

# Phenomenon of suicide bombing



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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate existing theories in terrorism studies when examining suicide bombing, specifically focusing on the gender and gender aspects that we can find in those theories. In order to conduct this theoretical research, I have used document analysis with deductive approach as a guiding research method to run throughout my research.

My research began by investigating theoretical approaches and theories in terrorism, regarding suicide bombing. While looking into theories I have focused on gender and how is gender presented in those theories. This approach gave me better insights in how each academic write about gender and how it is presented in their theories. I have argued that most of them, as proven, are mostly investigating only men, meaning they are gendered male and therefore can be foremost applied to man. I then moved on testing the two theories, one focused on men and one focused only on women, on the cases of failed suicide bombers. By doing that I have looked at gender aspects of motivations presented by theories, too understand and to see if we are able to find those proposed gender aspects in cases of failed suicide bombers. I have argued that in cases of failed suicide bombers, theories work only in one case, for each gender. I am not generalizing problem since my analysis of failed suicide bombers are low, only five cases. However, I am pointing out the problems that I have encountered while doing analysis and the problems that theory cannot explain with proposed gender aspects. Furthermore, I have reflected on the whole process while writing this thesis, where I have highlighted the problems that I believe are important and instruments and tools that we need for better analysis in the future. By proposing those tools, I am focused on interaction and gender roles in the society, also gender blindness, which is important to investigate for better and deeper analysis.

I concluded by pointing out the fact that most of the theories are focused only on men and that gender aspects that we can find in proposed theories, are not sufficient in explaining the motivations behind suicide bombers. I emphasize on the fact that we need a new, better approach, when examining gender and suicide bombing, which will be in future more gender-neutral. To do so not only do we need better instruments, but we need to focus also on the failed suicide bombers too, who are going through the same process as successful suicide bombers, and can give us some insights on what motivates them to commit such an act.

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## CHAPTER I. Introduction

“This is the poor man’s nuclear weapon, you don’t need a Tomahawk missile, this phenomenon is better. If a suicide bomber decides at the last minute, he can turn 90 degrees from his target, to a new one, this is very powerful.”

Anat Berko cited in Handbook (Handbook 2005)

Suicide bombing is a threat. It does not affect only one person and brings fear to its bones, it disrupts an everyday life of a community or even the whole nation. Each attack includes the unseen terrorization and it leaves feeling of not knowing where can next attack take place, in which form and what magnitude of destruction can it cause. Having knowledge on why’s and how’s of suicide bombing, researchers can gain insights about how best to deal with the problem.

The modest research, prior to 9/11, had its orientation on 3 vectors, according to Horowitz. Firstly, it has its focus on Lebanon and first attack in 1980; Secondly, researchers were studied the role and effects of suicide bombing in the Israeli–Palestinian dispute; Thirdly, focus was on Tamil Tigers the most prolific adopter of suicide bombing prior to 9/11 (Horowitz 2015). Wholly, the few researchers who did those studies had one goal, and that is to understand suicide bombers and what were their motivations to become one. However, on one hand they all suffered from a focus on remedies and on the other hand examining and taking into consideration gender, which for researches in these cases was not of importance, since the number of cases concerning women suicide bombers was very small. Furthermore, no one could, even to this date, propose an acceptable definition of suicide bombers, mostly because all the cases of suicide bombers are unique and cannot be comparable that easily with each other. Suicide mission was and still is hard to define, since there is a difference among “those who are ready to die, those who seek to die, and those who are indoctrinated into suicide” (Meytal Grimland 2006).

Nevertheless, after 9/11 the academic world is changing dramatically. Terrorism, international relation arena and suicide terrorism are getting more attention, and theories are trying to answer only one question and that is a question of political violence. Terrorism is less becoming an incomprehensible problem. The number of researches, academic studies and books are rising intensely; it increased 300% after 9/11 (Herschinger 2014, p. 47). Taking into

consideration first five years after 9/11 had more published books than prior to 9/11, speaks a lot about the impact attack in New York had; furthermore, now, every six hours there is a new book on terrorism published in English (this does not include all the titles published on other languages, which will make this number bigger) (Silke 2008, p. 28). When we look at academic journals, at least one article which was related to terrorism was published in the last fifteen years; two major academic journals are *Terrorism and Political Violence* (TPV) and *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (SICAT), however, one should understand that there is a plentiful number of researchers that did not publish their work in those two journals but in other periodicals (Silke 2008, p. 31).

The efficient study on suicide bombing and therefore the development of important academic research is a new enterprise. For instance, when paralleled to supplementary arenas of study, such as research on terrorism or war, it turns out to be noticeable that the research on suicide bombing is simply in its nascent phase. Furthermore, the study of suicide bombing is problematic since it changes the principal core of the subject. Many theoretical articles have used different theories to explain motivations behind suicide bombers. Even though researches have put terrorist in the focus, they have been struggling to understand the fundamental causes of terrorist behavior and their essential characteristic. The theories they would use in their studies would consider rational choice of a perpetrator, behavior, selected targets, ideology, or psychological or sociological factors. However, even though they had theoretical approach to the phenomenon, they would still struggle with understanding the motivation behind, since they are not able to generalize the act of suicide bombing; every perpetrator had a different motivation behind the attack. Nevertheless, having theories and research on suicide bombing is of crucial relevance, since its main role is to understand motivations behind suicide bombers, and by developing counter strategy they can prevent future number of suicide bombers. Moreover, the methodology of the research is in constant change. To understand why a movement grows or declines, why it pursues particular form of action, and how it relates to the people it claims to represent, it helps to have extensive data on how it is perceived among a given population (Roberts 2015, p. 63). However, to gather all the data necessary to investigate suicide bombing is hard, since the perpetrators die in their mission, so understanding the phenomenon is much tougher.

## 1.1. Gender and suicide bombing

We must recognize that the idea of terrorism that relates to men in its standard form is just another way of looking at the patriarchal construction of violence in which women is looked as victim. According to Cynthia Enloe ‘men are just naturally those who wield violence, whether that violence is organized by the state or by non-or anti-state actors... “Naturally” is a powerful and dangerous notion. It informs a lot of political narrative building when men are the actors’ (Enloe 2016, p. viii). Having this in mind, we are still generally neglecting trends regarding women suicide mortality and we are accepting the fact that only man can be violent.

Despite the great quantity of research studies on terrorism and suicide bombing, there is a strong absenteeism of ones that apply a gender viewpoint. Women involvement in terrorism and suicide bombing has not been researched at the same level as it is when it comes to man as suicide bomber. Furthermore, until today the number of a research viewpoints that will examine women suicide bombers as non-victims, is insignificant. Most of the research is somehow looking on the women as a victim, manipulated actors (Sjoberg and Gentry), and just few of them as rational agents (Rajan, Caplan), who are aware of the act they are committing. However, it is very important to gain knowledge about the suicide bombers, and emphasize the role of women as suicide bomber at the same level as man as suicide bomber – they are both important phenomenon’s. One of the examples comes from research by Karen Jacques & Paul J. Taylor who are writing that between the years 2000 and 2001, research on female terrorism encompassed the psychology of female involvement, an overview of female involvement in suicide terrorism, and a publication detailing representations of female terrorists” (Taylor 2009, p. 500). Furthermore, they are arguing that none of these issues were developed in research published in 2003, which leads to lack of cumulative development echoes trends in general terrorism research (ibid.). Moreover, when we take an example of journal *Research on Terrorism* from 2004., we can clearly see that even though it points out the importance of terrorism and suicide bombing, it doesn’t take into consideration an entry of gender, in any aspect, since the studies of terrorism were more connected with masculinity.

Undoubtedly, only in the last decade there was some political and feminist scholars that did research more closely on suicide bombing and gender. Gentry and Sjoberg are arguing that “understanding terrorism as a gendered phenomenon in a gendered world increases the accuracy and sophistication of our understanding of the idea of ‘terrorism’” (Gentry 2015, p. 129). Respectively, Stump & Dixit emphasize that, in feminist studies of terrorism, commonly held expectations related to gender are at the centre of the study; by embracing past and

classifications of women and men given my society, and perspectival understandings of chronological events grounded on operational interactions between men and women, studies may simplify and extend the understanding of terrorism with the presence of distinctive standpoints (Stump 2013, p. 56-57). Considering all of this, we are realizing that there are not enough epidemiological studies at a global level on women who are becoming suicide bombers, which makes concentration on a suicide bomber as a “man problem”. Furthermore, Jasmin Zine states that “the current rise of militarism is also galvanized by a globalizing patriarchy that purveys a conquest-driven masculinist stance” (Zine 2006, p. 31). In other words, militarism is and will be linked with patriarchy and maleness, and having a woman participating in the military actions is unbearable. This can go hand in hand with the statement that women are peaceful than man, which is highlight by numerous scholars (Auchter 2012, p. 126).

Nevertheless, there is a feminist call for gender research of suicide bombers (Tickner), and today it is calling for a study from an analytical point of view. According to Herschinger, researchers focused on gendered analysis of terrorism have few advantages that can inhabit in concentrating on gender as analytical category, when discussing terrorism and suicide bombing. “Firstly, gender as an analytical category in the study of terrorism is able to expose the gender blindness of the term terrorism; secondly, gender challenges the political myth of protection central to (international) politics, i.e. that states can legitimately fight wars to protect the vulnerable - *vulgo* women and children; thirdly, by including gender as an analytical category into one's study one also challenges the myth of an intrinsic peacefulness/vulnerability of women and, thereby, imbues terrorism research with insights from the study of political violence in general” (Herschinger 2014, p. 48).

When investigating suicide phenomenon from a gender perspective, it is outstanding how the gender is increasing the shockwave and gender stereotypes dominate. Yoram argues the same, “...despite whatever social and political advances they have made, women are still overwhelmingly regarded as the gentler sex, whose innate maternal nature makes them far less likely candidates for suicide bombers“ (Y. Schweitzer 2006, p. 9). Masculine behaviours are frequently studied as destructive, hostile and lethal, while womanlike behaviours are theorized as non-destructive, non-hostile and non-lethal; when a woman became a suicide bomber, she is looked as interloper in a male domain, where we cannot fit their participation in a linear correlation between gender and terrorist violence (Auchter 2012, p.125). This will lead us to two problems; first is understanding in depth who suicide bomber is, when it is committed by women, and what is terrorism violence in global perspective. Moreover, when one is

researching women's engagement in suicide bombing, the focus of the research goes into something more complex, where he will look at women who commit suicide bombing according to her role in the society, and her role in terrorism as a suicide bomber. This goes hand in hand with the argument of a researchers that are saying that there is small difference between man and women, when it comes to motivations; "such researches maintain that societies where female suicide terrorism is a phenomenon are exceptional cases and that what accounts for the presence of female suicide terrorism in them is malfunctioning gender norms and hierarchies" (Laura Sjoberg 2011, p. 203).

Study (and practice) show that gender and gender identity have been amongst the forming ideologies of opposition to perceived oppression, and fights where individuals will gain some level of independence, oppose occupation or fight against globalization (Erez 2007, p. 494). Furthermore, not only it is used to assemble individuals and instrument terrorist aims, it is also noted that gender structures have a motivating factor in resistance movements and security threats, whether expressed in religious, secular, ethnic, or national terms, and at the local, regional and national level (ibid.). Additionally, Carter is arguing that "while gender has tended to be ignored in the literature on terrorism and political violence, a gender perspective of violent extremism has started to receive media and academic attention recently, driven by an increasing awareness of the roles of women in preventing, promoting and participating in violent extremism" (Carter 2013, p. 1). Exactly this literature comes from different academic disciplines, including politics, economic, feminism, et cetera.

## **1.2 Problem formulation and research questions**

This thesis aims on reflecting at theoretical frameworks in terrorism studies and to see gender presentation in them. Knowing that a lot of research is not taking into consideration gender at all gives me an opportunity to investigate this phenomenon from different angle. I believe that most of the research is not thinking about gender since they take for granted the fact that suicide bombing is related only to men; as of the fact that most of the suicide bombers are male. However, that does not mean that women cannot become one too. Therefore, I want to investigate those theories deeply and test them on few cases to see their validity.

The aspiration was to understand the difficulty of a real-life issue, by picking out a most puzzling phenomenon we can find today in terrorism studies. Suicide bombing can happen at any place at any time, and therefore it is most fearful tool in terrorism. Most of the theoretical frameworks that investigate suicide bombing are not new developed theories that are in

connection with political violence but they are used to understand this phenomenon from different perspectives. When we investigate suicide bombing we are first and foremost investigating individuals who are committing this act, and therefore one of our main focus is understanding motivations behind. Suicide bombing is not a new phenomenon; however, it is in rising for the last decade and a half, and researchers are still struggling with understanding this marvel that brings unexpected fear to the community.

I have divided my problem formulation into three research questions:

1. How is gender presented in existing theoretical frameworks on suicide bombing?
2. Are we able to see gendered aspects of the motivations, provided in theoretical frameworks of *Ted Gurr* and *Sjoberg and Gentry*, in cases of failed suicide bombers?
3. Are we in need of a new theoretical frameworks when theorizing gender and suicide bombing?

In order to answer my first research question, I have analyzed theoretical approaches in terrorism studies, related to suicide bombing, and by choosing the most common used theories, I have paid close attention on gender and how does theory shows gender. The first research question will be answered in chapter three through method of document analysis. For my second research question, I analyzed five failed suicide bombers. I have coded transcripts of interviews of failed suicide bombers and applied theoretical frameworks to them, to see what can theories tell us about gender aspects of motivations, and can we find those characterizations in cases of failed suicide bombers. Furthermore, I tested theories and look deeply if the theories as themselves work. The second research question is answered in chapter four and five through a method of document analysis and coding and labeling categories of transcripts. Last research question will be presented in the final two chapters.

The objective of this thesis is to reflect and observe theoretical frameworks, and to see if their perception of gender can help us in understanding motivations of failed suicide bombers. However, since the number of failed suicide bomber in this thesis is low, only five, this thesis will not generalize the problem of all failed suicide bombers; focus will be only on the cases presented in this thesis.

## **CHAPTER II. Methodology**

Methodology chapter shows the construction of the thesis. The nature of this thesis was based on a qualitative method investigating gender in theoretical literature focusing on suicide terrorism and investigating two theories through failed suicide bombers. This theoretical research provides an overview of theories in terrorism, with a focus on gender and suicide bombing; meaning, I am observing theories and looking how is gender presented in theories and testing two theories, one focused on man and one focused on women, on failed suicide bombers. Taking into consideration that I tested two theories through failed suicide bomber, and used deductive approach, my study represents a qualitative research with deductive logic in which I have gone from something general to more specific. To be more specific, logic-deductive method starts with theory and then develops experiments or test the data, to verify or falsify the truth of the information presented (Gilgun 2015). The objective of my thesis is to see how is gender presented in existing theoretical frameworks and if I can find gender aspects of motivations that are theories emphasizing in the cases of failed suicide bombers.

This chapter illustrates the choice of topic, research design and document analysis, data collection, validity and trustworthiness, limitations, theoretical perspectives and data analysis.

### **2.1 Choice of Topic**

Investigating suicide bombing is not something new; however, looking it more through gender lenses is a step forward. Even though there are research studies on terrorism and suicide bombing in relation with gender, there are none research studies that are fully focused on reviewing theories and looking how is gender presented. There is a small part in the book “Mothers, Monsters and Whores” by Gentry and Sjoberg that investigates the gender, however, their work is insufficient. Having all that in my mind, I got curious how can I step in and investigate something that has not been fully investigated. Furthermore, my personal interest in terrorism and suicide bombing, lead this thesis to this direction. Therefore, this thesis offers an in-depth analysis on two main problems: first, how is gender presented in theoretical frameworks of terrorism, and secondly, am I able to find gender aspects of motivations, presented by theories, in the cases of failed suicide bombers.

## 2.2. Research Design and Methods

Research design is the action plan or blueprint of a research (Kuada 2012, p. 57). The research seeks to investigate how is gender presented in theories of suicide bombing and if we are able to find gender aspects provided by theories in cases of failed suicide bombers.

This thesis is qualitative in nature. Qualitative analytic approach was used to address my research questions. Qualitative research is used when results do not have numerical significance. It is concerned with “qualitative phenomenon, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind” (Kothari 2004, p. 3). Furthermore, this “type of research aims at discovering the underlying motives and desires.... research is especially important in behavioral sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behavior” (ibid.). Through this type of research, we can investigate the numerous reasons which encourage individuals to act in a specific manner, which is especially important for my analysis. The aim is to put together the segments which will help me understand the overall picture of the issue.

I used document analysis in my research, meaning that my research includes the use of texts and documents as source: books, government sources, newspapers, film and video and other written sources in other 'hard copy' form. “Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material (Bowen 2009, p. 27). Also, documents provide “background and context, additional question to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings from other data sources...documents may be the most effective means of gathering data when events can no longer be observed or when informants have forgotten the details” (Bowen 2009, p. 30-31). However, there are some advantages and limitations regarding document analysis. When thinking about advantages, we can say that document analysis is less time-consuming, available in the both printed and electronic form and they are cost-effective (Bowen 2009, p. 31). On the other hand, documents are not sufficient detailed, they are sometimes not retrievable and incomplete collection of documents suggest biased selectivity (Bowen 2009, p. 32). Through my four-month research, I have encountered all the advantages and disadvantages of document analysis.

