In the recent work of Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman and Orehek (Fully Committed: Suicide Bombers' Motivation and the Quest for Personal Significance, 2009) a motivational analysis of suicide terrorism is delineated with its special emphasis on significance quest. While this significance bestowing ideology has been largely recognized by members of terrorist organizations, the actual number of people intending to be suicide bombers is scarce. The authors argue that suicide terrorism „will likely require a conjunction of psychological forces of supreme magnitude" (p. 337), which paves the way for asking the question if religious ideology can be regarded as a sufficient and necessary condition for suicide terrorism?

1. Introduction

Terrorism has been proven an effective strategy, since regardless of which extremist group we are studying, it often seems to have delivered the intended outcome. Despite the fact that the phenomenon is not the product of the 21st century and therefore its historical roots can be hard to identify, the starting point of the current wave can be easily assessed.

The most contemporary trend towards suicide terrorism can be traced back to the 1980s (Crenshaw, 2007). It is frequently attached to the Beirut barracks bombings in October 1983, which action compelled the United States to pull its troops out of Lebanon (Friedman, 2004). Following that, suicide bombing was adapted to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Sri Lankan Civil War and the Second Chechen War. Nevertheless, its domestic nature was only surpassed by its application by Al-Qaeda in 2001, spurring interest internationally in the tactic as a consequence of its destructive potential in terms of casualties and perpetrators.

Furthermore, two years later the U.S. withdrew its soldiers from Saudi Arabia, which move could also be seen as a clear signal of how effective suicide terrorism actually was. Factually, in the period of 1980-2003, seven out of thirteen suicide attacks turned out to be successful in achieving considerable policy changes by the country of target (Pape, 2005, p. 64). Since then, we have witnessed both a geographical and numerical expansion in suicide terrorist campaigns throughout the world, having an immense effect principally on the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

In the following paper I put the emphasis on the underlying motivations of suicide bombers and would reason that religious ideology – although not exclusively - can be considered as an important component of it. In the first part of the essay, I conceptualize suicide terrorism and religious ideology, whilst in the second part I scrutinize it from a political economy perspective as well as offering some alternative explanations stemming from sociology. I conclude by taking stocks, answering the research question in light of the existing literature and identifying a possible avenue for research.

Despite the fact terrorists' motivations have been extensively researched (e.g. Bloom, 2005; Pedahzur, 2005; Sageman, 2004; Stern, 2003), I believe understanding their incentives could be constructive due to epistemic and pragmatic considerations. The former helps us clarify the seemingly irrational choice of suicide bombers to sacrifice their lives and simultaneously murder innocent people, while the latter gives us a chance to alter their motivations by comprehending and making use of the research findings in counterterrorism.

2. Defining Suicide Terrorism and Religious Ideology

The link between religion and suicide terrorism have been extensively researched (Hoffman and McCormick, 2004; Pape, 2005; Pedahzur et al., 2003, 2010; Stern, 2003). In this paper I advance the argument that religious ideology plays an important role in motivating modern suicide terrorism. The term *modern* is key in this context and I define it according to Crenshaw (2007) with the intention of not to be entangled in either the early use of the concept during the struggles of Sicarii's and Zealots' or the Russian anarchist for instance. Their motivations might also be justified in terms of ideologies and identities, but of entirely different nature.

As a matter of clarification, I do not mean to imply that suicide terrorism could clearly predict religiosity, since then the number of suicide bombers would strongly be correlated with of religious people, which is definitely not the case. Instead, I argue that there must be a positive correlation between the *absence* of particular religious beliefs and suicide terrorists' *unwillingness* to conduct this means of terror.

Among researches who would not define suicide terrorism per se, this means of terror is mostly referred to as either suicide missions (Gambetta, 2005; Hassan, 2001) or suicide bombings (Reuter, 2004; Oliver and Steinberg, 2005). According to Pedahzur, important components of suicide terrorism are the ability to cause wide-spread terror and the increased scale of attacks (Pedahzur, 2005). However, one of the most specific definitions was provided by Pape, who reasoned that the concept is "the most aggressive form of terrorism [in comparison to destructive and demonstrating terrorism], pursuing coercion even at the expense of angering not only the target community but neutral audiences as well" (Pape, 2005, pp. 9-10).

Having elaborated on the view of (modern) suicide terrorism in the existing literature, I would now turn to the notion of religious ideology. It could be defined as a system of beliefs which is based on certain collective and social ideals related to faith, justice and inalienable rights. Its power of motivation lies in its recognition of a discrepancy from an ideal state and providing the tools of erasing it through action. An ideology explaining terrorism identifies an

enemy (e.g. Israel, the West), who is thought to be held accountable for the discrepancy and presents violence (e.g. jihad) as the only efficient method for achieving this ideal state (Kruglanski et al., 2009).

