice of the martyrs (Hoffman, 2006). Moreover the circulation of such materials as video-tapes made by martyrs supports the image of a terrorist organization of being consistent of the determined martyrs, who fight for the inevitable victory of the organization. This technique has been highly exercised by Hamas and the PIJ in Palestine to strengthen the position of the organization and the value system as well as to invite more volunteers for the “holy war” participation.

In addition to normalization of violence in the society the role of social learning highly based on the theological justification of the actions has played a role in many terrorist based territories (with exceptions of the Tamil Tigers in Sri-Lanka and PKK party of Kurds in Turkey). Even though such desires as living next to Allah are rather the bonus perception in

suicide bombers' choice, in the society the religion certainly shapes and as the result defines the limits of "normality" and divine. For example Sheikh Ibrahim Madhi proclaimed in his sermon on April 12, 2001 that was broadcasted on the Palestinian television that "anyone who does not attain martyrdom in these days should wake in the middle of the night and say: 'My God, why have you deprived me of martyrdom for your sake?'" (cited in Hoffman, 2006: p. 158). Hence, this type of messages can be seen as a reinforcement for the society to embrace the culture and normality of the martyrdom.

As with any other society, the members of communities who support suicide terrorism share cultural heritage. This component of world life or cultural heritage is usually referred to as *culture of martyrdom*¹⁹. Even though the nature of this culture is suggested to be rooted in religion, other organizations such as PKK in Turkey, or the Tamil Tigers belong to secular terrorist organizations. The other ones of course such as Hamas or Taliban actually call for *jiḥad* in order to support the acts of suicide terrorism. Hence, the presence of such beliefs in a community makes it easier both for organizations to recruit volunteers and for the potential suicide bombers to choose to conduct the act.

The attackers, however, can not be fully explained by only sociological pressure and beliefs the stress should be made on psychodynamic processes that actually happen in the attacker's mind. They can be of the authoritarian nature combined with the religious fundamentalist beliefs (Lester et al., 2004). In addition, the condition of emotional distress and moral rage that are linked to the previous experiences of humiliation and assassination, not only of the closest people but also the ones with whom the suicide attackers shares ethnic, territorial, or religious grounds. In such a case, the behavior of an individual is "affectually

¹⁹ The culture of martyrdom seems to appraise in the time of crisis: nowadays in Islam and was also common in the history of prosecution of Christians that resulted in Crusades. Important to notice that both of these religions have strong negative convictions against killing others and committing suicide, however in a particular period of history they employed the idea of martyrdom.

determined” (Weber, 1966) because of emotional tensions such as revenge, for example of the Chechen women discussed above in chapters I and II, who aim to revenge for the killed husbands and children.

To summarize, this chapter concentrated on the motivations and causes of the suicide bombers that have their roots in psychology and sociology. The motivations learnt in more detail in this chapter are: the social learning of normalization of violence and bad vs good actors, the visible deprivation of possible suicide bombers of goods, so that they clearly envision the gap between what they have and what they could have had if not the occupiers. These motivations are usually pronounced in some way by the attackers themselves for instance in the video tapes. The causes of their behavior are rather such factors as the over-justification effect of correctness of their beliefs as well as the pre- and post-decision cognitive dissonance, which in a lot of cases dealt with the assistance of the terrorist groups and leaders, who make sure the future martyr is alienated from the outer world and contra-arguments to the decision that was made. Another cause, which is believed by many scholars to be influential is the feeling of humiliation which leads to aggression and the revengeful choice in the expense of one’s own life.

CONCLUSION

The understanding of suicide has always been rather difficult. The suicide terrorism is even a more complex phenomenon. So much literature is provided in the terrorism studies area from different perspectives and theories. For example, while many researches, mentioned in this thesis and beyond, concentrate on the terrorist organizations in order to explain certain part of the phenomenon, others concentrate on social environment and conditions of individuals who as the result become suicide bombers. Yet not much attempt has been done to create a general framework in explaining the behavior of suicide bombers. This thesis looked at the individual decision-making and opened the framework of the black box to be helpful in understanding the behavior of suicide attackers. Since most of schools have their views on explaining such a phenomenon, it is important to take a look into the most important of them and take out something that might help us understand why suicide bombers do what they do.

One of the most contradictory interpretations of suicide bombers' choice is given by Wintrobe where suicide attackers are seen through the prism of the traditional rational choice theory, which turns out to be too rigid to be able to explain such a complex social and political phenomenon. Thus, the rational choice approach fails to answer the question of the motivations of individuals, taking their rationality condition for granted with a single important motivator being the utility-orientedness. However, as I showed in the chapters I and II the utility maximization is often not the driving force behind someone's behavioral patterns. There are rather number of factors that influence the decision-making process of the suicide bombers. Certainly, none of the other theories, be it sociological or psychological ones, can thoroughly explain the motivations of the suicide bombers. That is particularly why the strongest points of the theories existing are taken up by the black box model.

As the result, the black box metaphor serves as a framework to a better understanding

of the phenomenon. The idea of a black box supports the “fact” that human nature and particularly behavior, is a rather complex occurrence. It suggests that suicide bombers make a decision not only based on their own rational cognitions that serve as stated motivations, but also their own emotional unconscious cognitions that serve as causes of their behavior and drive the motivational system. On the other hand, person is not alone but lives in the society and that is why there is also a division of his or her own decision making part from the socially influenced part of the decision. Thus, a suicide bomber in this framework is an agent who makes a detrimental decision based on rational weighing of cost and benefit, but who is influenced by his own belief system, feelings of deep unfairness of the status-quo and support of the environmental conditions that push individuals to such heroic acts of their type.

Thus, the most important implication of this thesis is that it proposes to look at the process of decision- making of suicide bombers from various perspectives and only afterwards create a better framework for explaining their actions. Since there has not been done research before in trying to combine existing prominent theories that explain suicide terrorists’ choice, this thesis presents a unique combination of theories and explains their connection to each other that as the result gives a much profound explanation power of the phenomenon. The black box model considers that there is a space for an individual to make a decision rationally in procedural way; however, the rationality is still bounded by irrational beliefs that individuals mostly prompt to have. The system of beliefs is mostly dependent on both the society the individual lives in where the sense of violence can be a natural response, and the construction of the motivation system that individual has and which is dependent on his life experience. As the result, there is more to a decision making process that is influenced by various psychological, sociological as well as own cognitive factors.

The valuable continuation of the study of the phenomenon of suicide bomber’s choice

is needed further. This thesis has taken the first steps in studying the existing literature and merging the existing theories in possible one framework of explanation of the suicide attackers' choice. However, at this point it is important to see if there are other ways and theories to explain such a complex decision- making process. In addition, even though such kind of approaches might well be not possible to test in a given context, more qualitative studies can be done with the existing and available terrorist materials and finding out if there is any pattern of behavior that can signal and distinguish social and personal drives in making a decision to become a human bomb. This will help to understand and explain even more how come those who are not psychotic, and lead just as daily normal life as us end up in the situation of taking his or her own life along with number of other people for the sake of beliefs.

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