I have utilized document analysis focusing on how is gender presented in theories; furthermore, I have use document analysis with a coding process for analyzing failed suicide bombers. The coding process helped me in organizing information from interviews, and gave me insights about the bigger picture behind suicide bombing attack but at the same time the

relevance of the theory. For my coding process, I used initial coding written in marginal remarks (Matthew Miles 1994, p. 65) of failed suicide bomber interview transcripts. Initial coding means “breaking down qualitative data into discrete parts, closely examining them, and comparing them for similarities and differences” (Patel 2014) while marginal remarks facilitate a quick glimpse of important parts of the interview (Suri 2014, p. 125). Likewise, during the coding process I have developed categories which helped me determine which parts of the interviews are the most important for my analysis. Final chosen categories are presented in chapters four and five with most important quotes that are imperative in understanding the person’s life, environment, motivation and decision.

Furthermore, I have used a qualitative research with deductive approach. According to Gilgun, we can test theories qualitatively or use concepts to guide our research (Gilgun 2015, p. 504). In other words, for my research I used two theories to investigate and to see if we are able to find gender aspects of the theories, when examining failed suicide bombers in my analysis; through coding of transcripts of failed suicide bombers I am either confirming or rejecting theories.

### **2.3. Data collection**

This thesis research draws from numerous empirical sources and data which were collected from several sources including secondary data and historical data. All-important data in this study were taken from main authors and official well-known sources that collect data on suicide terrorist attacks.

The Chicago Project on Security and Threats, The Guardian and Federation of American Scientists (Terrorism), books and articles written by experts and scholars in field of gender, terrorism and suicide bombing, provided valuable bases of evidence.

The books used in this thesis had a span from 1927 to 2017. Reason behind this enormous range is the investigation of the official theories; however, majority of the books in the newest years have been written by academics and specialists in gender and terrorism studies. The data for this thesis was primarily originated from books available at Aalborg University library, journal websites such as Ebsco, Sage journals, JSTOR Arts and Sciences I, article websites such as Taylor & Francis and open source internet searches. The purpose with the open-source internet search was to see which information is available with some simple keywords as – gender – suicide bombing – terrorism – suicide attacks – suicide terrorism.

Furthermore, interviews of failed suicide bombers for analysis used in this thesis were received with an approval, from independent journalists. The interviews are translated and provided online, on English. Having in mind that it is difficult to get transcripts of failed suicide bombers, the cases I manage to collect are from Palestine, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

#### **2.4. Validity and Trustworthiness**

To guarantee trustworthiness of sources used for this thesis, I have screened each of them thoroughly. To make certain that the data mirror the element of this thesis, I have used sources that are either well-known articles, for instance much-admired authors and experts or in the field of gender equality, terrorism and suicide terrorism or government sources, which contain data regarding suicide bombing.

The authorizations of each source cited in the reference as much-admired authors have been confirmed and only scholars that are experts in the field of gender equality, terrorism and suicide terrorism have been included in this thesis. Also, information of each theory was specifically drawn out from articles or books, from the named author. Additionally, figures and data has been collected from well-known sources as The Chicago Project on Security and Threats, The Guardian and Federation of American Scientists (Terrorism), and measurements were double checked to ensure that the figures and data is correct as possible. To improve the dependability of the data several sources of evidence were used to support respectively basis.

Regarding interviews of failed suicide bombers, I am facing few issues regarding validity. Failed suicide bombers can be unreliable and their statements are questioned. They could have given some false testimonials and change their perception of the suicide mission. Furthermore, they might be unwilling to speak about the whole truth, especially if they fear for future punishment.

Moreover, one of the issues I faced with was correct translation. Since all the interviews were conducted on Hebrew, having correct translation to English is questionable. Meaning, person who had translated the interviews had its own interpretation of the sentences and it is hard to seek validity of the phrases or individual words, since I am not familiar with the Hebrew language. Person translating could misinterpret material and the answers might not be legitimate.

#### **2.5. Limitations**

One of the biggest limitation I have faced during my four-month research was inability

to conduct interviews of failed suicide bombers by myself. In other words, I could not ask questions by myself and therefore, I was relying on the question guide from researchers that did interviews. Furthermore, to conduct interviews by myself with failed suicide bombers located in the prisons in Gaza Strip and the West Bank requires a 6-month procedure, if not more. I should pass all the requirements, such as consent from Palestine authority, prison, Croatian Embassy etc. Also, I should get permission from failed suicide bombers to be interviewed for my research study, which is one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish. In my attempt to get access to prison I was stopped already at the beginning with the procedure in the Croatian Embassy in Zagreb. Their answer to my request was positively, however it would last at least 2 months to have necessary protection for research study, which I am able to get from Croatian state. Going there by myself and conduct interviews can be a huge risk, and therefore I approach to Croatian Embassy for help.

Additionally, as I lack Hebrew skills, the accessibility to academic periodicals and sources has been limited and therefore, I have primarily used English written material. Moreover, this thesis is lacking some empirical data regarding interviews, since some of the angles are not covered and answers from interviewees had different direction; this is duo to limitation of not conduction interviews by myself.

## **2.6. Critical reflection on the methodological choices**

I am fully aware of some analytical thoughts in the selection of the methodology. Moreover, some repetitions will appear in this study, which are needed to understand the entire concept. Furthermore, I am aware of a fact that having only five failed suicide bombers are not enough for better analysis; however, since suicide bombing is an act that involves one to give his life, it is hard to reach those who have failed in their mission, and therefore I am relying on the existing interviews that were conducted by independent journalists. However, this can be a focus to the future researches.

## **2.7. Structure of thesis**

In this part, I will briefly display how the structure and logic of thesis is developed, which will help a reader to see how I answered my research questions.

First part of this thesis is examining a selection of theoretical frameworks in terrorism and suicide bombing. The focus in this part was mainly on gender and how is gender represented in those selected theories. The emphasis was on answering first research question,

through examining gender and theoretical standpoint of men and women. In order to do this, I have examined each individual theory, from different theoretical approaches, looked closely on how is gender presented and with which critique's is theory facing with.

The second part of this thesis is concentrated on analyzing three failed men suicide bombers and two failed women suicide bombers. For this analysis, I used two theories presented in the second part, *one* that is concentrated for investigating only men suicide bombers (Ted Gurr) and theoretical framework for investigating women suicide bomber (Gentry and Sjoberg). Emphasis in this part was on answering my second research question. In order to do this, I did a qualitative analysis with coding method and labeling categories of transcripts of failed suicide bombers.

The third part is focused on answering final research question. In order to do that I reflected to the whole process I have done and insights I have gain through the research. Moreover, I have suggested some ideas for the future analysis on gender and suicide bombing. The final research question is presented in chapter six and seven.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

In this chapter, the methodology and the research methods of the thesis were presented. Moreover, the explanation of the topic choice, the collection of the material and trustworthiness in this thesis were clarified. At the end of the chapter the limitations of the research, critical reflections and structure of thesis were underlined.

## CHAPTER III. Theoretical approaches

Most of the literature on terrorism and suicide bombing comes from political science, criminology, international studies, social studies, feminism, political-economic and psychological studies. Even though, terrorism is predominantly a political phenomenon, other approaches have been partially successful in explaining terrorist acts. However, due to the limitations of this study, most of these approaches will not be included in this thesis, and I have chosen only six main ones, when examining terrorism, gender and suicide bombing.

Theoretical approaches and theories in terrorism, regarding suicide bombing, are trying to explain motivations behind suicide bombers. Tracking the logic behind this phenomenon is difficult because researcher have problems with covering all the aspects of a motivations, since they can vary from individual to individual.

This chapter will start with explanations of the terminology that is used in this thesis. After presenting terminology the examination of theories in order to answer first research question, will take place.

### 3.1. Terminology

What is suicide bombing? What is terrorism? How do we define gender? These are the questions that every researcher is asking himself, before he goes deep into investigation. To understand the phenomenon of suicide bombing and gender in terrorism, each term, terrorism and suicide bombing, should be understood separately. Likewise, definition of gender will be presented.

#### 3.1.1. Terrorism

The concept “terrorism” is a problematic phenomenon to define and due to its politically critical description it doesn’t provide one single definition but over a hundred different ones, and there is no wide agreement on it. For example, Robert Hoffman in his book *Inside Terrorism* (Hoffman 2006) after reviewing some of the definitions of terrorism presents his own definition of a terrorism as: “the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change” (Hoffman 2006, p. 43). According to Jessica Stern terrorism is “an act or threat of violence against non-combatants, with the objective of intimidating or otherwise influencing an audience or audiences” (Stern 1999, p. 30). Enders and Sandler are arguing that definition of terrorism should be “the

premeditated use or threat of use of extranormal violence or brutality by subnational groups to obtain a political, religious, or ideological objective through intimidation of a huge audience, usually not directly involved with the policy making that the terrorists seek to influence” (Sandler 2002, p. 145-146). Tilly argues that terrorism is a terror of strategy and “asymmetrical deployment of threats and violence against enemies using means that fall outside the forms of political struggle routinely operating within some current regime” (Tilly 2008, p. 5).

The definitions represented so far shows struggles related with creating definition of terrorism that is acknowledged by all. Even though, they do have same or similar terms in defining terrorism, there are still relevant difference amongst them. However, for purpose of this thesis I will use one universally accepted definition by researchers, government agencies, feminists and theorists. According to Jonathan Matusitz that is following: *terrorism is the use of violence to create fear (i.e., terror, psychic fear) for (1) political, (2) religious, or (3) ideological reasons (ideologies are systems of belief derived from worldviews that frame human social and political conditions)* (Matusitz 2012, p. 4).

### **3.1.2. Suicide bombing**

After recognizing and defining concept of terrorism, the phenomenon of suicide terrorism can now be presented and clarified. Term “suicide terrorism/suicide bombing” is also struggling with different definition in literature as well as in international arena, according to Martha Crenshaw (Crenshaw 2007, p. 140-141). Closest works to describe suicide terrorism define it as an attack in which individual/individuals are aiming in killing others as well as themselves.

One of the researches in terrorist studies, Jacqueline Rose, is providing us with modest but precise definition of suicide bombing as an “act of passionate identification – you take the enemy with you in a deadly embrace” (Rose 2004, p. 23). Alongside Jacqueline, Atran has defined suicide terrorism as “the targeted use of self- destructing humans against noncombatant, typically civilian, populations to effect political change” (Atran 2003). Even though this definition shows that it is action that is violent and threatening to human life, Bloom argues that it need to be more define, and therefore she is outlining that suicide bombings “are violent, politically motivated attacks, carried out in a deliberate state of awareness by a person who blows himself/herself up together with a chosen target” (Bloom 2004, p. 113). Yoram Schweitzer complements these definitions and adds to his explanation: “*suicide bombing is a politically motivated violent operation carried out consciously, actively, and with the*

*premeditated intention of an individual (or number of individuals) to kill himself or herself during the operation, along with a chosen target. The planned and certain death of the perpetrator by such an act is a necessary precondition for the success of the operation”* (Y. Schweitzer 2008, p. 114). For this thesis, I will acknowledge Schweitzer’s definition, since I believe it captures all off the elements of a suicide bombing.

### **3.1.3. Gender**

With intention of the research, this thesis will address suicide bombers as “women suicide bombers” and “man suicide bombers”. Reason behind is based on the difference on “sex” and “gender”. The label behind of “male” and “female” is originated simply from science, where humans are presented according to their sex, which is given to us by nature and theoretically cannot be misrepresented. On the other hand, “men” and “women” are socially constructed terms. However, there are several definitions what gender is.

Gendered roles are eminent and stereotypes and opinions on man and women roles are established. In other words, “societal members decide what being male or female means (e.g., dominant or passive, brave or emotional), and males will generally respond by defining themselves as masculine while females will generally define themselves as feminine” (Burke 2000, p. 997). Similar definition offers Mary Holmes, defining gender as socially produced differences between being feminine and being masculine (Holmes 2007, p. 2). Having this in mind and knowing that gender biases are result of the social acclimation within society, the society from which women arise as suicide bomber will play a vital role in evaluating the efficiency of women suicide bombers.

My own definition is complementing definitions of gender presented. Gender involves more than just a biological sex. In way that one individual communicate with another, is through performance and gender roles; meaning they will indicate to themselves or others if they are man, women, or any other gender. Exactly this manifests in our society through idioms that we have and we are showing on daily basis. For example, women are presented as weaker sex while man are displayed as stronger, tougher sex. Those examples can give us sense of how are gender roles reinforced; if you violated your role in your society, you are looked as abnormal person. However, my argument here is that pushback (in this case presentation of us as abnormal person) that is society giving us for going outside the framework they set, is unnecessary. I believe there is a misinterpretation and misinformation where people are certain that terminology of gender is universal. Then I am asking a question: How can it be universal if there are so many cultures around the world that have different definitions of gender and

different gender system? If we only take for example India, we can clearly see that there are three genders, that are recognized since the 8<sup>th</sup> century. This is not equal to the definitions know in culture I grow up or cultures of Western societies.

Cultures around the world have space in their interpretation of gender for gender variance. If gender was universal, then would we expect to see it universal around all the cultures? We clearly cannot see that and therefore we cannot argue that it is universal. Culture can be oppressive if individual does not define himself as being one of the genders presented in that specific culture. Socially we have constructed a system where we can identify ourselves either as man or a woman; which in 21<sup>st</sup> century does not work, since individuals are going through different experience, and socially, with the traditional norms and values, we cannot describe those phenomenon's. Today, I re-examine the crucial idea which is rooted in 21<sup>st</sup> century that patriarchal society is still working; this traditional thought is what limits us. I am not susceptible to taking the stench of the old construction that the society displays and imposes. Even though man and woman are biologically different, they should be equal in every other aspects and there should not be barriers to equality. Equality agenda is the one that is questioned and damaged through the whole process, rather than fixed and served as it would eliminate distinctions that man and women are facing with.

### **3.2. Theoretical approaches**

In this part of the chapter, I will discuss social approach with rational-choice theory and social identity theory, psychological approach and psychoanalysis theory, feminist approach and theoretical narratives by *Sjoberg and Gentry*, strategic approach and strategic logic of suicide bombing, political-economic approach and relative deprivation theory, and criminological approach and general strain theory. These are not the only theories and approaches used when describing suicide bombing and terrorism, but they are most used in practice. Attempts by researchers to explain suicide bombing various with different approaches; one group of researchers look at suicide bombing from socioeconomic perspective; another group of researchers from psychological point of view; other groups look at suicide bomber from rational point of view, et cetera. However, even though there is a broad range of research point of departure, they all have one main goal; to determine what is motivation behind suicide bomber.

An important point needs to be clarified, and that is that this thesis has suffered from undeveloped characteristic of the terrorism literature. Furthermore, while discussing about

theories I have looked at how is gender presented in theories and which critiques are addressed to the theories. This part will answer my first research question.

### **3.2.1 Social approach**

Social approach views suicide bombing and terrorism as a reproduction of numerous social dysfunctions and it is looking at individual's level of response. It offers a range of explanations, such as social oppression, mobilization or helpfulness of social amelioration, in order to understand why will individual join terrorist group and commit a suicide act. For this approach, I will describe 2 major theories, that are used in explaining suicide bombing.

#### **3.2.1. a) Rational-choice theory**

Suicide bombing and terrorism in general is viewed as irrational decision; however, a numerus researchers and scientists are arguing differently, and therefore the rational choice theory is used in explaining and investigating this phenomenon.

The principal aim of rational-choice theory is an attempt to explain the emergence of social outcomes by the action of purposive agents who are subject to a host of constraints, both external and internal (Diem 1993, p. 91-92). Focus is primarily here on the individual agent than the social structure. According to Friedman, rational-choice theory is "the assumption that people have given goals, wants, tastes, or utilities" that instruct their activity, and they do not have power, resources or capability to choose amongst objectives (Friedman and McAdam 1992, p. 159). When applied to terrorism, the rational-choice theory assumes that individuals will emanate from conscious decision and will do action which will become imperative, in this case suicide bombing, so he/she can fulfill its personal needs in specific circumstances. However, through the explanation of the theory I could see that the authors are always arguing that man is the one who is individual agent who is in most of the times the one who is looking to fulfill his needs, and not women. Furthermore, terrorism is likely to be a reasonably informed choice among available alternatives, some tried unsuccessfully", and again, mostly connected with men (Crenshaw 1998, p. 11). Moreover, Crenshaw is arguing that "users of terrorism are constrained in their opposition by the lack of active mass support and by the superior power arrayed against them. . . terrorism is often the last in a sequence of choices" (ibid.). Having said this, we can say that suicide bombing is one of the actions of terrorism, which is chosen by a specific individual, who sees this action as the best way of achieving its political goals.

Rational choice theory attempts to explain individual that is implicitly gendered male and through the theory focus is only on men. Individual agent who wishes to fulfil its personal needs are connected to man; it is necessarily partial, as its explanatory framework builds exclusively on men's historical experiences and leaves out women's violence (Tanya Narozhna 2016, p. 12). In other words, it is specifically designed to understand man violence than women's, because women have that traditional role in the society and they are looked as non-violent. However, theorist analyze motivations and assign responsibility for individual violence, both male and female, based on dominant gender norms (Tanya Narozhna 2016, p. 12-13). Rational choice model operates based on a generic player, a "stipulation that conceals rather than clarifies how norms of gender might shape preferences, decisions, and actions" (Krook 2008, p. 11). Furthermore, "gender stands as a fundamental and immensely powerful coordinating force in human interaction, it can provide rational choice theorists with important leverage in their attempts to understand the origin and nature of values that motivate human behavior (ibid). This does not connect biological sex as the crucial explanatory aspect in human interface. It is concentrating on the social values that are set to biological changes which opens chances to discover how gender norms shake the individual preferences, risk evaluations, and strategic calculations of women and men – or, otherwise, to acknowledge inequalities in outcomes that might otherwise be obscured (ibid).