3. Motivations Underlying Suicide Terrorism: The Political Economy Perspective
3.1 Nationalism

Previous research has shown that suicide terrorism is often seen as essentially irrational (Kramer, 1990; Merari, 1990; Post, 1990). According to Pape as a consequence of that the emphasis was frequently put on the religious and psychological motives of individuals (Pape, 2003). He on the contrary proposes that suicide terrorism follows a strategic logic, which undermines the assumption that suicide bombers are irrational fanatics, whose behavior is inconsistent with their desired objectives.

He enlists three distinct factors to support this claim, namely timing, nationalist goals and target selection. The first one shows that the decisions of terrorist organization' leaders are of strategic nature, since suicide campaigns seem to be well-organized and logical and not disconnected or randomly-timed. The second property is tied to the observation that the primary purpose of suicide attacks is to drive foreign troops out of the territory that is believed to belong to the terrorists, which also bolsters the argument about suicide bombers' rationality. The third factor illustrates that democracies are far more selected as targets than autocracies, which can also be justified rationally due to the publics' ability to influence state policy, lower the tolerance of cost and impose restrains on the government in terms of retaliation.

Pape therefore argues that motivations for suicide terrorism are principally not of religious, but of nationalist nature, reasoning that "every group mounting a suicide campaign over the past two decades has had a major objective… coercing a foreign state that has military forces in what the terrorist see as their homeland to take those forces out" (Pape, 2005, p. 21; Table 2). He collected information on every suicide campaign conducted worldwide between 1980 and 2003, amounting to 315 suicide terrorist campaigns altogether.

TABLE 2. Motivation and Targets of Suicide Terrorist Campaigns, 1980–2001			
Region Dispute	Homeland Status	Terrorist Goal	Target a Democracy?
Lebanon, 1983–86	US/F/IDF military presence	US/F/IDF withdrawal	Yes
West Bank/Gaza, 1994–	IDF military presence	IDF withdrawal	Yes
Tamils in Sri Lanka, 1990–	SL military presence	SL withdrawal	Yes (1950)[a]
Kurds in Turkey, 1990s	Turkey military presence	Turkey withdrawal	Yes (1983)[a]
Chechnya, 2000–	Russia military presence	Russian withdrawal	Yes (1993)[a]
Kashmir, 2000–	Indian military presence	Indian withdrawal	Yes
Saudi Peninsula, 1996–	US military presence	US withdrawal	Yes

Sources: Pape (2002). Przeworski et al. 2000 identifies four simple rules for determining regime type: (1) The chief executive must be elected, (2) the legislature must be elected, (3) there must be more than one party, and (4) there must be at least one peaceful transfer of power. By these criteria all the targets of suicide terrorism were and are democracies. Przeworski et al. codes only from 1950 to 1990 and is updated to 1999 by Boix and Rosato 2001. Freedom House also rates countries as "free," "partly free," and "not free," using criteria for degree of political rights and civil liberties. According to Freedom House's measures, Sri Lanka, Turkey, and Russia were all partly free when they were the targets of suicide terrorism, which puts them approximately in the middle of all countries, a score that is actually biased against this study since terrorism itself lowers a country's civil liberties rating (freedomhouse.org).
[a]Date established as a democracy (if not always a democracy).

According to Goodwin, in order for Pape's nationalist theory of suicide terrorism to be proven correct, two distinct factors must be true. The first is that the primary purpose of suicide campaigns must be to end the occupation of foreign troops, while the second is that each of these actions must be provoked by foreign occupations (Goodwin, 2006). Even though the argument seems to hold in several suicide terrorist campaigns, such as Sri Lanka, Palestine and Israel, Lebanon, Chechnya and Russia or Turkey, there are cases which certainly contradict it.

Suicide terrorism in Iraq can be mentioned as one example, since despite the fact the Kurdish and Shi'a Muslims were supporting the occupation of the United States and thus nationalist motivations could be justified on the basis of suicide attacks conducted by Sunni insurgents, the support was rather due to benefits. It could be reasoned that the suicide attacks of Sunni Muslims were mainly "motivated by a belief that Shi'a political and religious groups welcomed and cooperated with the U.S. invasion to overthrow the Iraqi government" (Human Rights Watch, 2005, p. 36).