Rational choice theory often faces critiques. J. Ann Tickner is arguing that "IR arena is influenced by rational choice theory, which is modeled on the behavior of individuals in the market, behavior that, historically, is more typical of men than women (Tickner 2014, p. 21)". Furthermore, she is arguing that this theory appears thoroughly gendered –and gendered masculine – most international theorist would deny that their theories have anything to do with gender, since gender is usually assumed to be synonymous with women (ibid). Another author that is arguing similar is feminist IR scholar Charlotte Hooper, who is saying that this theory is "physically disembodied and social disembodied from gendered rational/emotional, mind/body, and reason/madness dichotomies of Western thought' (Hooper 2001, p. 99). Additionally, rational-choice theory is based on partial view of the world that emphasizes men's experience and the values associated with masculinities, where man is entirely rational and women entirely emotional (L. S. Gentry 2007, p.178).

Feminist have two broad classes of attacks on rational-choice theory: "firstly, because assumptions it is making, rational choice theory excludes women from consideration, or, when it does take women into account, they almost always fail to measure up (i.e., fail to behave as rational-choice theory predicts.); secondly, when rational-choice theorist do address issues of

gender inequality, they do so in a wholly inadequate manner (Diem 1993, p. 93). Moreover, Laura Sjoberg is arguing if “we see men and women as rational calculators, the rational calculation they do is often based both on values and processes associated with trait that signify masculinities... interdependence in decision – making is based on a partial representation of human behavior that tends to privilege certain (masculinized) types of behaviors over other” (Sjoberg 2013, p. 178). To this argument, England and Kilbourne are adding to its critique and say that this theory fails for its unitability of its assumptions, especially when women are the principal actors (Diem 1993, p. 93). To sum up, as rational-choice is gendered both by omission (women) and by commission (the partiality of its theoretical insights) (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 178) where theorist examine inspirations and consign accountability for individual violence, based on leading gender standard.

### **3.2.1. b) Social identity theory**

According to Tajfel and Turner, “social identity theory is a broad theory of intergroup relations, which suggests that our social categories help determine our perceptions of events and determine our social actions” (Wright 2015, p. 76). Meaning, the core of an identity is the labeling of the self and expectations will form ideals that will guide our behavior. Moreover, if there is a conflict between two or more distinct categories, or membership groups, this will identify whether a person perceives stressors as threatening (Wright 2015, p. 77). Since the social categorization is important and it guides individuals to determine observations and social activities, it is obvious that behavior is guided by influences of social identity (in this case values and guidance of group belonging), rather than our personal opinions. One insinuation of social identity theory for understanding terrorism and suicide bombing is awareness of threat. Wright is arguing that “when a social identity is salient, perceptions that an action is threatening will be enhanced “ (Wright 2015, p. 77). Furthermore, he is making connection with religious identity, and arguing that religious identity is “particularly powerful social identity because it is built upon fundamental beliefs and values and anchored within a sacred and eternal worldview” (ibid.). In other words, our behaviors are guided according to standards and believes of the religious group. Moreover, religious identity is central to the identity of religious terrorists and the religious identity is salient, threats may be perceived as more relevant to the activated and important identity, resulting in increased anger and more support for retaliatory or confrontational interactions (Wright 2015, p. 78).

Social identity theory undertakes society as a stable and patterned structure; however, at the same time it is also an identity, where one indorses gender benefits to define the cultural construction that arises from that. Further, we are facing hegemonic masculinity because enormous number of men (but at the same time women too, in a distinctive way) indorse that model for men; at the same time women are contributing to this hegemony by accepting this role.

Social identity theory most of the times addresses role activities, especially how personages create and maintain values in the various roles they are addressed to play. One's identity is socialized early in their life, and from there on individuals, boys or girls, are taking up roles, which are viewed from observations they made; it also means that individuals will share same behavioral beliefs and perspectives with a larger group of alike gendered characters. Exactly here, children learn norms and expectations that come to be labeled as masculine or feminine, which can be triggered by various situations, and social identity theory is addressing them (M. J. Carter 2014). Meaning, children take up on conventional gender roles. Furthermore, theory helps to explain why “gendered behavior and gender stereotypes that are learned perpetuate over the life-course... and concern an individual's participation (both genders) in such collective categories as political affiliation, religion, or nationality” (M. J. Carter 2014, p. 250).” Furthermore, Burn proposed that gender as a social identity may stimulate gender equality efforts on the part of women while simultaneously triggering backlashes from men against these efforts; this may occur because awareness of women's gender pride and of gender equality efforts may increase the salience of males' sex-category membership and contribute to an in-group–out-group dynamic (us–them enemy perceptions)” (Shawn Meghan Burn 2000, p. 1082-1083).

Although, social identity theory seems it takes into consideration gender identities, there is still a critique regarding difference in how women and men think about group. One of the authors is J. A. Williams, who claims that social identity theory is a theory of intergroup relations between men, excluding women (Williams 1984, p. 311). She is stating that principles of comparison, distinctiveness and differentiation are most common for behavior of a men's group than women's group (Williams 1984, p. 313). She is also adding that theory is abandoning the fact that there are other interactions in the group, for example connection with another in group (ibid).

### **3.2.2. Psychological approach**

When researchers want to study terrorist per se, personality, motivations and principles, they use psychological theories. Even though, there is a tendency to agree that no one can find a one profile of suicide bomber, since every suicide bomber has his own motivations and is unique. One of the theories used are from Sigmund Freud and his contribution to psychoanalysis.

#### **3.2.2. a) Psychoanalysis theory**

The most generally acknowledged theory that addresses the origins of all forms of violence is the psychoanalytic by Freud. Freud wrote in his book “The Future of an Illusion”: “one has, I think, to reckon with the fact that there are present in all men destructive, and therefore anti-social and anti-cultural, trends and that in a great number of people these are strong enough to determine their behavior in human society” (S. Freud 1927, p. 6). He saw aggression and violence as an essential and visceral human characteristic, which came and grow from normal progression of human development. In his later work, he described that “humans had the energy of life force (*eros*) and death force (*thanatos*) that sought internal balance. Violence was the “displacement” of *thanatos* from self and onto others” (Borum 2004, p. 18). Energy of life Eros and energy of death force Thanatos, are two instincts in life which are intertwined and thus provide both destructive and constructive action of humans. Thanatos is constantly striving destruction of others and himself, while Eros has a role in mitigating the destructive energy and it is manifested in the form of sadism or masochism (Fromm 1989, p. 32-33).

Even though his work did not include research on political violence, his works are widely use in research of suicide bombers. In contribution to terrorism research, “one of the earliest examples of the former was Feuer’s (1969) “conflict of generations” theory, “which is based on a Freudian interpretation of terrorism as a psychological reaction of sons against fathers, a generational phenomenon rooted in the Oedipus complex and, thus, in maleness”” (Borum 2004, p. 18). Furthermore, there are several authors who take into consideration Freud’s theory when discussing terrorism and suicide bombing. For example, Joseba Zulaika in his book *Terrorism: The self-fulfilling prophecy* is arguing that “it is not some criminal instinct that compels them to martyrdom and destructive rage; following Freud’s insight, it is their religious or ideological superego that drives them to suicide and death” (Zulaika 2009, p. 92). Another author discussing suicide bombing, including Freud’s theory, was James Kleiger.

He is arguing that Freud introduced an erotic and subtle pleasurable element into the death instinct; for the suicide bomber the ultimate goal is to achieve a higher form of life after death, and martyrdom is the promise of erotic paradise (Kleiger 2008, p. 126) He is stating “suicide bombings would seem to bridge the gap between sadism and masochism, homicide and suicide, and in some way, Thanatos and Eros. In take-in, one’s life by strapping a bomb around one’s waist, the goal certainly is to externalize as much destructiveness as possible. In doing so, the bomber, is the first to be destroyed by their own hand” (ibid.)

Freud saw women as gently human beings while man sad violent ones, and therefore only one libido exist and that is male. “Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness” (S. Freud 1962, p. 58)... “It is not easy for men to give up the satisfaction of the inclination of aggression. They do not feel comfortable without it “ (S. Freud 1962, p. 61). Furthermore, he is discussing about instincts that are developing in humans, and women are non-violent while man are instinctively fiercer; “besides the instinct to preserve living substance and to join it into ever large units there must be another instinct that will dissolve those units and to bring them back to their primeval, inorganic state (instinct of death)” (S. Freud 1962, p. 65-66). It is interesting to see how in all his works he is not considering the social context or political reasons for people to become violent. Additionally, he wrote from gendered agenda, where only man can become violent; “Men have gained control over the forces of nature to such an extent that with their help they would have no difficulty in exterminating one another to the last man” (S. Freud 1962, p. 92). Freud sees gender and sexuality as deep-rooted biological and anatomical forces and limitations. Freud writes that “psychoanalysis does not try to describe what a woman is—that would be a task it could scarcely perform—but sets about enquiring how she comes into being, how a woman develops out of a child with a bisexual disposition” (Minsky 1996, p. 218) Furthermore, he understands “women to be ‘castrated,’ deprived of a penis, and men to live under the threat of castration” (Zakin 2011)

Freud’s work on psychoanalysis has offered feminists a space to critique. Karen Horney for example, argued for “inherent feminine disposition that is not merely a secondary formation premised on castration and she took issue with the ostensible effects of penis envy and women’s supposed feelings of inferiority” (Zakin 2011). Furthermore, she tried to recover female sexuality, binding form of feminine presence, by “appealing to a genuinely independent nature and holding culture culpable for women’s subordinate status” (ibid.). Another scholar giving a critique to Freud’s work was Simone de Beauvoir, denounces Freud’s idea that there is but one,

masculine, libido and no feminine libido with “its own original nature” (ibid.). Beauvoir's work “*The Second Sex*” depicts the effects on women's character of inequitable social arrangements; it neither proffers a normalized destiny for women nor presupposes a common metaphysical identity; furthermore, she is misgivings about Freud's account of femininity stem from two sources, a feminist suspicion that women, in psychoanalytic discourse, are understood and based on a masculine model, and an existentialist conviction that human beings are self-defining, choosing themselves through their own actions (ibid.).

Another critique comes from Chodrow, Chodorow (1994) argues that Freudian theory “does not just suppress women but gives us a theory concerning how people, women and men, become gendered and sexed, how femininity and masculinity develop, and how sexual inequality is reproduced, a task which no other major classical social theorist has made central to their thinking” (Metzl 2003).

### **3.2.3. Feminist approach**

Even though feminist approach to examining terrorism and suicide bombing is still slowly growing, in the last decade there has been researchers who have been examining role of women as a perpetrator of political violence. One of them are Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, who with their work are contributing in understanding women mindset and motivations for committing act of suicide bombing.

#### **3.2.3. a) Theoretical narratives “Mothers, Monsters, Whores”**

The information presented by Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry in the “*Mothers, Monsters, Whores*” book is representation of women who participate in political violence. Both authors have specialized in gender and conflict. Their work is written through the lenses of international relations feminism, meaning it takes gender subordination as a starting point (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 12). Book provide us with three theoretical narratives which are explained in detail and providing us with information of a stereotypical descriptions that relate to women who are participating in violence. For a lot of researchers’ this book presents a feminist re-evaluation of how we look at the woman and her motivation to become a perpetrator of political violence. In relation with terrorism and suicide bombing, authors are applying all the narratives, by giving the direct examples of Chechen 'Black Widows' and Middle Eastern suicide bombers and trying to give deep understanding of women suicide bombers.

First narrative, mother narrative, explains how women who engage in political violence are violent because of maternal and domestic disappointments (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 32). They are placed into “biologically determined categorizations, depicted in maternal or domestic language” (ibid.). Furthermore, they have been told what is women biological destinies of a mother, and they become violent because they are acting either in a support role (the nurturing mother) or out of revenge (the vengeful mother) (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 33). The nurturing mother is one who stem from a maternal desire to belong to and be useful to specific organization (ibid). On the other hand, the vengeful mother is driven by rage either because of maternal losses, maternal inadequacies or maternal incredulity (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 34). Monster narratives is the second one, and it is describing that we can understand women violence as a biological flaw that disrupts their femininity (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 36). They are engaged in violence because they are pathological deviant from prescribe feminine norm; it is a result of a mental deviation which increases chances for women to be more violent (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 37). It is considered that they are even more fatal and monster women represents more of a treat than violent man. The monster woman is involved in political violence because of pathological reasons and she is described as a woman who is evil and psychologically damaged; since it considers women as pathological, therefore neither they nor their gender is responsible for their action (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 41). Third and last narrative is a whores’ narrative which is describing women violence as an act associated with sexual necessity and depravity. Woman’s violence is a “sexual event: they are highlighted, exploited and fetishized” (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 46). Authors are arguing that women are violent either because they have insatiable desire for sex with men, men’s control and ownership of their bodies, or either because they have inability to have sex with men (ibid.). In other words, they are either not able to control themselves of pleasure or they are unable to provide pleasure to a man. Second one is often related with lesbianism or infertile women, according to authors.

Writers work looks only on women violence and therefore their work is gendered. Sjoberg’s and Gentry’s define gender in the book as “a set of discourses which can set, change, enforce, and represent meaning on the basis of perceived membership in or relation to sex categories” (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 6-7). In this discourse, deviant women are set up in opposition to idealized gender stereotypes (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 7). Meaning, even though there are traditional gender norms which will portray women as non-violent and psychologically sensitive, and Sjoberg’s and Gentry’s work shows that they are still existing, and if the women acts differently and go outside existing traditional gender stereotypes, she is systematically judged as abnormal, and she is not accountable for her action. “If women have

any decision-making power in their actions, it is limited to decisions about their femininity and maternity – taking care of or avenging their men” (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 32).

All of three narratives show violent women as a product of faulty biology or faulty construction, and she is singular mistake and freak accident (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 13). All three of gendered narratives are neither culturally specific or new phenomena, however, they can be found across cultures, time and space (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 30). The fact that gender is socially constructed should not mean that is less real... people live gender and gendering’s across time, space and culture (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 6).

One of the critiques regarding Sjoberg’s and Gentry’s works comes from Sian Jones. He is writing that is “frustrating that the authors’ intention was not to discover why these women chose to act as they do, but how they decide to act (what aspects of their political or other context informs the complex processes of decision)” (Jones 2008). Furthermore, he is adding that second-hand research and lack of interviews is also irritating, especially where basic inaccuracies might have been corrected (ibid.).

Another critique comes from Ayça Kurtog ̇lu. She is questioning their thinking when it comes to their descriptions of women action. She is writing, “one wonders what happens if/when women’s relationally autonomous actions in, for instance, genocide-related atrocities are properly recognized” (Kurtog ̇lu 2010, p. 289), since both authors are not looking at this. Furthermore, she is asking” Will the world become more equal, just and a place full of male and female ‘beautiful souls’ who are against violence and peaceful? This question follows from feminist and peace theories telling us that violence in all forms, at all scales and with all possible content is structural in the sense that it is embedded in unequal structuring of power relationships and embodied through power relationships, and feminist ethics telling us about the virtue of aiming to construct a world which is full of male and female ‘beautiful souls’” (ibid).

#### **3.2.4. Strategic approach**

Looking at the terrorism and suicide bombing, one cannot dismiss a strategic notion. Prominent in suicide bombing and terrorism studies is researcher Robert Pape, who wrote three books about suicide bombing, that will change philosophy of terrorism and suicide terrorism.

### 3.2.4. a) Strategic logic of suicide bombing

Pape in his book “Dying to win” is offering an argumentation for a strategic logic of suicide bombing and social significance. He is arguing that suicide terrorism is “a strategy of coercion, a means to compel a target government to change policy” (Pape 2005, p. 22) He finds a central logic very simple: suicide terrorism attempts to inflict enough pain on the opposing society to overwhelm its interest in resisting the terrorists’ demands, and so to induce the government to concede, or the population to revolt against the government (ibid). Furthermore, when we discuss suicide terrorism we must think about the fact that coercer in this case is the weaker actor and the target is the stronger actor (Pape 2005, p. 23). Additionally, the strategic logic of suicide terrorism is aimed at political coercion. Meaning, individuals who commit act of suicide bombing are primarily rational, nationalistic and part of the group who has an aim to achieve specific political goal, and the main goals of individuals are profoundly of this world (Pape 2005, p. 18-19). Also, Pape is arguing that attacks and record of suicide terrorism shows that there is strategic logic behind it but no irrational or fanatical behavior (A.Pape 2003, p. 345). After explaining his thoughts on strategic and social elements of suicide bombing, he is presenting his theory. According to his theory, figure 2. (Pape 2005, p. 66), which he used to analyze campaigns between 1980 and 2003, religious difference, nationalism and occupation cause a rebellion which then leads to mass support, which in the end leads to suicide terrorism.

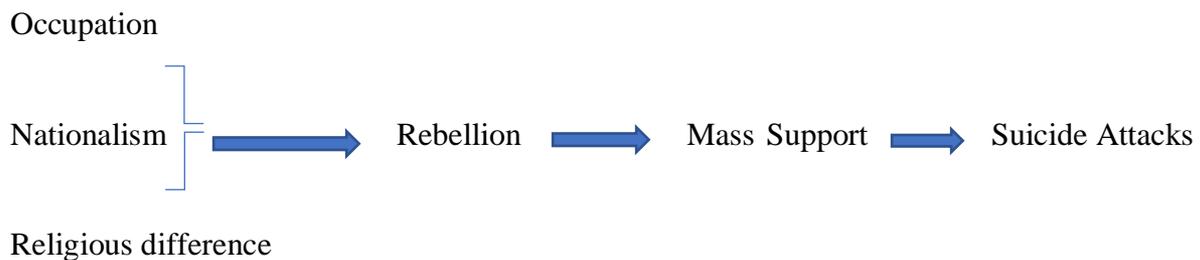


Figure 2: Pape’s Causal Map of Suicide Terrorism

On one hand, Pape is looking at suicide bombers as a social construct – martyrdom is an honor for those who have died in the sake of their community (Pape 2005, p. 56). On the other hand, he is referring to suicide bombers as religious concept (Pape 2005, p. 62). Furthermore, even though his work is showed as gendered neutral in social construction, gendered stereotypes and arguments that he is proposing through his book are confusing; his strategic logic model is misplacing the terms, and while at the beginning he is arguing that suicide bombers (man and women) are rational actors, later he is showing women as emotional

and weak actors; placing man in political sphere and women in private sphere. In other words, he puts rationality as a masculine characteristic and therefore it is not a gender-neutral way to investigate suicide terrorism. Additionally, his gender-based assumptions of self-martyrs are grasped when explaining women participation.

Moreover, he is claiming that “the crucial need is an explanation of the political, social, and individual conditions that ... account for why suicide terrorist campaigns persist, (Pape 2005, p. 18)” applying that gender is not making any influence in his theory.

Even though his work embraces both men and women suicide bombers, he is criticized by his portrayals of subjects in gendered terminologies and how he uses the term “rational actor”. His work shows how motivations distinguishes between women and men, placing women in the private scope and men in the political scope, and how women is illustrated as more emotional and fewer rational than man. Furthermore, “the crucial need is an explanation of the political, social, and individual conditions that account for why suicide terrorist campaigns persist,” (Pape 2005, p. 20) suggesting that these circumstances are equally common and applicable for both genders. Also, we can clearly see that Pape recognize women and man as suicide bombers as the same strategic phenomenon; simultaneously he is arguing that women suicide bomber is a result of her status as a rape victim.

Feminist scholars, Sjoberg and Gentry are arguing that his work “implies that women are driven to suicide terrorism by emotions while for men it is a fundamentally rational decision” (L. S. Gentry 2008, p. 2) and his thinking of rational actor cannot be applicable to both genders, since he is showing women from two different views. His gendered stereotypes are most shown in his description of Dhanu, member of the Liberation of Tamil Elam (Pape 2005, p. 151-153). Additionally, Pape’s reliance on rationality to explain suicide terrorism does not recognize that the “rational actor” model, though apparently gender-neutral, values traits associated with masculinity over traits associated with femininity and neglects the gendered power dynamics in global politics (L. S. Gentry 2008, p. 5).

Both authors are arguing that his approach is problematic when it is looked from a gender perspective. “First, the claim that suicide terrorism can be studied without regard either to the gender of terrorists or the gendered international political arena is empirically false and normatively problematic. Second, feminist critique of Pape’s work reveals gender bias and explanatory deficiency in the “rational actor” approach to suicide terrorism. Finally, though Pape claims to offer a gender-neutral presentation of these actors’ motivations, his work contains gender-based assumptions about the motivations of women self-martyrs” (L. S.

Gentry 2008, p. 3). Furthermore, his work transgresses both inherited notions of gender and suicide terrorism (L. S. Gentry 2008, p. 7).

### **3.2.5. Political-economic approach**

Political-economic approach is applying economic methodology to terrorism studies. The question why people are being violent is one of the fundamental question, from political thought of Plato and Aristotle to Ted Gurr in 1970.

#### **3.2.5. a) Relative deprivation theory**

Today, Gurr's book "Why men rebel?" is widely recognized because it helps researchers to understand the causes of political rebellion and demonstrations, and therefore terrorism and suicide bombing. Before explaining the relative deprivation theory Gurr is asking a question: "Are men inherently aggressive, or aggressive only in response to specific social conditions?" (Gurr 2016, p. xx). In other words, is "being aggressive essential for a man or if he feels that he is incapable of achieving what is socially expected of him as a man, he will develop feeling of rebellion which will be his only option to prove his masculinity? Men are quick to aspire beyond their social means and quick to anger when those means prove inadequate, but slow to accept their limitations" (Gurr 2016, p. 58).

According to Gurr, relative deprivation is defined as actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities (Gurr 2016, p. 24). In this case, "value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled and value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping" (ibid.). Furthermore, he writes, "Relative deprivation' is the term... used to denote the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the "ought" and the "is" of collective value satisfaction, and that disposes men to violence" (Gurr 2016, p. 23). Exactly this gap which individuals is facing is a result why men are being violent. Meaning, men are becoming frustrated if they receive or have less than they should have, and it is resulting with frustration and aggression that has deep roots in their deprivation; "if men are exposed to noxious stimuli that they cannot avoid or overcome, they have an innate disposition to strike out at their sources" (ibid.).

When explaining values, Gurr is saying that "Values are the desired events, object, and conditions for which men strive. In psychological terms, values are the goal objects of human motivation, presumably attributable to or derived from basic "needs" or "instincts"" (Gurr

2016, p. 25). People act out their frustrations if "they believe that they stand a chance of relieving some of their discontent through violence" (Gurr 2016, p. 210). This is a pure case of suicide bombers, who believe that with their action can make greater good by defending against occupation or if they are unsatisfied with the environment they are; also, Allah will saw them as martyrs, which it will satisfied their needs. Moreover, "people may be subjectively deprived with reference to their expectations even though an objective observer might not judge them to be in want; if people have no reason to expect or hope for more than they can achieve, they will be less discontented with what they have, or even grateful simply too able to hold on to it" (Gurr 2016, p. 24).

In connection to Gurr's relative deprivation theory, Walter Garrison Runciman defines 4 preconditions of "relative" deprivation as follows:

- Person A does not have X;
- Person A wants to have X;
- Person A knows of other people who have X;
- Person A believes obtaining X is realistic.

(Person A feels deprived of object X) (Smith 2014, p. 65)

These predictions are general and even though they will capture that there is some inequality or dissatisfaction, they do not capture specific action from individual. However, idea is widely used in sociological research with Gurr's theory, where it is normally expected for operational purposes that value standards are fixed by reference to some group or rank with which an individual does or is thought to identify (Gurr 2016, p. 24).

Relative deprivation can happen in three ways according to Gurr: a) decremented deprivation - value expectations remains constant while capabilities fall (Gurr 2016, p. 47); b) aspirational deprivation - value expectations rise while capabilities remains the same (Gurr 2016, p. 51); c) progressive deprivation (the J-curve) - expectations grow and capabilities do to, but capabilities either don't keep up or start to fall (Gurr 2016, p. 53). Furthermore, relative deprivation is finding its support on micro- and macro-levels of society. Meaning, theory is helping in seeing how people react to socio-economic status, and the interaction of economic factors as unemployment and social factor as education, can offer better understanding of terrorism and political violence. In sum, it is important to note that theory relay on psychological and socio-economic factors, and it is specifically designed for men's violence. One of the researches using relative deprivation theory in terrorism is Edward A. Sayre who wrote paper "Relative Deprivation and Palestinian suicide bombing". He examined the

phenomenon of Palestinian suicide bombing in period between 1995-2004, and he concluded that relative deprivation can be one of the factors that triggers people to become suicide bombers; part of injustice may be the relative deprivation of Palestinians (Sayre 2010, p. 460).

Relative deprivation theory is gendered, since it is focusing only on motivations of men. His perception of gender is socially constructed where he is arguing that man and women has its own role in society, and how only man can be relative deprived because they are more affected by social and economic situations, which distresses their psychological thinking and make them violent. Furthermore, individuals are showing emotions like anger or frustration that is a result of their depravity – emotions which are most likely to find with men then with women, since they should not be exposed so much to relative deprivation. Theory not only overlooks the political violence of women, it also overlooks the impacts of mutual reliance between people and groups, as well as harmony. Furthermore, it remains based on the masculine ideal-type which is responsible for its establishment and the experience of a gender subordination Gentry and Sjoberg (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 184). If the theory as itself looks at individuals who are relatively deprived, the whole hypothesis would guess that the women would in real world be more deprived than a man; however, it is gendered male and shows only men being deprived. To sum, theory understands that violent individual who is relative deprived is men, and he has a perception of himself as an individual who lives in social anarchism, where he can achieve his goals through specific use of power.

Sjoberg and Gentry are criticizing theory from a gendered perspective. They are arguing that approach is specifically tailored to men's violence and it has been applied more broadly than only to men's violence since its inception (L. S. Gentry 2007, p. 184). Furthermore, they are arguing that women are more deprived than men and that the way in which this theory is presented, even in studies of gender violence, is still gendered male, which is not a good point for researches (ibid.).

### **3.2.6. Criminological approach**

A diversity of theories has been offered to justify criminal behavior, such as suicide bombing and terrorism. One of the most used theories by researches, when explaining terrorism and suicide bombing from a criminological approach is theory proposed by Robert Agnew, general strain theory.

### 3.2.6. a) General strain theory

General strain theory “states that a range of strains or stressors contribute to crime, including strains involving the presentation of negative stimuli (e.g., verbal and physical abuse), the loss of positive stimuli (e.g., the death of friends and family), and the inability to achieve valued goals (e.g., monetary, status, and masculinity goals)” (Gary LaFree 2017, p. 121). All this trauma can lead to aggression and violence so the individual can alleviate the heaviness of strain. In another word, crime is the technique for reducing strain. Strain refers to a “relationships in which others are not treating the individual as he or she would like to be treated” (R. Agnew 2001, p. 320). However, numerous researchers are using this definitions in various ways; it can refer to a specific objective event, individual evaluation of the event, emotional response to the event or condition (R. Agnew 2001, p. 320). In connection with terrorism, strain is connected with terrorist groups, in a sense that individuals who become part of terrorist organization have an experience of “collective strains”, which are high in magnitude, with civilians affected; unjust; and inflicted by significantly more powerful others (Agnew 2010, p. 132). He states that “these collective strains increase the likelihood of terrorism because they increase negative emotions, reduce social control, reduce the ability to cope through legal and military channels, foster the social learning of terrorism, and contribute to a collective response” (ibid.). Furthermore, he explains that strains are in high magnitude, since they involve acts which cause a high degree of harm, such as death, serious physical and sexual as sault, dispossession, loss of livelihood, and major threats to core identities, values, and goals (R. Agnew 2010, p. 136-137).

When looking at gender in general strain theory by Agnew, it is clear by his writings that this theory can be applied to both genders, and “allows us to better explore the types of strain experienced by man and women, including but not limited to the strains identified by certain classis strain theorist” (L. B. Agnew 1997, p. 276). Additionally, it allows us to “explore the factors that influence the reaction to the strain by men and women” (ibid.).

General strain theory is socially constructed, and it allow us to have better understanding of strains that are experienced by men and women, but also the factors that influence the reaction to this strain by men and women (ibid.). Responses on the strains can be emotional and behavioral but at the same time to understand them we should understand the roles of man and women and types of strains they are facing. Boridy and Agnew are showing gender differences in positively valued goals, negative valued goals and achieved valued goals of men and women (L. B. Agnew 1997). Furthermore, they are taking into consideration that

gender role socialization, gender stereotypes and gender identities are factors which influence behaviors.

General strain theory has faced some of the feminist critiques. For example, Fait pointed out that “relative to boy and men, girls and women commit far less crime and they constitute the most impoverished group of every Western Society” (Mallicoat 2012, p. 31). Also, Belknap has criticized theory for omitting some of the major strain youth’s lives, such as abuse, sexism, racism, and other traumas (ibid.). Furthermore, when examining the strains, and looking for explanations if one gender experience more strain than other, Agnew and Broidy argue, that “females experience as much if not more strain than males” (L. B. Agnew 1997, p. 278). However, there is a difference in experience the strain by men and women, and they identified three types of strains: both men and women have distinctive goals and conceptions of fairness, the loss of positive stimuli and the presentation of negative stimuli (L. B. Agnew 1997, p. 279), which leads us to conclusion that there are gender differences in types of strain, in which women will experience more one strain than another. In sum, general strain theory can be used to explain both male and female crime, however it should be acknowledged that the type of strain is different for man and women.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

Traditional narratives of terrorism have not only been written by men, but violence and performance is always connected with men. The supremacy of maleness is therefore hallowed into the concept of policies and radical rebellion; meaning, idea is tied up with the male, and traditionally men have ruled the political and public sphere. As shown in the theoretical overview of existing theories on suicide bombing, we can clearly conclude that most of them are gendered male in a sense that they can be firstly and foremost applied to man. Even theories that describe themselves as gender neutral are often gendered by command and exclusion. However, one of the theoretical approaches represented here in this chapter focus only on women, and are written by feminists, which can clearly show us that there is diversity in terrorism studies. Furthermore, chapter has clearly show how is gender presented in theoretical frameworks; almost all of them see gender as socially constructed identity; however, there are differences in sociocultural influences which determine the individual development.

This chapter has answered my first research question: *How is gender presented in existing theoretical frameworks on suicide bombing?*

### **3.3.1. Selection of theories for analysis of failed suicide bombers**

Having this theoretical overview of existing theories on suicide bombing, helps me to choose two theories that I will use in my analysis of interviews of failed suicide bombers. For purpose of my research, I have the assistance of two different theoretical approaches presented; Ted Gurr and Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry. The choice of theories was grounded on their relevancy to the selected topic and on the premise that one is focused on man and one focused only on women in the world of terrorism and suicide bombing. That will provide me with an overview from two opposite perspectives with different gender perspectives and will help me answer my last two research questions.

To test the theories, I used document analysis of interviews with failed suicide bombers. By having their direct testimonials, it afforded me insight into their motivations for doing act of suicide bombing and if the gendered aspects of theories can be applied to their cases.

## CHAPTER IV. Mothers, monsters, whores

In this chapter, I have analyzed two failed suicide bombers, one from Palestine and one from Sri Lanka, through theoretical narratives presented by *Sjoberg and Gentry*. Through the interviews of failed suicide bombers, I have coded the information, put them in labeled categories with significant quotes and in discussion part discussed what are gender aspects of narratives and motivations of cases, and if the theory as itself works and can explain violent women.

Theoretical narratives by *Sjoberg and Gentry*, as described in chapter three, include mother, monster and whore narrative. Narratives describe women as a biology mistake and she is an abnormal accident which is not accountable for her actions. Portrayals of these women are as follow: violent women can be either a) mother – she is fulfilling biological destinies (nurturing or vengeful mother); b) monster - pathologically damaged and evil women; c) whore – women who is inspired by sexual dependency and depravity (L. S. Gentry 2007). These characterizations explain why woman is violent, and guide analysis in a particular way.

Women examined in this chapter are women who were caught and imprisoned. In their personal interviews, they have revealed their motivations which lead them to volunteer for their deadly mission.

### **4.1. Case 1. Failed suicide bomber from Sri Lanka – Menake (last name was not provided)**

In her interview with the Jan Goodwin, failed suicide bomber Menake aged 27, described her mission to commit an act of suicide bombing; from her childhood to the day she decided she has an opportunity to accomplish her task, and kill her primary target, Sri Lankan prime minister (Menake 2008).

As described in interview, she had a simple denim vest, tailored to her body. Around the vest, which was under her breast area, was a 3-mm steel balls and behind that, C-4 explosive, which is capable to kill a dozen of people in 100-foot radius, and can be triggered at any time by 2 detonators on left and right side of her body. Furthermore, she carried a cyanide necklace which she can drink immediately, in case if she would not be able to accomplish her action (Menake 2008).

Menake spent three days observing prime minister's mansion, and when she saw an opportunity to strike, she approached to mansion, saying to the guards in front she is visiting a

sick aunt. However, she was stopped by guards, since she could not provide any identification. When taken to police, police officers saw the necklace with cyanide capsule, and beat her until she was unconscious. They knew right away what was her mission (Menake 2008).

While reading and coding interview, I have labeled the categories from coding, which give me overall picture of her environment and possible motivations for committing act of suicide bombing. The categories include family status, life in Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam camp (LTTE), health condition, sacrifice and emotional state, and her reflections. Reason I have chosen these categories are because interview I was provided with had specific guide, and chosen categories can help me with my analysis of failed suicide bomber.

#### **4.1.1. Results**

##### *Family and life in LTTE*

Menake had a hard childhood. After her mother died, when she was only 3, she lived with her alcoholic father. At age 7, her father raped her frequently for four days, and her grandparents took her under their custody. When she turned 15<sup>th</sup>, her both grandparents died and she was unwillingly taken by uncle and aunt, who did not have any emotions towards her, and though she is going to be a problem for them. At age 17, when Tamil Tigers came to take one member of a family to fight in combats, no matter what gender they are, her relatives gave her up (Menake 2008).