In addition, the insurgents of Sunni Muslims can be divided into Salafists and nationalists and it is the former group that can be held accountable for suicide campaigns against Shi'a Muslims, which completely contradicts the thesis of Pape. Hence, albeit admitting that nationalist aspirations magnified the struggles, religious and political motivations might be more adequate in explaining suicide terrorism in Iraq.

Another problematic case is the one of Al-Qaeda, since Pape argues that "the overwhelming majority [of Al-Qaeda suicide bombers] emanate from a narrow range of Muslim countries, those with American combat troops stationed on or immediately adjacent to their soil and those that received substantial backing by the United States" (Pape, 2005, p. 125). In brief, according to Pape it means that in terms of recruitment the military policy of the U.S. is more effective than religious ideology/ Islamic fundamentalism.

Nonetheless, it all comes down to the conceptualization of 'occupation' as many of the countries do not even possess combat troops or bases designated to the United States. Pape therefore prefers using an encompassing definition of 'occupation', reasoning that all states in the Persian Gulf as well as Saudi Arabia are *occupied* militarily (Ibid. pp. 83-84). On the contrary, Goodwin claims that the suicide bombers of Al-Qaeda might not be the product of the military occupation of the U.S., but rather its support and collusion with unpopular governments in the area (Goodwin, 2006).

Moving beyond the contradictory cases, I believe, Pape is right to argue that suicide terrorism is a more complex phenomenon than to be simply explained by religious ideology,

since a lot depends on the actual political context of suicide terrorist campaigns. Besides, it is also beneficial to explore the connections between the policies and presence of the United States and suicide terrorism.

However, while his observation about suicide bombings being a tactic that is most frequently applied during foreign occupation is noteworthy, the data also show that it is mostly the case when the occupied and the occupier have different religious roots (Pedahzur, Weinberg, 2010). He also seems to be wrong about the nature and ideological form of U.S. presence in a wider context, as neither military occupation, nor nationalism is basic characteristics of suicide terrorism. While this means of terror can certainly be motivated by nationalism, it cannot be generalized, because ideologies and identities of different nature (i.e. religious) can also be seen as motivations for engaging in suicide terrorism.

3.2 Economic conditions and education

According to popular beliefs the motivations underlying suicide terrorism are fanaticism, poverty and the lack of education (Blackwell, 2005). In the following section I would like to take two of the most influential empirical researches under scrutiny that are both dealing with suicide terrorism in the Palestinian context.

Benmeleck and Berrebi (2007) explore the connection between suicide terrorist bombers' human capital and the outcome of the attacks they carried out. They advance the argument that human capital plays a crucial role in producing suicide terrorism, because more competent suicide terrorists are more often entrusted with tasks that are associated with a larger amount of benefits to the terror group.

The research party builds on the proposition of Krueger and Maleckova (2003) in terms of recruitment, drawing a parallel between the attainment of education and the ability of conducting suicide attacks. In short, better educational background prioritizes an individual in the selection process as it is seen as a signal of commitment by the organization. The claim also seems to hold in the context of the September 11 attacks conducted by Al-Qaeda, since "[t]wo thirds of the hijackers had pursued formal academic studies, and at least seven of the 19 hijackers had formal flight training" (Benmeleck, Berrebi, 2007). Despite the fact that the evidence is informal and largely based on personal testimony, it can be stated that human capital is significant in underlying suicide terrorism.

The authors use a novel dataset that contains Palestinian suicide attacks conducted against Israelis in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Israel between September 2000 and August 2005. All the information comes from detailed reports provided by the Israeli Security

Agency (ISA). It includes suicide bombers' biographies, targets as well as numerical data on people they either killed or injured.

The main finding of Benmeleck and Berrebi (2007) is that there is indeed a strong correlation between the significance of targets and the education and age of suicide bombers. They show that suicide terrorists who are older and have received higher education are more regularly entrusted with tasks that offer higher pay-offs. Additionally, these suicide bombers would potentially fail or be caught fewer times than their younger and less-educated counterparts. Lastly, when attacking targets of greater importance, differences in age and education can benefit the terrorist organization in terms of the number of people killed.

Although the argument Benmeleck and Berrebi (2007) advances about the crucial role human capital plays in producing suicide terrorism in the Palestinian context is convincing, I would like to draw attention to an alternative explanation. If we were to presuppose that there was no causal relationship between suicide bombers' education, age and the probability of getting caught, we could interpret the actions of suicide terrorists in light of the terror organizations' beliefs.