*"They just said, 'She is yours,' " ... "I cried. I begged [the LTTE] not to take me. I told them I didn't want to die so young. But a woman officer told me, 'Sorry, we can't help you. Your relatives said you came here of your own volition" (Menake 2008).*

Furthermore, since the moment she had been in the camp, she could not have any sexual intercourse or romantic relationships, so she could be focused only on one thing, and that is becoming a fighter for LTTE; *"The LTTE prohibits alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. "Unlawful sex" — anything ranging from masturbation to romantic relationships — is banned'* (Menake 2008).

Menake spend seven months in LTTE training camp, where her daily life was monotonous, but difficult. Her day would start at 4 a.m., and first thing she would do, would be an hour-long run. *"At 5 a.m., we got tea and a bucket of water to wash with," she states. "Then we did push-ups." She continues by saying, "They watch you closely. Some girls were so fast they won prizes — clothes, a watch. I was always in the middle. If you were slow, you were punished. Sometimes I'd get so tired, I'd fall asleep in class. Then I had to run 20 times*

around the camp perimeter [about 18 miles] or do jumping jacks until I thought I'd die. You'd be so exhausted, you could hardly move" (Menake 2008). The rest of her day was alienated into sessions of extreme political indoctrination. Furthermore, she would watch movies almost every day, with a war topic. *"They were always about war," ... "The training videos showed us how to fight, how to use weapons, how to kill. Some talked about how, when girls die, they become heroes"* (Menake 2008).

#### *Health condition*

Menake describes her health good at the beginning, however after training in the camp she had an accident. She states, *"I was depressed and in pain," .... "I had nerve damage to my spine after falling from an LTTE tractor. The doctor said I might become paralyzed when I got older. I thought, why continue to live? A lot of girls were volunteering to be suicide bombers, so I thought I would, too"* (Menake 2008).

#### *Sacrifice and emotional state*

When she was asked about her mission and if she was aware of the act she wanted to accomplish, she responded *"I know once I put it on, I will kill people, and I will also die. My whole body will be in pieces. But this type of death is very fast"* (ibid.). With her cold response and with none emotions, she knew what was her mission. *"I came to Colombo to destroy, to kill. We are taught to forget the victims. I was just focused on the target. I never had time to think about who else I would kill. I was simply told it was the enemy. It was a job to go and do"* (Menake 2008). She continues by saying, *"I knew I was going toward death and just kept walking. You're told this is part of your duty. I didn't think about fear. I was shown what to do, and I never questioned it. We knew there would be a time when we would see today and not see tomorrow. I saw other girls go off who never came back. Then, in the next batch, they took me"* (Menake 2008). According to the interviewer, she was completely emotionless when she said those words and did not show any compassion, showing she was not irrational in her decision.

#### *Reflections*

The interviewer asked Menake if she has any regrets and how she feels about the mission now. *"If I felt sad, it was because I would never have the opportunity to have a family and children, to hold my own baby in my arms. That was my biggest sorrow. I was fed up with*

*life before I was caught. But now, I feel I could lead a normal life. I want to live, not die,"* she said (Menake 2008). This showed that she wants to have a better future and she would not risk her life again.

#### **4.1.2. Discussion**

After presenting valuable data from interview, discussion in relation to theoretical narratives and gender aspects, are presented.

Motivation: *"I was depressed and in pain," .... I had nerve damage to my spine after falling from an LTTE tractor. The doctor said I might become paralyzed when I got older. I thought, why continue to live? A lot of girls were volunteering to be suicide bombers, so I thought I would, too"* (Menake 2008).

Having in mind gender aspects of *Sjoberg and Gentry* and narratives provided by authors, the narratives are being examined. As stated in analysis, Menake could not have any personal relationships, and therefore she could not get married or have children; the mother narrative stereotypes could not be applied to her case. Furthermore, she did not show any signs of sexual necessity which would put her in whore stereotype narrative. However, when she was explaining how she had only one purpose, and that is to kill prime minister, narrative monster can be questioned and analyzed.

For monster narrative *Sjoberg and Gentry* are saying that evil women is monstrous and psychologically damaged, but she is not responsible for her action it because she was mad and irrationally evil. Furthermore, their gender in this case would not be responsible for their act. On the surface, one could say that monster narrative can be applied because she showed no emotions towards her action and she clearly had evil thoughts. However, when going deeper into analysis, as seen in results provided, she does not show any signs of rage, anger or irrationality, as provided in the monster narrative; the only emotions she showed, such as pain and sadness, classified as different emotions than provided by authors, was when she was talking about her health and future. She knew exactly what she was doing, she did not want to medically suffer in the future and therefore, she was completely aware of the act she would commit, knowing it was wrong. In that sense, the theoretical narrative monster does not work, because she is responsible for her action, knowing what will happen if she presses the trigger. Furthermore, she did not show any signs of psychologically damaged person, which could explain monster narrative.

To sum up, theoretical narratives provided by Sjoberg and Gentry in this case would not work, because the explanations of narratives and their stereotyping is not applicable to her case. As shown, we are not able to identify any gender aspects of the theoretical approach that would help us understand motivations behind Menake, failed suicide bomber. According to her, her clear motivation to commit a suicide bombing was because she was tired of life she had, environment she was in, and she did not want to become paralyzed when she gets old; something that theoretical narratives and gender stereotyping in the narratives are not able to explain.

#### **4.2. Case 2. Failed suicide bomber from Palestine – Arin Ahmed**

Israeli reporter Levy-Barzilai visited prison with Israeli Defense Minister Ben-Eliezer in Jerusalem, to conduct interview with Arin Ahmed. As described by Levy, Arin Ahmed was inelegant and smart, 20 years old woman. She was studying communications and computer programming at Bethlehem University (Ahmed 2002). Interview was focused on understanding why did she wanted to become a suicide bomber.

Her mission, on May 22, 2002 was to blow herself up in Rishon Letzion together with 16-year-old boy, Issam Badir. After writing farewell letter to her family, she put on herself two knapsacks of explosive, weighing at least 35 kilograms and a switch which can detonate the bomb. She received all the instructions by Tanzim militants, and exact place where she should be in the moment of detonation. She was wearing tight pants and a midriff top, and explosive on it (Ahmed 2002). Nevertheless, when she got the spot she immediately changed her mind. According to interviewer, she stood on the spot for 10 min and then left. She could not accomplish her task. Moreover, dispatchers that were helping here did not like that situations and were trying to convince her to go through it; but they did not manage to persuade her. Few days later, information leaked into public, and she was arrested in her home (Ahmed 2002).

For analyzing this interview, I have used new set of codes and categories. The categories in this case include family, motivation, mission, reflection and regret.

##### **4.2.1. Results**

###### *Family*

She stated in pre-interview that she has lost her farther when she was baby, and for unclear reasons her mother abandoned her. She lived her whole life with her aunts and uncles who provided her steady life and education. Under Israeli Defence Force gunfire she lost her

partner, (not married) who was her biggest support. According to the Shin Bet: "*He was apparently killed while attempting to prepare a car bomb*" (Ahmed 2002).

### *Motivation*

When asked why did she wanted to commit a suicide bombing and was it connected with religious reasons, she replied: "*No, it was something personal. I was in distress. I was depressed. You [Israelis] killed my friend. I don't know what I wanted. I was very hurt and angry. I have friends from the university who are active in the Tanzim. We get together a lot and go out together. We were sitting together one evening and they were talking about how they wanted to organize a reprisal action against all the military actions and everything that Israel had done to them in the last months. I sat and listened. I thought about Jad. And all of a sudden, I said to them, you know what? I'm going to do a suicide bombing. That was it. A moment earlier, I hadn't thought of anything like that*" (Ahmed 2002). As shown, she was impulsive and guided by her emotions. Her main reason for becoming a suicide bomber is because she had lost her boyfriend, who was killed by Israelis.

### *Mission*

The interviewer wanted to gain more knowledge about her mission and how did it all progressed. She was very detailed with her answer: "*I spoke with someone in the Tanzim and told him that I wanted to do it. I thought they would take me to start preparing for it, that they would train me and teach me about weapons, something like that. I was sure it was a process that took several months. Then, suddenly, four days later, some Tanzim militants came and told me: We've chosen you. Congratulations. You're going to do a suicide bombing. Then some more senior people came. I was in shock. I never imagined it could happen so fast*" (Ahmed 2002).

She continues, "*but they didn't let me think about it too much. They pressured me and persuaded me. They told me: You'll gain a very special status among the women suicide bombers. You'll be a real heroine. It's for Jad's memory. You'll be reunited with him in heaven. You'll be with him in Paradise. They pushed me. They encouraged me. I did whatever they told me. They explained everything to Issam and me. This all happened very fast and then we set out. I got out of the car. The place wasn't exactly like I'd seen on the map. I saw a lot of people, mothers with children, teenage boys and girls. I remembered an Israeli girl my age whom I used to be in touch with. I suddenly understood what I was about to do and I said to myself:*

*How can I do such a thing? I changed my mind. Issam also had second thoughts, but they managed to convince him to go ahead. I saw him go and blow himself up. I decided that I wasn't going to do it. They were very angry at me. They yelled at me the whole way back. And they also tried to send me to carry out another attack in Jerusalem. But I'd already changed my mind and given up the whole idea. I stayed at home, until your forces came and arrested me” (Ahmed 2002).*

#### *Reflection*

Her reflection to the act was emotional. *“And now I'm here. It was a mistake. It's wrong to kill people and children. Doing something like that is forbidden. There's no way I would do it. And the fact is, I didn't do it.”* (Ahmed 2002). She clearly saw that what she wanted to accomplish was wrong and her stopping seconds before will save innocent people.

#### *Regret*

During the interview, she said to Israeli Defense minister how she feels right now, to obtain their sympathy. *“I'd leave this place immediately. I'd go to live in Jordan with my mother. I would draw a line across the past and never come back here. Yes, I faltered. But it was a momentary stumble. That's not me. I was swept up into this thing, but I came to my senses. In Jordan, with my mother and sisters, I would continue studying. I'd get a degree at the university. I'd never go near anything like this again. I'd continue my life normally”* (Ahmed 2002). She continued with her fear of her life, by saying: *“What will become of me? I have no future. I don't want my whole life to be ruined because of this. I'm at the beginning of life. I didn't do anything. Don't forget that. I didn't do it. I changed my mind. Please, let me out”* (Ahmed 2002).

#### **4.2.2. Discussion**

After showing results given from interview, debate of the theoretical narratives and gender aspects are taking place.

Motivation: *“No, it was something personal. I was in distress. I was depressed. You [Israelis] killed my friend. I don't know what I wanted. I was very hurt and angry”* (Ahmed 2002).

Theoretical narratives by Sjoberg and Gentry are questioned in this case. Taking into consideration that Arin Ahmed is not a mother, mother narrative (nurturing or vengeful) is ruled out. Furthermore, whore narrative is dismissed too, since there is no evidence in the

interview that can go hand in hand with Sjoberg's and Gentry's argumentation, and their gender stereotyping. From this interview, Arin Ahmed had a personal motive which led her to become suicide bomber; she did not have any psychological problem, she was not married or had a child, and she did not have any sexual necessity or depravity. After deciding in the last moment that she doesn't want to commit a suicide act and kill all off those people, she showed that she is emotional and felt great regret for thinking to do an act of suicide bombing. However, if we take close look in the monster narrative there are small evidence that can be drawn. Taking into consideration that monster narrative is talking about woman who is irrationally evil because she was mad and that would lead her to commit an act of violence; meaning, she is psychologically damaged and she will not be responsible for her action because the feeling of rage led her to commit the act. When looking at Arin Ahmed case, we can draw the conclusion that she was mad because she lost the loved one by the Israelis, and by being mad she wanted to commit an act of suicide bombing. She is distress which leads her to be pathological deviant, and act violent. In this case, monster narrative can explain Arin Ahmed's motivations; however, I believe they are still missing the connection of linking it with personal reasons.

Taking into consideration all that I have argued until now, I can sum up by saying that gendered aspects of monster narrative by *Sjoberg and Gentry* can explain motivation of failed suicide bomber, Arin Ahmed, and we can actually see the gendered aspect proposed by narrative. It can explain why is she becoming violent (because of her anger), which leads her automatically to be pathological deviant, and motivate her to act irrationally.

### **4.3. Conclusion**

After presenting both cases of failed women suicide bombers in this chapter, we can clearly see that theoretical narratives "Mother, Monster and Whore" are working in some cases, while in other, they do not. Furthermore, the gender aspects and stereotyping they are providing through their theoretical narratives, are not sufficient for explaining motivations of both failed suicide bombers.

Having in mind that Sjoberg and Gentry have a lot to say about female suicide bombers in their works, their frameworks cannot be useful in research of Menake's case. Explanations of the narratives are accompanied by numerous depictions and diverse motives. However, the fact that they argument that women who becomes violent is abnormal because she is getting out of social prescribed norms, is still not confirmed in both cases. Taking the fact that women, both in Sri Lanka and Palestine, are encouraged to become suicide bombers, in some cases

celebrated, this does not follow their view of violent woman. They are on the right track when examining performances of gender and violence, however there are still lacking in their way of investigating encircles existence of diverse gender descriptions.

Nevertheless, when they argue that women are denied women choice, they are in some cases right. We can see in both cases that both women were controlled by men; they got instruction from them, they are prepared by them and they did not have any say in the mission they should accomplish. This give us space for discussion where we can question existing tools for analyzing gender, and therefore, we are able to provide new standpoints.

## **CHAPTER V. Relative deprived man**

This chapter is based on analysis of two failed suicide bombers from Palestine and one failed suicide bomber from Pakistan, through relative deprivation theory. The goal of this chapter is to look at gender aspects of relative deprivation theory and to investigate if they can be found in cases of three failed suicide bombers. Furthermore, my objective is also to see if the theory works in their cases or not.

Relative deprivation theory by Ted Gurr is a theory of actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities (Gurr 2016). Meaning, men will become frustrated and aggressive if they believe they are receiving less than they should receive. Furthermore, theory relies on psychological and socio-economic factors, meaning that education, unemployment or political instability is influencing man's view of environment, and makes him frustrated if he does not have as much as he should have. The details of the theory is fully described in chapter three.

Men examined in this chapter are failed suicide bombers from Palestine and Pakistan, two of them still imprisoned and one of them served his sentence, and now is continuing with his life. In their interviews, they revealed their motivations and even the reflection on the mission and if they will, if they have another chance, repeat their mission.

### **5.1. Case 1. Failed suicide bomber from Palestine - Rasan Stiti**

Interview with Rasan Stiti was conducted by Israeli reporter Levy-Barzilai and Israeli Defense Minister Ben-Eliezer in Jerusalem. Rasan Stiti was a young man from Palestine who was sent to carry out a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. He attended a school in Ramallah, where he was perceived as very intelligent student with outstanding grades (Stiti 2002)

Rasan Stiti was recruited by Crhis Awis, a captain of the Palestinian intelligence service. Before carrying mission, he was learning about Islam religion in local mosque; months after he was set off to carry out attack. He tried four times to carry out his mission; in his first attempt, he postponed his mission duo to helicopters whirling around the city; in second attempt, the road was blocked and he had to postpone it; third time Palestinian intelligence stopped him on his way; last and final time he was arrested by Israeli Defense Force (Stiti 2002).

The conducted interview did not have any questions regarding his life before attempt of the attack, and therefore that information is not presented in this analysis. The interview was

coded and label categories are represented in results. Considering that the interview was not too long, the categories coded include only emotional state, motivation and reflection.

### **5.1.1. Results**

#### *Emotional state*

During the interview, interviewer made notes about the way he responded to questions. According to interviewer, he was expressionless, cold with monotonous tone, without any feelings. The way he was speaking showed as he memorized his speech and answers that he gave were not truthful.

When he was asked if he ever questioned the reason of doing it and if at the moment, he would see the people whom he was about to kill, would he think about “why them?”, he answered: *“I wouldn't have seen that. We don't see them at all. What's before my eyes is [becoming] a shaheed.”* (Stiti 2002). When he was asked “what did you wanted to happen?” his answer was simple: *“For Jews to be killed and to die as a shaheed”* (Stiti 2002).

Furthermore, when asked “You knew that you would kill innocent people - women and children. Do you hate the Jews that much?” his answer was *“No, not at all. I don't hate Jews. That's not it. I just wanted to take part in my people's war of national liberation. It's a holy war for the liberation of occupied Palestine. That's what I was thinking all the time.... Everything is for the sake of the commandment. That's what I was told. The shaheed is on a very high level and everyone respects him. I wanted to participate in the liberation of my people, to fulfill the sacred commandment, to be a source of pride to my people and my friends”* (Stiti 2002).

#### *Motivation*

When Rasman Stiti was asked why he decided to commit suicide, he answered: *“No, that's not it. That's not right. I didn't go to commit suicide. I went to die a martyr's death. I wanted to get the reward. I spent a month in the mosque. I learned there how important it is to be a shaheed. It is the loftiest objective. It's very important for the Palestinian people, nationally and religiously. It's the biggest and most holy thing you can do. And then you receive all the rewards in Paradise”* (Stiti 2002).

When asked “If Yasser Arafat called for a halt to suicide bombings, would it have any effect on you?” his answer was *“No. It's a religious imperative from Allah. It has nothing to do with whether Arafat says yes or no. Allah supersedes everyone. But maybe if he did call for it to stop, we might think twice about it.”* (Stiti 2002)

### *Reflection*

The interviewer asked if he had any regrets regarding his mission and if he cared about dying at all, he answered "*No. Because they explained to me that life here is just a pathway to life in the next world. The loss of life here is not such a big thing. Here it's just preparation. The next world is the true life, for the holy ones who are worthy of reaching there*" (Stiti 2002).

However, when he was asked if he will commit another attempt of suicide bombing if he had another chance, he said "*I don't think so. I made a mistake. Now I just want to go back to normal life. I want to study*" (Stiti 2002).

### **5.1.2. Discussion**

After presenting the data from the interview, the discussion in relation with the relative deprivation theory and gender aspects will now take place.

Motivation: "*I went to die a martyr's death. I wanted to get the reward. I spent a month in the mosque. I learned there how important it is to be a Shaheed*" (Stiti 2002).

Taking into consideration Rasman Stiti motivation to become a suicide bomber, at first sight one could say that the theory by Ted Gurr cannot be applied to him. Through his interview, he did not express any type of discrepancy that can lead to conclusion that the theory can be fully applied to him. Though, he did express that he wants to receive the reward and have a status of martyr, which can be presented as social status, where he wants to gain something more than he already has. His expression can be related to religious status, since most of the prophets from Islamic countries preach about the 72 virgins they will receive if they become Shaheed (martyr). However, there is no evidence in The Quran about this and this is purely interpretation of The Quran, by prophets. Furthermore, this can bring a confusion, because there is a small link through the theory where we are still talking about the social status that one's wanted to have and he will do whatever it takes to get to that status.

However, if we go deeper into analysis we can see small patterns between the theory and Rasman case. Theoretical part clearly states that "values are the goal objects of human motivation, presumably attributable to or derived from basic "needs" or "instincts"" (Gurr 2016, p. 25). In Rasman case the value is a social status (religious status) in which he becomes a martyr who fights for his country. Nevertheless, he did not show any frustration or any psychological concerns, or the fact that he is missing something or is incapable to achieve something that is socially expected from him, and frustration is one of the main parts of the theory; individuals act out their frustrations if "they believe that they stand a chance of relieving

some of their discontent through violence" (Gurr 2016, p. 210). There is no dissatisfaction from Rasman Stiti, only the status he wants to receive and the reward he wants to get when he dies. Meaning, gender aspects of Ted Gurr theory cannot be fully applied to his case.

To sum up, even though he wants to gain a social status (in this case a religious status) he did not show any signs of frustration or dissatisfaction. Because of that evident indication is that the theory cannot be fully applied to him. When we take into consideration gendered aspects of relative deprivation theory, they can be ruled out from this case. Rasman Stiti is not portrayed as frustrated or as discrepant rebel man; he was portrayed as cold, expressionless and not truthful, but without any psychological damages. However, I can argue that the Rasman is seeking something he doesn't have and through his mission he wants to get the missing satisfaction. Furthermore, he is doing this because his role is socially constructed and he is becoming a suicide bomber for prize that he should receive in Paradise. Meaning some of the gendered aspects of the relative deprivation theory work, and other do not.

## **5.2. Case 2. Failed suicide bomber from Palestine – Mohammed Zaidan**

Interview conducted by Dan Cohen, took place in beginning of 2015. He accidentally encounters Mohammed Zaidan in the taxi, while Mohammed drove him through the city. Mohammed, now 34 and a taxi driver, was a teenager during the second Intifada, who wanted to commit an act of suicide bombing. He lived in Gaza City all his life, but he was hopeless with the living situation; especially because of Israelis occupation. He wanted to become a suicide bomber, and his mission was to detonate in the bus. However, he did not have any direct connection with any kind of organizations, and he was leaded in the mission by his friend. When he was at a position to detonate himself, the trigger only exploded, causing few damages to him; however, explosive itself did not detonate and he failed in his mission. (Zaidan 2015)

The interview has been put in label categories which include life before attack and Jenin refugee camp, motivation, mission and reflection of the mission. After examining and coding the interview, those categories most important, when showing what influenced and motivated him to commit such an act.

### 5.2.1. Results

#### *Life before attack and Jenin refugee camp*

Mohammed Zaidan described his life situation as hopeless; *“I liked going to school and I wanted to finish to improve myself and to make my family proud. But I dropped out – not because of financial issues, but because it was pointless with the life I was living. The Israeli occupation depressed me and everyone else. You’re not living and you’re not dead. So, I thought of suicide bombing.”* He is adding, *“If you wanted to leave Jenin, you couldn’t. You didn’t have the money to leave. It was either bombing night and day, or curfew in the morning and bombing in the night”* (Zaidan 2015).

When asked to describe why did he join the camp, his view had unworldly goals: *“All I wanted was to enter the refugee camp to help any way that I could, or to fight by suicide bombing because I didn’t have any weapon on me. But I wasn’t prepared to fight at all. It was only in my heart – I didn’t have the tools to do it, and I wasn’t trained.”* He adds, *“I found bulldozers all over the place with dead and burned bodies all around. I was traumatized by that scene ... the bombing was everywhere. It wasn’t aimed at a specific target. I saw a woman keeled over with her face in the dough. She had a bullet in the middle of her face. After I saw this, I knew it was a war”* (Zaidan 2015).

#### *Motivation*

When interviewer asked, what motivated him to become a suicide bomber, he had plenty explanations: *‘Because I can’t do anything while I’m living in my country. I can’t learn. I can’t do business with my father and he is out of work. Every day there is siege and killing.’* He is adding *“[The motivation] wasn’t religious. I just didn’t feel alright with the life I was living and I needed to do something about it. My aim in that moment [of suicide attack] was to deliver a message with my own blood. To deliver a message that this guy who did a suicide bombing didn’t live equally and to [force people to] ask a question: why would a guy like me, who didn’t have any records, go and do such a thing? I only went to suicide bombing because I wasn’t living like the rest of the people. And you, the Israelis, are suffocating us, because of what? Who gave you the power to do that to us? Do you want us to ask for permission to breathe? We will never do that. The [Palestinians] will not ask you how to die and we will not ask how to take their freedom and dignity. All I wanted was to deliver my message and there was a way to do that back then”* (Zaidan 2015).

Furthermore, he adds, *“I didn’t want to die because I wanted to go to heaven. This thing is between me and God only. I wouldn’t kill you to go to heaven and you wouldn’t kill me to go to heaven. This discussion is invalid in our religion or any other”* (Zaidan 2015).

In his will, he said he added few more things, not only what he was told to say: *“It’s either the Israeli occupation or we live like the rest of the human beings. To have the full freedom of movement — to live a normal life or death would be the only choice. Because they will not take our freedom in choosing to die. Maybe you can take my freedom in life but you can’t take it on how I’m going to die. You either give me my freedom or you give me the freedom to choose how to die. That’s exactly how it is. Not because I want to die or buy death, and not because I’m not afraid of death. But because death is a departure from this system we are living under. When the human being dies, it’s not the end. If someone kills and steals, oppresses people and then dies, is this the end to this human being?”* (Zaidan 2015).

#### *Mission*

Mohammed Zaidan described his mission in few sentences, but he was more concentrated on the reason why he hesitated to get into first bus. *“I saw kids in it and said, ‘No, I’m not going into this bus’. I couldn’t do it. I didn’t have the heart. Not because they were Israelis, but I had a message that was directed to the soldiers because they were the ones who did what I saw to the refugee camp. On the bus, they were just children. They might become soldiers, but who am I to judge them from this age? No mind can agree to kill a child because of what they are going to become. You can’t call my daughter a doctor because she hasn’t studied medicine”* (Zaidan 2015).

Nevertheless, second bus came and *“It was full soldiers,”* he told interviewer. *“The driver didn’t notice the situation and the soldiers didn’t even bother to tell the driver. The two soldiers ran away from me.”* ... *“The soldiers next to me were very close. I looked at them and I noticed that they were aiming at me, so I switched the bomb on. I laid on the ground as the bus left.”* However, the bomb failed. *“If it was working properly, when I put it in the car [near Jenin] when I was with another ten people, it would have detonated then. What exploded? Only the trigger... Then I woke up in the hospital”* (Zaidan 2015).

#### *Reflection on the mission*

When asked by interviewer would he do it again he stated: *“I wouldn’t do it again. I would help in delivering food and tending to sick people. But for me to do a suicide bombing?”*

*I wouldn't – not because I failed but because of my age now. I was 17 then. Now it's a different situation, we're in a bloody war in Gaza. I think suicide bombings are still a way to defend ourselves" ... "It's still the same philosophy: You either live free or die free" (Zaidan 2015).*

### **5.2.2. Discussion**

After representing results given from interview, examination of the theory and gender aspects in relation with the interview will be presented.

Motivation: *"Because I can't do anything while I'm living in my country. I can't learn. I can't do business with my father and he is out of work. Every day there is siege and killing... I just didn't feel alright with the life I was living and I needed to do something about it" (Zaidan 2015).*

Firstly, we will look on the gendered aspects of the relative deprivation theory that can be found in Mohammed's case. Relative deprivation theory shows man as frustrated and if they wish to achieve their goals they become violent. Mohammed's is frustrated with his life and situation he was living in. Meaning, his economic and social environment was causing frustration in his daily life. He wanted to do something about it, and through anger he found only one way out, and that was act of suicide bombing. Relative deprivation theory is explaining correctly in this case that because of social and economic situation, one was getting frustrated; Mohammed is portrayed as frustrated person.

Furthermore, relative deprivation theory can be applied in Mohammed Zaidan case. He received less than he thinks he deserves; he wanted something more. The cause of his frustration is the occupation of the Israelis and everyday killing (social-economic context), which made him be frustrated and guide him to commit the act of suicide bombing. Even though, he did not achieve his goal, his motivations are clear, and can be explained through relative deprivation theory.

In conclusion, gendered aspects of relative deprivation theory can show us in this case his psychological state and motivations behind his act. His frustration and socio-economic background lead him to attempt to become a suicide bomber; furthermore, the dissatisfaction and knowing he is receiving less than what he should receive, makes him even more angry and he is becoming fierce.

### **5.3. Case 3. Failed suicide bomber from Pakistan – anonymous**

The interview conducted with Pakistani failed suicide bomber is a little bit different than those presented until now. The questions and answer, asked by journalist Raza Rumi, are very simple and not detailed. Therefore, my analysis cannot be too much detailed and explained as those presented until now. However, it will focus on the aspects I am trying to explain through my research question.

The interview was video recorded, however, there were transcripts of video available. Any detailed information about anonymous failed suicide bomber was not provided; including his life before attack and any social and economic aspects. Therefore, I will just present the labeled categories of the interview and discussion on results will come afterwards.

#### **5.3.1. Results**

##### *Family*

Despite the fact, I haven't had any information about the anonymous failed suicide bomber, during the interview journalist Rumi did ask him question on how many brothers and sister does he have. He answered "*Nine, including myself.*". When asked they knew about his suicide mission he said "*Yes. All praise to Allah*", but when asked if he had a permission from them to commit suicide mission he answered, "*No. Permission is not essential when Jihad becomes obligatory*" (Anonymous n.d.).

##### *Mission*

When asked if he would repeat his mission his answer was positive. When asked against who is he fighting he answered "*..those who are not taking part in Jihad are not innocent. Only those are innocent who are taking part in the Jihad in Miramshah, etc.*" he continues, "*... we have no repentance, no sorrow for killing. Even if our leader orders us to kill two people and a hundred are killed in the process, then we will do so*" (Anonymous n.d.).

Furthermore, when interviewer asked about the young children being killed in the suicide missions, interviewee answer was, "Why do you consider these children to be innocent?". He adds, "*No one is innocent*" (Anonymous n.d.).

## *Religion*

When he was asked about the any legitimacy of suicide attacks, he response was, “*Yes. There is a book justifying suicide bombing by an Arab Scholar*” (Anonymous n.d.). However, when the interviewer wanted to know name of the scholar’s interviewee did not had an answer. Furthermore, when question about permission came as topic he answered, “*Permission is not essential when Jihad becomes obligatory. I accept neither the scholars of Pakistan nor the Government of Pakistan*” (Anonymous n.d.).

### **5.3.2. Discussion**

After presenting the most important results from the interview, discussion about theory and genders aspects is presented.

*Motivation: Taking into consideration that interviewee did not specifically say what was his motivation, I can clearly argue that he was driven by religious factors.*

Firstly, when we look on gender aspects of a relative deprivation theory, we cannot find any argumentations from interview that will go hand in hand with theory. The person being interviewed does not show any signs of frustration or aggressiveness. He does look stone cold while giving interview, but when answering all the questions he was not upset or angry at any moment. Furthermore, he did not reveal any sings of deprivation.

Even though this interview was not detailed enough to be examined with relative deprivation theory, I can still fully argue that his motivations were purely religious. His expression of committing suicide bombing was not personal reason, or because he was lacking something that others had. Any answer regarding his mission was religious; from the fact that if Jihad is obligatory he does not need mission to become a suicide bomber because becoming suicide bomber is part of his fate, to the 72 virgins that he expect to receive in Paradise when he succeed in his mission. However, when we look on his answers, he does not show 72 virgins as a need, or something he has to have; his expression is as something he will get, and that is the fact. Interviewee role is to become a suicide bomber and to meet all the religious requirements to go to Paradise.

To sum up, gender aspects of the relative deprivation theory, cannot explain us anything about the motivations of failed suicide bomber from Pakistan from this interview; there are not enough information. Furthermore, theory as itself is not applicable to his case, since there is

not enough information, that will lead us to the conclusion that he was relative deprived at any moment.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

After analyzing interviews with failed suicide bombers and relative deprivation theory, I can draw some conclusions. Gender aspects of relative deprivation theory are not able to fully explain motivations behind failed suicide bombers. Meaning, in three cases of failed suicide bombers, theory and its gender aspects worked only on one case. Having said this, it is clear that we cannot find the gender aspects of theory in all of the cases.

Portrayal of a violent man who is frustrated, aggressive, psychological damaged and deprived is an illustration only for Mohammed Zaidan. Meaning we can find the gender characterizations of the theory only in one case, from three cases presented. Explanations that show why is man violent are shown as something universal; however, as we can see, that is not the case, and therefore theory is not capturing man characterizations of becoming violent.

Having on mind that man frustration is one of the key factors of the theory, because it is a result of the deprivation, some men can show those signs, while others can adopt different emotions that are more suitable for their value capabilities. Furthermore, knowing the fact that most men are committing an act of suicide bombing because they believe that should be done by religious law, and they show portrayal of steady men who is ready to give his life for country, because that is what is written by Quran, they are exiting the concept of relative deprivation theory.

Theoretical framework by Gurr illustrates that violence is more probable when people have a motive that is result of relative deprivation and therefore it is connected with frustration, aggressiveness, or psychological damaged individuals. However, as shown in this chapter, we can clearly see that this is not the case with all cases of suicide bombers; even though, we cannot generalize this problem based on few examples, I can still argue that the theory as itself is not sufficient in explaining because it is generalizing the motivations and emotional state of individuals (in this case only man) that are responding to relative deprivation through violence.

## CHAPTER VI. Further discussion

The last few chapters were focused on examining gender in theories and if the selected theories, regarding only men and women, are working and are we able to find gender aspects provided by those theories in the cases of failed suicide bombers.

In this chapter I would like to reflect on some of the insights I have encountered, while doing the research and writing this thesis. Therefore, in this chapter I am arguing about some of the issues I believe are important, and should be highlighted, regarding any kind of research on suicide bombing and gender. Furthermore, I am suggesting a few things, that could make investigation and analysis of suicide bombing and gender, better.

### *Definitions*

One of the problematic aspects when analyzing suicide bombing is acceptance of one universal definition for terrorism, suicide bombing and gender too. Even before thinking to analyze a suicide bomber, we are facing several definitions which makes our research even tougher. Furthermore, knowing the fact that every culture has a different opinion and approach to gender, it constructs our investigation even more complicated, because every researcher should investigate deeply cultural differences. This is not the case in most of the times, and therefore there is a big lack in most of the terrorism studies. Therefore, one of the biggest issues we are facing when even starting our research on suicide bombing and gender is the explanations of the key words used in the research studies.

### *Gender roles*

Understanding gender roles in each culture is very important if we want to have a clear vision of how gender is constructed. However, a lot of researchers are not taking into consideration gender when they are doing research, especially on suicide bombing, because they take for granted the fact that suicide bombing is only connected to men. Yet, with so many examples of women suicide bombers, studies are still neglecting or giving no attention to their participation, or in some cases researchers are in need of a strong type of evidence to justify women's behavior.

The role of each gender is very important to understand at least one part of the phenomenon of suicide bombing. As shown in chapter five, we can clearly see that women have no role in making a decision – what is she going to wear, where is she going to commit the

attack, who is the target. All those decisions are made by man, no matter which culture it is, in this case Palestine or Sri Lanka. Therefore, knowing exactly what is the role of each gender, not only man or woman, but other genders too if they exist in those culture, can help us more in analyzing gender in suicide bombing. This should be a crucial start of any researcher who is considering investigating phenomenon of suicide bombing, because knowing their positions and roles, we can make better analysis. However, taking into consideration that cultures are different all around the world, and therefore gender roles too, we cannot generalize the problem. Theoretical approaches should be adjustable to cultures around the world, and should have better perspective of the phenomenon, especially when they are labeling man or a woman with specific keywords. Even though I realize this is not the perfect solution for this problem, still it is a step forward.