For instance, older and more-educated terrorists could be assigned to tasks with a lower probability of getting caught just because of their terror groups' conviction that they are more reliable, which is a virtue that can be taken advantage of continuously, but only if the suicide bomber returns from a mission. Even though the authors controlled for distance and target importance in their regression analysis, the explanation that the chance of getting caught is only related to task assignment cannot be ruled out.

In a follow-up research, Benmeleck, Berrebi and Klor (2012) reason that there is a connection between the quality of suicide terrorism, economic conditions, the outcome of terrorist attacks and the attributes of suicide bombers' targets. They argue that under certain circumstances when the economy is not performing well and unemployment rates are soaring, better-planned and more ambitious suicide attacks can be expected, since the recruitment of more-experienced and highly-educated bombers is facilitated.

Furthermore, they believe these suicide terrorists would often attack targets of greater importance in their vicinity. While they confirm the validity of their hypothesis in regard to the existing link between the quality of suicide terrorism and poor economic conditions, they could not establish unequivocally that the number of suicide attacks would also be influenced by bad economic conditions.

The authors offer a merged dataset containing micro-level data on suicide bombers in Palestine, which is an updated version of the database used by Benmeleck and Berrebi (2007).

On top of that, in order to investigate demographic and economic indicators in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, they look at the Palestinian Labor Force Survey (PLFS). At last, the data obtained on curfews and fatalities in Palestine come from the United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and a human rights organization in Israel, called B'tselem.

Benmeleck, Berrebi and Klor (2012) reason that religious ideology in the Palestinian context does not play a crucial role in determining the varying response given by terror organizations to economic conditions. In brief, their argument is that "bad economic conditions do not drive the quality of terror equally for different organizations, but rather affect groups that provide excludable public goods by increasing their ability to commit terror attacks during difficult economic times" (Benmeleck et al., 2012, p. 126).

They argue that despite the fact Table 5 implies that religious ideology is important to consider, it is only because suicide terrorists are lumped together regardless of significant religious differences between them. To investigate whether their hypothesis is valid they present a multinomial logit model with a dependent variable being one of the main political groups in Palestine, namely the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Fatah or Hamas (Table 5).

They find that organizations with the provision of excludable public goods (i.e. Hamas) have a potential to conduct suicide attacks even when economic conditions are poor, whilst the attacks of groups that provide no medical care, welfare or education (i.e. PIJ) show a decrease following a rise in unemployment.[1] Important to note, however, that their hypothesis was only tested in the Palestinian context, so even though its validity has been confirmed there, the possibility of context-dependency cannot be eliminated.

TABLE 5   The Effect of Economic Conditions on the Organizational Affiliation of Suicide Bombers

	Islamic Suicide Terrorist	Multinomial Logit: Marginal Effects that Suicide Terrorist belongs to		
		Fatah	Hamas	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
Unemployment Rate	1.103*** [0.105]	-1.085*** [0.189]	4.019** [1.963]	-2.934* [1.774]
Group Specific Unemployment Rate	0.874*** [0.070]	-0.897*** [0.048]	2.352*** [0.012]	-1.456 [1.983]
Income Inequality	-0.474*** [0.106]	0.517*** [0.066]	0.743*** [0.076]	-1.261*** [0.142]
Year Fixed Effects	Yes		Yes	
Observations	156		156	

1 Groups with the provision of non-excludable public goods (i.e. Fatah) returned no significant results.

7

4. Motivations Underlying Suicide Terrorism: Alternative Explanations

4.1 Extreme fear, despair and hopelessness

In investigating the link between religious ideology and suicide terrorism, sociology might be able to provide valuable answers. Researchers most frequently refer to the work of a French sociologist from the 19th century, Emile Durkheim, who distinguished the motivation of individuals along the line of their being fatalistic or altruistic.

In this section I put the main emphasis on the former, delving into fatalistic suicide in more details. These suicide attacks are mostly motivated by extreme fear, despair and hopelessness. Besides, they are likely to result from "excessive regulation, such as that of persons with futures blocked, aspirations chocked by oppressive discipline, and persons living under physical or moral despotism… Fatalistic suicides involve an escape from a normative situation from which there is no appeal" (Stack, 1979, p. 162). In addition, Stack reasons that both overregulation and totalitarianism can be seen as components responsible for spurring fatalistic suicide, since heavy restrictions imposed on human freedom may incentivize suicide terrorism due to rendering the lives of potential terrorists as meaningless.

In the third part of his book Pape advances a similar argument, emphasizing that individuals may be motivated to conduct suicide attacks by "the use of excessive regulation and oppressive discipline to strip [them] of the capacity for independent thought and so leave them vulnerable to following directions against their self-interest" (Pape, 2005, pp. 175-176). To put it differently he contends that groups of religious and political nature may brainwash individuals to make sure that they would not question any instructions provided by the organization.

According to Pape, the real-world example of fatalistic suicide is not suicide terrorism in a general sense, but rather cult suicide among either messianic movements or religious cults (Ibid. p. 177). He presents a number of distinct acts between 1978 and 2000 including the mass suicide at Jonestown or the Waco siege with naming a couple of cults responsible for conducting those suicides (e.g. Movement for the Restoration for the Ten Commandments of God, Heaven's Gate, Order of the Solar Temple).

He notices that different forms of social exclusion and restrictive conditions played an important role in all of these movements and therefore concludes that there must be "an existence of a hard boundary separating a self-contained group from the society at large" (Ibid. p. 179). In his understanding the relationship of the individual to society, in this case

separation is the most crucial feature of fatalistic suicide that creates an environment in which a system of shared beliefs can be maintained. While Pape is certainly right about emphasizing the role of social exclusion, there is another trend that can be observed among the presented sects: religiosity.

Additionally, fatalistic suicide positively correlates with the socioeconomic profiles of several terror groups. This type of suicide is mostly motivated by despair and hopelessness, which are considered to be products of economic and political oppression. For instance, research shows that the suicide bombers of Hamas are regularly profiled as young, unemployed bachelors with strong religious attachments to the organization (Ganor, 2000) and the biographies of suicide terrorists from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) reveal that bombers tend to be rather young and come from disadvantageous families (Ergil, 2000). Moreover, the suicide bombers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) also match this socioeconomic profile, since they are most often young bachelors without any kind of employment in Sri Lanka (Gunaratna, 2000).

4.2 Strong religious conviction

The other type of individuals' motives according to Emile Durkheim is of altruistic nature. He argues that the deep integration of the individual into the collective provides fertile ground for altruistic suicide. As a result, suicide is viewed as a 'duty' and the satisfaction of the social group is prioritized over the contentment of the person, who is responsible for carrying out the attack (Durkheim, 1951).

Hence, if there is a strong correlation between the willingness of the individual to give up his own life and the intention to help the social group to achieve its objectives, it is likely that an increase in altruistic suicide will be witnessed. On top of that, the biographies of suicide bombers between the 1980s and 2000s suggest that they were mostly members of organization with religious affiliations, such as the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, Hamas, Hezbollah or Al-Qaeda (Shay and Schweitzer, 2002).

Furthermore, research shows that the majority of them practiced Islam throughout their entire lives and received religious education (Ganor, 2000; Merari, 1990; Schweitzer, 2001). This trend can be applied to the subcategory of Durkheim's altruistic suicide, which is 'acute altruistic suicide' in which "the suicidal act stems from a strong religious conviction in the glorious destiny that awaits the perpetrator in the afterlife" (Pedahzur et al. 2003).

In this section I reason that religious ideology can play an important role in the recruitment and training of suicide terrorists from the perspective of altruistic suicide. I will use case studies from the Palestinian and Sri Lankan context to bolster this argument. In terms of

recruitment, in order to understand what might truly motivate individuals to consider becoming suicide bombers, micro-level analysis is required. Whilst the majority of people would find it hard to come up with reasons for the involvement with a terror organization, the decision of potential recruits may be easier in light of the following logic.

Imagine that as a suicide bomber you would be enabled to secure the economic status of your family and wage war on the enemy who compromised your religion and political beliefs. In general, cash payments of approximately $10.000-$25.000 are received by the martyr's family upon the completion of his attack (Human Rights Watch, 2012, pp. 100-101).

However, this raises a couple of questions. At first, if economic conditions were the only influential factors in motivating altruistic suicide, would the phenomenon be eliminated by improving living conditions? At second, if so, would it work universally? Unfortunately the answer to these questions is no, since while it must be acknowledged that economic conditions in this context do matter, there is also the religious act of self-sacrifice that needs to be elaborated on, which is martyrdom.

To fully comprehend the role martyrdom plays in altruistic suicide, a distinct form of belief in Islam has to be scrutinized, which is the religious doctrine of Salafism. It requires a life identical to the companions of Muhammad as well as it instructs its followers to engage in struggles against the enemies of Islam. The doctrine dates back to the time of the Prophet, who lived in the 7th century and importantly enough, it is not consequently relatable to violence. Nevertheless, when it is attached to Jihad, it unquestionably is. "Suicide is still understood to be prohibited, but martyrdom while carrying out Jihad is not" (Pedahzur, Weinberg, 2010).