### *Stereotyping*

One of the main things I have come across while doing a research of gender in theories is the fact that each theory is putting stereotypes on man or woman, so they can have better understanding and better display of man or a woman. I strongly believe this is not correct approach, because every theory when putting stereotypes on man or women, is putting it as universal thing – meaning, if man is violent because he is deprived, that is how the man is displayed in every country and every culture around the world. I found this disturbing, because that would mean that if one person is aggressive and deprived in one culture because some specific reason, he would be acting the same in another culture, and the same stereotype would be applied to him. I believe that stereotyping should be minimalized if possible, and if there would be any stereotyping it would be stereotyping according to the culture they live in. One of the examples is that most of the theories look at women as passive and non-violent human being, and if she would commit act of suicide bombing she would be considered as abnormal. However, if we look on case of Palestine or Sri Lanka, where suicide bombers, both genders, are welcomed in their mission and even celebrated, the theories are then completely wrong, because they do not consider the gender roles in different cultures. Even though some of the theories argue that gender roles can change in time and place and they are looked at it with open arms, that does not mean that stereotypes they have are excluded and limited.

### *Studies on suicide bombers*

Last thing, and I believe the most important thing, is the fact that most of the research completed on suicide bombing was after the mission. In other words, all the information of the attacker and mission was given by third person, who interpreted the mission and the person who committed suicide bombing, in his own views. For example, theoretical narratives by *Sjoberg and Gentry* included investigating women suicide bombers, who were successful in their mission, and all the information they gathered was information provided by their family or friends. Furthermore, all gender stereotypes and characterizations were put as speculations on what person was and how did that person behave.

After analyzing theories and interviews, I have concluded that there is a big difference between examining a suicide bomber and a failed suicide bomber. Most of the Western researchers who have done studies and theories regarding suicide bombers, did not investigate failed suicide bombers and get their perspectives, but they investigate persons who have been successful in their mission of suicide bombing by gathering information from somewhere else. Meaning, there are huge differences in investigation, and when they investigate those people, they did investigation after the mission, which put them in position to talk to third person about the person who committed a suicide act. However, I should highlight that not all the theories are made for investigating suicide bombers, but are used in investigating suicide bombing. Having a failed suicide bomber, we have direct testimonial to their motivation, which can give us a hand in compiling new theories - better ones. All the research on motivations of successful suicide bombers can be speculations and assumptions, which can be or cannot be true. And therefore, some of the theories cannot explain most of the aspects, and then the theoretical approaches are being questioned. Furthermore, we need to understand gender perspective from the person we are investigating. In my case, I was limited with this since I was not the one who could make a research. However, further researchers can focus on that too, because every individual has its own vision of what is gender and how is gender constructed, and therefore we can even see how the person is crossing the boundaries of the constructed gender in his/her culture.

Doing research on the phenomenon of suicide bombing is very hard because the fact that most of the people die in their missions. However, having failed suicide bombers, we can gain insights that other studies; however, by focusing only on successful suicide bombers, we cannot.

Having on mind all of these issues presented, I truly believe we are in need of a new approach when analyzing gender and suicide bombing. As shown in last two chapters, theories that are trying to generalize problem cannot explain most of the cases of failed suicide bombers. I should note, I am not generalizing problem since every failed and not failed suicide bomber is different and has different motivations behind. However, I am generalizing the problem with the theories that are showing different stereotypes regarding each gender, and are guided by those stereotypes. Theories somehow do not take into consideration the environment, but just note that either social-economic situation is what makes them relative deprived for example, or for example, she belongs to the mother narrative, mother who is violent only because of two reasons – she is either nurturing or vengeful mother. Having on mind all of that stereotypes scholars are not taking in consideration that there is a big percentage of women who are violent, but do not belong to the stereotypes provided by theories – the same logic goes for the theory that talks about relative deprived man. Western scholars somehow are not taking into consideration all the perspectives they can have when analyzing suicide bombers and because of that they are not so relevant in examining them; in this case that would be failed suicide bombers who can give researchers better insights than successful ones. If we have all perspectives represented to us, from failed suicide bombers to successful suicide bombers, because in my opinion they all have similar path – except the fact some of them are successful in their mission while others are not, then we are able to have better understanding of the phenomenon. I believe this is a big lack in the research, even for *Sjoberg and Gentry* who have developed theoretical narratives while investigating suicide bombers too. Taking into consideration Ted Gurr too, who have developed theory decades ago, is still arguing that his theory can explain the phenomenon of suicide bombing; I would strongly disagree with his statement and point his stereotypes that are lacking in the cases of the studied suicide bombers.

### **6.1. Further considerations for the future analysis**

Studying phenomenon of suicide bombing is all about people who commit an act of suicide bombing – we should understand every single aspect of a person (from his social status to personal and family situation) to put some descriptions on them – including gender aspects. Furthermore, even though there are existing instruments that help us analyze phenomenon of suicide bombing, I still believe we should have better ones, since I do not believe those existing are working properly. Therefore, I suggest that while doing analysis of suicide bombing one should take into consideration following proposals:

a) *Gender blindness* – when analyzing terrorism and suicide bombers, analysis should go in gender-neutral direction. In this way, we can have serious discussion about terrorism, without all the common stereotypes that are describe to each gender. To give your life and give up of everything you have, and you have built, it takes something more, that some of the theories are missing. Furthermore, by not recognizing that stereotypes are influencing our perception of a man a woman, we are making a step back in our analysis. Those blind spots create a perception of each gender differently in our mind, and therefore, we are limiting ourselves at the beginning of analysis.

b) *Gender roles* – having better understanding of gender roles, we can have a better analysis of suicide bombers. Existing theories that are used in terrorism studies are lacking on giving us a better understanding of gender roles. Furthermore, they are all, if presenting roles of man and woman, displaying it as universal. We need to have better understanding of what gender assumptions, identities, and frameworks individuals are dealing with and how themselves assert and perform upon them.

c) *Rational thought and agency* – most of the researcher's when examining suicide bombers take into consideration rational thought and agency only when it comes to investigating man. Furthermore, feminist researchers are saying that woman has no agency in her mission; on the other hand, most of the researchers are saying that there is faulty agency. This contradiction in the studies makes study even more confusing, and therefore, we need to have clear vision on agency, experience and subjectivity of both genders. Denying political agency and rational thought of women questions traditional gender order; which can be good in this case, because it will prove the fact that gender order is changing, and it is distinctive in each culture.

d) *Interaction and environment*– one should investigate more on interaction between individuals in one culture, and organizations that are responsible for terrorist acts; having better insight of those interactions can help us in understanding if that interaction is influencing a person to become a suicide bomber. Furthermore, environment is what influences an individual to behave in a specific way; even personal motivations are defined by the environment or the social structure. Motivation is always result of environment one is in, even personal ones; for example, one decides that wants to become a suicide bomber because they killed his loved one is a still a question of environment where that specific event make him/her do act of suicide bombing.

*e) Analytical category* – if we take into consideration to use gender as an analytical instrument, we can investigate the phenomenon of suicide bombers in the way we will take a closer look on how is gender constructed in the specific culture and how does it impact on life of a man and a woman; including ethics, norms, privilege and oppression, environment they are living in and representation. This again, will give us better insights in their environment and everyday life, which will give us enhanced understanding behind their motivations.

## **6.2. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of problematic aspects when analyzing theories and gender. Furthermore, it offered few suggestions in which future analysis should go, when analyzing gender and suicide bombing. As shown until now, most of the research is neglecting some aspect of gender and therefore we are in need for better tools and instruments in analysis.

## CHAPTER VII. Conclusion

The rules of the investigating suicide bombing are changing all the time, and therefore re-theorizing suicide bombing is important if we want to have better approaches in understanding the phenomenon. The literature focused on terrorism and suicide bombing attempts to focus on most noteworthy aspects of suicide bombing; however, as argued through this thesis, there is a lack in the research and gender is far neglected. This study was concentrated on displaying how is gender presented in theories of terrorism that explain the phenomenon of suicide bombing and if we can see gender aspects of selected theories in cases of failed suicide bombers. It was assumed that most of the theories did not take into consideration gender as they should, and most of them are focused mostly on investigating men, since there is a small percentage of women that are active in suicide bombing missions. The findings in this study also highlight the need for more comprehensive investigation on suicide bombing in terrorism studies. Moreover, future studies might study suicide bombing while having in mind some of the instruments proposed in this thesis.

### 7.1 Answering research questions

#### *1. How is gender presented in existing theoretical frameworks on suicide bombing?*

As showed in chapter four, we can clearly see that gender is in high percentage socially constructed in all of the theories. Furthermore, it is evident that high percentage of the theories are taking into consideration only men violence. Having clear vision of how is gender presented in existing theoretical frameworks on suicide bombing, I can clearly back up my assumption that gender aspect is highly neglected in terrorism studies. Men as suicide bombers are taken for granted and every study regarding suicide bomber will always put a focus on them since there are more cases that can be investigated, than those including women. On the other hand, if women are being examined as suicide bomber they are always questioned a little bit more, since their action is considered as abnormal with a range of stereotypes that are labelled on them. Women will always challenge gender norms put by the society, and that is one of the challenges researchers must take upon. Suicide bombing is not connected only with men; women are the ones who are committing suicide too, and therefore theories should take into consideration both (or more) genders when examining the phenomenon of suicide bombing.

*2. Can we find gendered aspects of the motivations, of theoretical frameworks of Ted Gurr and Sjoberg and Gentry, in cases of failed suicide bombers?*

Analysis of failed suicide bombers leads to the conclusions that gendered descriptions of theory, simply do not work for the majority of the cases. Most of the failed suicide bombers who chose to give their life were acting for reasons other than gendered theories can explain. Reasons had different variety of motivational causes, from revenge to religion. Furthermore, when looking at gender aspects of motivations, I can conclude that theories could not give me any insights that will explain their motivation, and evidence from interviews can back up my claim. Understanding gendered aspects of motivations that selected theories had argued, are a step closer in understanding failed suicide bomber. However, with their universal stereotyping they are not good enough in examining failed suicide bombers.

*3. Are we in need of a new theoretical frameworks when theorizing gender and suicide bombing?*

After analyzing theories and looking how is gender presented and if we can find gender aspects of selected theories in cases of failed suicide bombers, I got to the conclusion that we need better theoretical frameworks when theorizing gender and phenomenon of suicide bombing as itself, which will take into consideration better tools and instruments in examining the phenomenon. Gender aspects given by existing theories are not good enough for explaining motivations behind failed suicide bombers. Gender should not be a salient feature anymore of the suicide bombing studies, however, it should go in the direction of looking at it as gender neutral. Though this thesis cannot provide a definitive answer to the problem of gender in studies of suicide bombing and theories investigating suicide bombing, it seeks to point other researchers in gender and terrorism studies in the right direction.

This thesis has been a learning experience for me and it opened my eyes of problematic world when examining gender and the phenomenon of suicide bombing. By way of concluding, it is my hope for the future that following studies will take into consideration some of the things I have proposed in chapter seven. The suggestions in this thesis are significant toward understanding the view of gender in current studies on suicide bombing, and how can we improve it.

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## Appendix

### 9.1 Transcripts of interviews

Transcripts were download from internet webpages, with the provided access of reporters. This includes five cases of failed suicide bombers used for analysis in chapter four and five.

#### Case 2 from chapter four and Case 1 from chapter five

*Interviewee:* **Rasan Stiti and Arin Ahmed**

*Interviewer:* Israeli reporter Levy-Barzilai and Israeli Defense Minister Ben-Eliezer

*Source:* <http://www.therazor.org/oldroot/Summer02/sbombinterview.htm>

A young female Palestinian terrorist sits in a detention room opposite the Israeli defense minister and cries. "What will happen to me now?" she asks him. "What will become of me? What will my future be? Am I going to rot in prison for 20 years for something I didn't do?" Benjamin Ben-Eliezer's expression reveals nothing.

She wanted to be a shaheed [martyr], to blow herself up on an Israeli street and kill as many Jews as possible. The bomb was already strapped to her body. But on the way to the attack, she had a change of heart and returned home. Now the defense minister has come to ask her why: Why did she say yes at first - and why did she say no later? She looks into his eyes, searching for a hint of compassion.

"You've heard the story of my life," she says, her lips trembling. "It wasn't easy. But that wasn't the direction I was heading in. It was a momentary stumble. Yes, I faltered. But when the decisive moment came, I backed out. Please tell me, Mr. Minister, what will become of me?"

Ben-Eliezer sat there silently and kept looking at her. If something was going on inside him, it didn't show on his face. He cast a fleeting glance at the Shin Bet security services personnel in the room, and then his gaze returned to the young woman. "Kul wahad wanasibuhu," he said to her in Arabic. To each his fate.

Arin Ahmed was studying communications and computer programming at Bethlehem University. She speaks fluent English and a little Hebrew. Born 20 years ago in Beit Sahur, outside of Bethlehem, she is an articulate and intelligent young woman. Her father died when

she was still a baby. For reasons that are not totally clear, her mother abandoned her and moved to Amman, Jordan, where she still lives. Arin was left in the care of relatives. Her aunts and uncles raised her and saw to her education. On March 8 of this year, she experienced another loss: Tanzim militant Jad Salem, her boyfriend of a year and a half, was killed. According to the Palestinians, he was killed by Israeli Defense Forces gunfire. The Shin Bet says: "He was apparently killed while attempting to prepare a car bomb."

Arin decided to avenge the death of her beloved by carrying out a suicide bombing. She conveyed a message to this effect to a senior Tanzim militant. On May 22, Tanzim activists Ali Yusef Mughrabi and Mahmoud Salem picked her up and took her to prepare for a suicide bombing in Rishon Letzion. They introduced her to a 16-year-old boy, Issam Badir, from Beit Jala. They were supposed to carry out the attack together. Mahmoud Salem instructed Badir to blow himself up amid the backgammon tables on the open plaza. Arin was supposed to wait on the other side of the street for the people who weren't killed or injured in the first explosion to run in a panic toward where she was standing. The expectation was that she would soon be surrounded by a large crowd. Then she was to choose the right moment and blow herself up.

The explosives were packed into black knapsacks, each weighing 35 kilograms. The bomb was light and easy to detonate, Mahmoud Salem told her. A switch coming out the back of the knapsack was connected to wires that activate the bomb. Arin said that she had already written a farewell letter to her family. She purified herself and prayed. Ali Mughrabi captured her final words on video. They explained to her that she had to pass for a young Israeli woman, and so she was asked to wear Western-style dress - tight pants and a midriff top. She did as she was told.

Then they met with Ibrahim Sarahne, Mahmoud's cousin, who explained how to get to the site chosen for the attack and described the place for them in great detail. Sarahne transported them nearby. When they arrived, Sarahne gave Arin and Issam precise instructions via cell phone: where exactly to stand so as to have the most lethal effect. They got out of the car with their knapsacks and headed for opposite sides of the street, as instructed. Arin stood in her position for about 10 minutes. Then she suddenly left the spot, returned to the parked car and told Sarahne that she had changed her mind and didn't want to go through with the bombing.

Her dispatchers were furious. They tried to convince her to carry out the mission to which she had committed herself. They reminded her of the lofty status she would achieve and of the

great honor awaiting her in Paradise. Arin watched as the teenager ran and blew himself up right before her eyes. She again told her handlers that she wouldn't go through with it, and they brought her back to Bethlehem. The Tanzim men were enraged that she had backed out. Arin would later tell her interrogators that the Tanzim subsequently tried to enlist her for another suicide bombing on the Jerusalem pedestrian mall, but she refused.

On May 29, acting on information obtained in the interrogation of Ibrahim Sarahne, Israel Defense Forces soldiers arrived at Arin Ahmed's home in Beit Sahur and arrested her.

Benjamin Ben-Eliezer decided several weeks ago that he wished to meet face to face with suicide bombers who had failed to carry out their plans. He asked the Shin Bet to arrange such a meeting for him. The Shin Bet chose to have him meet Arin Ahmed and another failed suicide bomber, Rasan Stiti from Jenin. Stiti was enlisted by the Islamic Jihad about six months ago. As part of his training for a suicide mission, he was sent to Ramallah where he was enlisted by intelligence chief Tawfiq Tirawi. He also attended high school in Ramallah, where he proved to be a bright student and got excellent grades.

During his time in the city, Stiti met Chris Awis, a captain in the Palestinian intelligence service there. Awis was a high-ranking Fatah suspect (who turned himself in to IDF forces during Operation Defensive Shield) and he was the one who persuaded Stiti to go on a suicide mission in Tel Aviv. Stiti first spent a month studying religion at a local mosque. Immediately afterward, he set off to carry out the bombing.

En route, he noticed combat helicopters hovering over his route and suspected that they were following him, so he decided to postpone the mission. A few days later, he made a second attempt, but this time the road was blocked and he had to turn back. The third time, he was stopped by members of Palestinian intelligence. And then, finally, he was arrested by the IDF during Operation Defensive Shield.

The meeting took place last week on Sunday at 2 P.M., in the detention room in the Russian Compound in Jerusalem. Defense Minister Ben-Eliezer was accompanied by his military secretary, Brigadier General Mike Herzog. He came straight from a cabinet meeting, dressed in a dark suit, light shirt and tie. The two men entered the room where the Shin Bet personnel were waiting. Rasan Stiti was led in first, in handcuffs. He was wearing jeans and a T-shirt. He is very thin, with black hair and a short beard. His eyes had a glassy look. The little room was

too narrow to comfortably accommodate all those present. They took their places around the table: Ben-Eliezer and Herzog on one side, and the terrorist, flanked by Shin Bet men, on the other.