Having realized that the notion has great value in terms of recruitment and propaganda, terror groups considered it beneficial to start using 'martyrdom' instead of 'suicide'. One of the differences between the concepts is that while the latter might imply insanity and unbalance, the former suggests suicide bombers to acquire heavenly and earthly rewards and be regarded as heroes, which gains can be part of a cost-benefit calculation and therefore contradict suicide terrorists' irrationality. The other difference is that suicide is deemed to be about killing for individual benefits, while martyrdom is viewed as a sacrifice in order to advance the terrorist organization's goals (Hoffman and McCormick, 2004).

The religious component indeed seems to be crucial for the justification of suicide bombings, since in one of the semi-structured interviews conducted with an incarcerated terrorist from the Middle East a quite similar reasoning was put forward: "This is not suicide.

Suicide is selfish, it is weak, it is mentally disturbed. This is *istishad* (martyrdom or self-sacrifice in the service of Allah)" (Post et al. 2003, p. 179).

As a conclusion, the argument can be raised that terror groups' usage of suicide and martyrdom is socially constructed. Even though martyrdom might be a euphemistic term for suicide, according to the vast majority of people, individuals who conduct these kinds of attacks remain suicide bombers. It is only the terrorist organization, the general population in the bomber's place of origin and the family who will remember them as martyrs, which seems to be satisfactory, since "[t]he social basis of this interpretation has given sponsoring groups the opportunity to reframe suicide attacks as acts of self-martyrdom. In so doing, they have helped popularize these attacks in the eyes of their political constituents and ensured themselves a steady stream of recruits" (Hoffman and McCormick, 2003, p. 253).

In analyzing terrorist groups such as the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the PIJ or Hamas in Israel-Palestine and the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the authors reason that suicide terrorism has less to do with individuals' motives than the strategic goals of terrorist organizations redressed in a religious-ideological context. They argue that identity construction and the process of socialization are crucial to understand how the group's motivations and objectives are prioritized over the individuals'. "To that end, the organization provides the candidate with religious and political indoctrination, in the course of which the terrorist act will be given a moral, political and religious justification" (Moghadam, 2003, p. 85).

Religious ideology is continuously reinforced during the indoctrination into the terror organization through training as well. Individuals who are selected for suicide missions are obliged to take religious courses that specifically focus on sections of the Hadith and Quran dealing with the elevated importance of martyrdom and afterlife rewards (Kushner, 1996).

Furthermore, in order to prepare mentally for the suicide mission a videotape is made about the 'living *shaheed*'. Its purpose is rather straightforward. Firstly, it signals an irrevocable commitment to the terrorist group and secondly, the videotape contributes to the betterment of the organization's interests, since it can be used for future recruitment purposes. Most importantly, the tape can be considered as a contract between the individual and the group that finalizes the process of integration and socialization. Thus a change of mind would not only bring shame to the individual and his family, but would also indicate disloyalty and the breach of faith.

Pedahzur et al. (2003) hypothesize from the perspective of altruistic suicide that religious ideology has a stronger motivating power in relation to suicide terrorists than non-suicide

terrorists in the Palestinian context.[2] They use a newly-established database that contains data on 819 individuals who engaged in terrorist missions between the year of 1993 and 2002. To magnify the differences between suicide and non-suicide terrorists the authors apply chi-square measurements for nominal and variance analysis test (ANOVA) for interval variables.

The results of the analysis can be found in Table 2. Pedahzur et al. (2003) could prove empirically that religious ideology plays an important role in the Palestinian context studied through the Durkheimian altruistic sentiment. Religious ideology (88.4%) is significantly more influential than either Nationalist (10.1%) or Left wing ideology (1.4%). Nonetheless, a critique of the research paper could be that while over 800 terrorists are included, the numerical difference between non-suicide (739) and suicide terrorists (80) is vast, which was justified by the authors on the basis of data accessibility (Pedahzur et al. 2003).

TABLE 2 Descriptive Statistics and Analysis of Variance for the Research Variables

Variable	Entire sample	Suicide terrorist	Non-suicide terrorist	Chi-square/ANOVA analysis
Type of terrorist	Non-suicide $N = 739$ (90.3) Suicide $N = 80$ (9.7%)			
Experience in terror attacks	First event 32.6% Not first event 67.4%	First event 20% Not first event .80%	First event 35% Not first event 65%	X^2 ratio $= 2.25$
Type of education	Secular 55% Religious 45%	Secular 17.2% Religious 82.8%	Secular 63.9% Religious 36.1%	$X^2 = 20.63$***
Ideology	Religious 61.2% Nationalist 28.0% Left wing 10.8%	Religious 88.4% Nationalist 10.1% Left wing 1.4%	Religious 56.9% Nationalist 30.8% Left wing 12.3%	X^2 ratio $= 29.99$***
Age	$M = 22.96$ ($SD = 6.36$)	$M = 24.5$ ($SD = 7.46$)	$M = 22.4$ ($SD = 5.94$)	$F = 3.04^{†}$
Marital status	Married 34.8% Unmarried 65.2%	Married 15.8% Unmarried 84.2%	Married 40% Unmarried 60%	X^2 ratio $= 4.26$*
SES of region where the terrorist lives (1 = high SES, 10 = low SES)	$M = 5.82$ ($SD = .37$)	$M = 5.97$ ($SD = .38$)	$M = 5.78$ ($SD = .37$)	$F = 10.13$***
Gender	Male 97.4% Female 2.6%	Male 98.7% Female 1.3%	Male 97.3% Female 2.7%	X^2 ratio $= .683$

$^{†}0.1 > p > .0.5$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

5. Conclusion

The most often cited terrorist group that is thought to disconfirm the relationship between suicide terrorism and religious ideology is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), because of its being a secular organization. A certain way of labeling a group, though, fails to paint the whole picture about the nature of beliefs the Tamil Tigers might hold. Belonging to an organized religion is not a precondition for maintaining supernatural beliefs (Zuckerman, 2008), so unless it can be ascertained that the majority of Tamil Tigers engaging in suicide

---

2 Pedahzur et al. (2003) have as many as seven hypotheses tested; however, I only highlighted the hypothesis that is crucial in this paper. The other independent variables are the following: type of terrorists, experience in terror attacks, type of education, age, marital status, SES of region where the terrorist lives.

terrorism do not hold specific beliefs (e.g. endorsement in martyrdom, belief in the afterlife), the labeling of the group as secular in itself is not a persuasive argument.

In this paper I argued that religious ideology plays a crucial role in motivating modern suicide terrorism. In the beginning, motives stemming from Political Economy were explored, namely nationalism and economic conditions and education. Following that, some alternative, sociological explanations were put forward, such as extreme fear, despair, hopelessness and strong religious conviction.

All of the studied motivations provide valuable answers in the Israeli-Palestinian case. Fear, despair and hopelessness are regarded as the main motives in the Turkish and Sri-Lankan context, while religious motivations play the most important role in Iraq and the study of Al-Qaeda. The possibility must be considered that such a complicated and multi-layered phenomenon as suicide terrorism can only be interpreted by compatible theories. Nevertheless, religious ideology – albeit cannot serve as an exclusive explanation – seems to have a significant motivating power in all of the examined cases.

One possible avenue for research in the future could be to investigate whether a link between suicide terrorism and religiosity could truly be detected. Obviously such an endeavor is likely to entail empirical difficulties due to the fact that religiosity cannot be seen as a strong predictor of suicide terrorism, since the number of religious people and suicide bombers is not the same. However, hypotheses could be generated about particular religious beliefs and their effects on suicide terrorism.

The concept of martyrdom or the belief in the afterlife for example may decrease the cost of conducting suicide terrorism. Other beliefs might spur violence towards out-group and create closer ties with in-group members, thus motivating suicide terrorists to inflict damage on the former and protect the latter. I would argue that religious beliefs might not be universally equal, so some of them might play a potentially more important role in facilitating suicide terrorism than others. Replacing religiosity with specific religious beliefs may be more productive in studying the connection between suicide terrorism and religiosity if such a relationship exists (Liddle et al., 2011).

6. Bibliography

Benmeleck, E; Berrebi, C; Klor, E.F, '*Economic Conditions and the Quality of Suicide Terrorism*', The Journal of Politics 74(1), 2012

Benmeleck, E; Berrebi, C, '*Human Capital and the Productivity of Suicide Bombers*', Journal of Economic Perspectives 21(3), 2007

Blackwell, A.D, '*Terrorism, heroism and altruism: Kin selection and socio-religious cost-benefit scaling in Palestinian suicide attack*', Poster session, 17th annual Human Behavior and Evolution Society Conference, Austin, TX, 2005

Bloom, M, '*Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*', Columbia University Press, New York, 2005

Crenshaw, M, '*Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A Review Essay*', Security Studies 16(1), 2007

Durkheim, E, '*Suicide*'. (Originally published in 1897), Glenco, Free Press, 1951

Ergil, D, '*Suicide Terrorism in Turkey: The Workers' Party of Kurdistan*', Countering Suicide Terrorism: An International Conference, Herzliya, Israel, International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 2000

Friedman, T.L, '*Marines Complete Beirut Pullback: Moslems Move In*', New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/1984/02/27/world/marines-complete-beirut-pullback-moslems-move-in.html?pagewanted=all , 1984 (Last accessed: 20th December, 2016)

Gambetta, D, '*Making Sense of Suicide Missions*', Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005

Ganor, B, '*Suicide Terrorism: An Overview*' and '*Suicide Attacks in Israel*', Countering Suicide Terrorism, Erzlia, International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 2000

Goodwin, J, '*What Do We Really Know About (Suicide) Terrorism?*', Review Essay, Sociological Forum 21(2), 2006

Gunaratna, R, '*Suicide Terrorism in Sri Lanka and India*', Countering Suicide Terrorism: An International Conference, Herzliya, Israel, International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 2000

Hassan, N, '*An Arsenal of Believers*: *Talking to the "human bombs"*', The New Yorker, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/11/19/an-arsenal-of-believers, 2001 (Last accessed: 20th December, 2016)

Hoffman, B; McCormick G.H, '*Terrorism, Signaling, and Suicide Attack*', 'Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 27(4), 2004

Human Rights Watch, '*Erased in a moment: Suicide bombing attacks against Israeli civilians*', Human Rights Watch Publications, New York, 2002, https://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/isrl-pa/ISRAELPA1002.pdf (Last accessed: 20th December, 2016)

Human Rights Watch, '*A Face and a Name: Civilian Victims of Insurgent Groups in Iraq*' 17(9), https://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/iraq1005/iraq1005.pdf, 2005 (Last accessed: 20th December, 2016)

Kramer, M, '*The Moral Logic of Hizballah*', Origins of Terrorism, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990

Krueger, A.B; Maleckova, J, '*Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Casual Connection?*', Journal of Economic Perspectives 17(4), 2003

Kruglanski, A.W; Chen, X; Dechesne, M; Fishman, S; Orehek, E, '*Fully Committed: Suicide Bombers' Motivation and the Quest for Personal Significance*', Political Psychology 30(3), 2009

Kushner, H.W, '*Suicide Bombers: Business as Usual*', Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 19, 1996

Liddle, J.R; Bush, L.S; Shackelford, T.K, '*An introduction to evolutionary psychology and its application to suicide terrorism*', Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression 3(3), Routledge, 2011

Merari, A, '*The Readiness to Kill and Die: Suicide Terrorism in the Middle East*', Origins of Terrorism, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990

Moghadam, A, '*Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivations and Organizational Aspects*', Studies of Conflict and Terrorism, 26, 2003

Oliver, A.M; Steinberg, P.F, '*The Road to Martyrs' Square*', Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005

Pape, R.A, '*The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*', The American Political Science Review' 97(3), 2003

Pape, R.A, '*Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*', Random House, New York, 2005

Pedahzur, A; Perlinger, A; Weinberg, L, '*Altruism and fatalism: The characteristics of Palestinian suicide terrorists*', Deviant Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 24, 2003

Pedahzur, A, '*Suicide Terrorism*', Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2005

Pedahzur, A; Weinberg, L, '*Suicide Terrorism*', Religious Compass 4/4, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010

Post, J.M, '*Terrorist Psycho-Logic: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Psychological Forces*', Origins of Terrorism, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990

Post, J.M; Sprinzak, E; Denny L.M. '*The Terrorists in Their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists*', Terrorism and Political Violence 15(1), 2003

Reuter, C, '*My Life is a Weapon: A Modern History of Suicide Bombing*', Princeton University Press, 2004

Sageman, M, '*Understanding terror networks*', University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004

Schweitzer, Y, '*Suicide Bombings – The Ultimate Weapon?*', International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, https://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=809 , 2001 (Last accessed: 20th December, 2016)

Shay, S; Schweitzer, Y, '*The Al-Aqsa Intifada: Palestinian-Israeli Confrontation*', International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, https://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=798 , 2001 (Last accessed: 20th December, 2016)

Stack, S, '*Durkheim's Theory of Fatalistic Suicide: A Cross-National Approach*', The Journal of Social Psychology, 107, 1979

Stern, J, '*Terror in the name of god: Why religious militants kill',* Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2003

Zuckerman, P, '*Society without God: What the Least Religious Nations Can Tell Us About Contentment*', New York University Press, New York, 2008