After being given some brief biographical information about the young man, Ben-Eliezer addressed the terrorist in Arabic: "Who sent you?"

Stiti: "The Islamic Jihad."

Ben-Eliezer: "What did you want to happen?"

Stiti: "For Jews to be killed and to die as a shaheed."

Ben-Eliezer: "Now explain to me why you decided to commit suicide."

Stiti: "No, that's not it. That's not right. I didn't go to commit suicide. I went to die a martyr's death. I wanted to get the reward. I spent a month in the mosque. I learned there how important it is to be a shaheed. It is the loftiest objective. It's very important for the Palestinian people, nationally and religiously. It's the biggest and most holy thing you can do. And then you receive all the rewards in Paradise."

Ben-Eliezer: "You knew that you would kill innocent people - women and children. Do you hate the Jews that much?"

Stiti: "No, not at all. I don't hate Jews. That's not it. I just wanted to take part in my people's war of national liberation. It's a holy war for the liberation of occupied Palestine. That's what I was thinking all the time."

Ben-Eliezer: "But in the place you were supposed to blow yourself up, you would see with your own eyes the people whom you were about to kill. Did you ever ask yourself: Why them? What have they done? Why do they deserve to die?"

Stiti: "I wouldn't have seen that. We don't see them at all. What's before my eyes is [becoming] a shaheed. Everything is for the sake of the commandment. That's what I was told. The shaheed is on a very high level and everyone respects him. I wanted to participate in the liberation of my people, to fulfill the sacred commandment, to be a source of pride to my people and my friends."

Ben-Eliezer: "You have parents, brothers, sisters, family, friends. Did you think about them?"

Stiti: "Yes."

Ben-Eliezer: "Did they know?"

Stiti: "Yes. My parents begged me not to do it. My father told me that I'd be very sorry if I dared to go ahead, but it didn't convince me. What they told me at the mosque was more powerful. They told me to just think about the commandment and the reward, up above, in Paradise, with the virgins that would be waiting for me and all the honor I would receive."

Ben-Eliezer: "And you were prepared to break your father's heart? Your mother's heart?"

Stiti is silent and looks down.

Ben-Eliezer: "Look at me."

Stiti looks up, but remains silent.

Ben-Eliezer: "And what about you? Didn't you have any regrets about taking your own life? You're young, you're just starting out. You're a good student. You could have gone on to university, become something. Did you care about dying?"

Stiti: "No. Because they explained to me that life here is just a pathway to life in the next world. The loss of life here is not such a big thing. Here it's just preparation. The next world is the true life, for the holy ones who are worthy of reaching there."

Ben-Eliezer: "You mean the shaheeds, the ones who committed suicide bombings?"

Stiti: "Yes, right."

Ben-Eliezer: "If Yasser Arafat called for a halt to suicide bombings, would it have any effect on you?"

Stiti: "No. It's a religious imperative from Allah. It has nothing to do with whether Arafat says yes or no. Allah supersedes everyone." He thinks for a moment and continues: "But maybe if he did call for it to stop, we might think twice about it."

Ben-Eliezer: "If I let you go right now, would you go out to commit another attack?"

Stiti (looking down): "I don't think so. I made a mistake. Now I just want to go back to normal life. I want to study."

Ben-Eliezer: "Do you know whom you're talking to right now?"

Stiti: "Of course, I know. You're the defense minister. I see you on television every day."

Rasan Stiti is led out of the room. Arin Ahmed is brought in. Brigadier General Herzog comments later that there was a very big contrast between the strength that she projected and the fear projected by Stiti. He sat slouched in his seat and averted his gaze for most of the session, not daring to look Ben-Eliezer in the eye. Ahmed, in contrast, sat upright and looked straight ahead. He was stiff. She was very expressive. He spoke only Arabic. She sometimes switched to fluent English and occasionally used a few words of Hebrew.

He never revealed his emotions, and expressed neither sorrow nor remorse. He was expressionless and spoke in a cold, monotonous tone, as if he were reciting slogans. The gut feeling of the others in the room was that Stiti was not being truthful, especially when he said that he would not be interested in attempting another bombing. Ahmed, on the other hand, seemed much more sincere and they tended to believe her. She sounded genuine, did not try to hide anything and was even bold enough to make a direct appeal to the minister sitting opposite her.

"Natural intelligence" and "a winning smile" were two of the phrases used by Ben-Eliezer and Herzog in describing her. Ahmed impressed them as a young woman with a charismatic personality.

Arin Ahmed was not handcuffed when she was led in to meet Ben-Eliezer. She sat at the table dressed in long pants and a gray sweater - a tall, full-figured young woman with long black hair and dark eyes.

Ben-Eliezer: "Explain to me why you wanted to commit a suicide bombing in Israel. Was it for religious reasons?"

Ahmed: "No, it was something personal. I was in distress. I was depressed."

Ben-Eliezer: "Why did you want to commit suicide?"

Ahmed: "You [Israelis] killed my friend."

Ben-Eliezer: "Was he a close friend of yours?"

Ahmed: "Yes. We were friends for a year and a half."

Ben-Eliezer: "Did you live together?"

Ahmed: "No, of course not. There's no such thing in our society. But we were friends. And he was killed."

Ben-Eliezer: "So what did you want to happen? Did you want to kill innocent Jews in order to avenge his death?"

Ahmed: "I don't know what I wanted. I was very hurt and angry. I have friends from the university who are active in the Tanzim. We get together a lot and go out together. We were sitting together one evening and they were talking about how they wanted to organize a reprisal action against all the military actions and everything that Israel had done to them in the last months. I sat and listened. I thought about Jad. And all of a sudden, I said to them, you know what? I'm going to do a suicide bombing. That was it. A moment earlier, I hadn't thought of anything like that. This was on a Friday. Afterward, I went home. I spoke with someone in the Tanzim and told him that I wanted to do it."

Ben-Eliezer: "And what happened then?"

Ahmed: "I thought they would take me to start preparing for it, that they would train me and teach me about weapons, something like that. I was sure it was a process that took several months. Then, suddenly, four days later, some Tanzim militants came and told me: We've chosen you. Congratulations. You're going to do a suicide bombing. Then some more senior people came. I was in shock. I never imagined it could happen so fast.

"But they didn't let me think about it too much. They pressured me and persuaded me. They told me: You'll gain a very special status among the women suicide bombers. You'll be a real heroine. It's for Jad's memory. You'll be reunited with him in heaven. You'll be with him in

Paradise. They pushed me. They encouraged me. I did whatever they told me. They explained everything to Issam and me. This all happened very fast and then we set out."

Ben-Eliezer: "Did your family know?"

Ahmed: "No. I left on the day I wrote my farewell letter."

Ben-Eliezer: "And you didn't feel bad about what it would do to them?"

Ahmed: "I was only thinking about my boyfriend."

Ben-Eliezer: "And what happened then? Why did you change your mind?"

Ahmed: "I got out of the car. The place wasn't exactly like I'd seen on the map. I saw a lot of people, mothers with children, teenage boys and girls. I remembered an Israeli girl my age whom I used to be in touch with. I suddenly understood what I was about to do and I said to myself: How can I do such a thing? I changed my mind. Issam also had second thoughts, but they managed to convince him to go ahead. I saw him go and blow himself up.

"I decided that I wasn't going to do it. They were very angry at me. They yelled at me the whole way back. And they also tried to send me to carry out another attack in Jerusalem. But I'd already changed my mind and given up the whole idea. I stayed at home, until your forces came and arrested me."

Ben-Eliezer: "And now what?"

Ahmed: "And now I'm here. It was a mistake. It's wrong to kill people and children. Doing something like that is forbidden. There's no way I would do it. And the fact is, I didn't do it."

Ben-Eliezer: "If you're released, what will you do?"

Ahmed: "I'd leave this place immediately. I'd go to live in Jordan with my mother. I would draw a line across the past and never come back here. Yes, I faltered. But it was a momentary stumble. That's not me. I was swept up into this thing, but I came to my senses. In Jordan, with my mother and sisters, I would continue studying. I'd get a degree at the university. I'd never go near anything like this again. I'd continue my life normally."

At this point, Ben-Eliezer says good-bye and signals that the conversation has ended. Ahmed bursts out crying: "Please, Mr. Minister. Wait a minute. There's something else I want to tell you."

Ben-Eliezer turns around to listen.

Ahmed: "I'm finished with this. I swear it. Please, let me out of here. I want to ask you to transfer me to my family in Jordan."

He listens, but doesn't say anything. She sighs. "What will become of me? I have no future. I don't want my whole life to be ruined because of this. I'm at the beginning of life. I didn't do anything. Don't forget that. I didn't do it. I changed my mind. Please, let me out."

"To each his fate," Ben-Eliezer says, and then he leaves the room.

### *Case 2 from chapter five*

*Interviewee: Mohammed Zaidan*

*Interviewer: Dan Cohen*

*Source: <http://mondoweiss.net/2015/06/interview-suicide-bomber/>*

"The doctors asked me, 'Why did you want to die?'"

"I told them, 'Because I can't do anything while I'm living in my country. I can't learn. I can't do business with my father and he is out of work. Every day there is siege and killing.'"

17-year-old Mohammed Zaidan had awoken in an Israeli hospital, recovering from serious injuries to his stomach, eye socket, head and arm. He had gone on a suicide bombing operation, but the explosives he brought failed to properly detonate. 15 years later, I interviewed Zaidan in his home in Gaza City.

"The doctor asked me, 'What's your view of the future? Is it death?'"

"I replied, 'I didn't want to end my life or yours.'"

“I didn’t see a place to live with dignity,” Zaidan told me.

I met Mohammed Zaidan riding in his taxi in Gaza City. After nearly a decade in Israeli prisons, he was released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner swap in 2011, and banished to the Gaza Strip. Now, Zaidan earns a meager living as a driver.

“I’d blow myself up on the wall,” he joked with a wide grin.

Slenderly built, Zaidan walked with a light step and had a cheerful attitude. Now 32 years old, he is married with one child and his wife is pregnant.

“Are you happy,” I asked him as we drove through Gaza’s busy streets.

He took a long and contemplative pause, turned his head and looked me in the eyes. “Thank god,” he said with a sigh.

Mohammed Zaidan displays two newspaper clippings of photos of the Israeli bomb disposal robot. (Photo: Dan Cohen)

Mohammed Zaidan displays two newspaper clippings of photos of the Israeli bomb disposal robot. (Photo: Dan Cohen)

Mohammed Zaidan was a teenager when the second intifada broke out. “I didn’t have anything to do with the factions,” he explained. “[The motivation] wasn’t religious. I just didn’t feel alright with the life I was living and I needed to do something about it.”

Zaidan recalled the suffocating restrictions and everyday violence of life under Israeli occupation. “If you wanted to leave Jenin, you couldn’t. You didn’t have the money to leave. It was either bombing night and day, or curfew in the morning and bombing in the night,” he said.

With no opportunity, Zaidan saw a grim future.

“I liked going to school and I wanted to finish to improve myself and to make my family proud,” he explained. “But I dropped out – not because of financial issues, but because it was pointless with the life I was living. The Israeli occupation depressed me and everyone else. You’re not living and you’re not dead. So I thought of suicide bombing.”

Mohammed Zaidan’s explanation is consistent with studies of suicide bombers. As Robert Pape described in his book *Dying to Win – The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, “The bottom line, then, is that suicide terrorism is mainly a response to foreign occupation... Modern suicide terrorism is best understood as an extreme strategy for national liberation against democracies with troops that pose an imminent threat to control the territory the terrorists view as their homeland.”

From my interactions with Zaidan, he fit the personality profile that Pape described. “In general, suicide attackers are rarely socially isolated, clinically insane, or economically destitute individuals, but are most often educated, socially integrated, and highly capable people who could be expected to have a good future.”

Situated in the slopes west of the city of Jenin in the north of the occupied West Bank, Jenin refugee camp was a stronghold of armed resistance – a status it would lose after the intifada. Near the green line and several Israeli cities, many suicide bombings originated from the camp.

On March 22, 2002, a suicide bombing killed 29 Israelis and injured 150 more in a hotel in Netanya. The ensuing international outrage provided the pretext Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s government needed to carry out a pre-planned attack on the West Bank.

In Jenin refugee camp, fighters had prepared for the invasion, setting up booby-traps and fortifications. After a week of fighting, a booby-trap killed 13 Israeli soldiers. Unable to crush the resistance, Israeli weaponized D9 bulldozers began to demolish the camp, burying fighters and civilians beneath the rubble. By the end, 52 Palestinians were killed, more than half of them were civilians.

Then Israeli military Chief of Staff and current Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon described his approach to crushing the resistance, invoking language used to incite against Jews in Nazi Germany: “The Palestinian threat harbors cancer-like attributes that have to be severed. There

are all kinds of solutions to cancer. Some say it's necessary to amputate organs but at the moment I am applying chemotherapy.”

Living in the city of Jenin, Mohammed Zaidan watched the decimation of the besieged Jenin refugee camp, looking for any way to enter to provide any humanitarian relief.

“After the third day, I heard that the people were saying that they didn't have money to eat and that the food storage was burned. I couldn't stay calm,” he told me. “If I could have given my blood to bring food for the people, I would have done that.”

Zaidan found a way to enter the camp, avoiding Israeli military tanks, bulldozers, and jeeps. “I helped the Red Cross,” he recalled. “They said ‘we are not allowed to deliver food because there is no way to enter.’ I told them, ‘There is a way. Come with me.’ So we brought the food for the people that we could reach.”

Back at home in the city of Jenin, Zaidan was unable to stay still. Once again, he left his house searching for any way to slip past the military. “There was no way to enter, like the first time.” Day after day, he failed. Finally, the siege loosened, and he managed to enter Jenin refugee camp.

“All I wanted was to enter the refugee camp to help any way that I could, or to fight by suicide bombing because I didn't have any weapon on me,” Zaidan said. “But I wasn't prepared to fight at all. It was only in my heart – I didn't have the tools to do it, and I wasn't trained.”

Upon entering the camp, he witnessed the aftermath of Ya'alon's “chemotherapy.”

“I found bulldozers all over the place with dead and burned bodies all around. I was traumatized by that scene,” he said adding “The bombing was everywhere. It wasn't aimed at a specific target.”

“I saw a woman keeled over with her face in the dough,” he said as he bent at the waist to demonstrate the position he found her body in, killed as she was making bread. “She had a bullet in the middle of her face,” he added, pointing directly between his eyes. “After I saw this, I knew it was a war.”

Having seen the shocking scenes of the decimation of Jenin camp, Zaidan became intent on carrying out a suicide bombing.

Sitting in his home in Gaza City, Zaidan reflected on his decision. “I wrote in my will that I wanted to live a normal life like the rest of humanity – to travel and work and to live a dignified life, not to live poor, or to die and rest from this life. I didn’t want to die. Why would anyone want to die,” he asked me rhetorically. “Do you have more reason to live this life than I do? Live happily and go wherever you want. This life will fit me and you – it fits a trillion human beings. But why are you encroaching on me? Did I come to you holding a weapon? Did I kill you? Did I harm you? Because you are putting pressure on me!”

As much as Zaidan wanted to carry out a suicide bombing, he had no involvement with the resistance and didn’t know where to start.

“I saw a friend that I used to think was involved with the resistance. I was direct with him. ‘I want to do a suicide bombing,’” he said.

“My friend said, ‘Go home to your mother.’”

“‘I’m serious,’ I told him.”

“He replied, ‘Go home to your mother.’”

He beseeched his friend on a daily basis and always received the same response: Go home to your mother.

Finally, Zaidan’s friend accepted.

“That was on the sixth of May, 2002,” Zaidan recalled. “My friend told me, ‘Tomorrow be ready and I will take care of the rest.’”

Zaidan then realized that his friend had been preparing an operation since he first approached him, but wanted Zaidan to demonstrate his commitment.

Before sunrise the following morning, Zaidan and his friend went to record his will in an abandoned house near Jenin. Being uninvolved with any faction, Zaidan did not have anything prepared. The language of armed resistance was unfamiliar to him, but he spoke eloquently of oppression. Zaidan explained a profound philosophy on death, something he had much time to reflect on while he was incarcerated in Israeli prisons.

“I stood up to say my will but I was never in any faction or trained or anything. I never shot a bullet in my whole life,” he told me. “So, I did my will. He gave me a paper to read from and I added to it: It’s either the Israeli occupation or we live like the rest of the human beings. To have the full freedom of movement — to live a normal life or death would be the only choice. Because they will not take our freedom in choosing to die. Maybe you can take my freedom in life but you can’t take it on how I’m going to die. You either give me my freedom or you give me the freedom to choose how to die. That’s exactly how it is. Not because I want to die or buy death, and not because I’m not afraid of death. But because death is a departure from this system we are living under. When the human being dies, it’s not the end. If someone kills and steals, oppresses people and then dies, is this the end to this human being?”

His conception of the afterlife dispelled the common portrayals of suicide bombers in the western media. “I didn’t want to die because I wanted to go to heaven. This thing is between me and God only. I wouldn’t kill you to go to heaven and you wouldn’t kill me to go to heaven. This discussion is invalid in our religion or any other,” he said before quoting a Qu’ran verse.

Zaidan’s non-religious motivation is in line with Robert Pape’s findings: “There is strong evidence that Islamic fundamentalism has not been the driving force behind Palestinian suicide terrorism.” Indeed, as the second intifada began, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades, both secular factions, adopted to tactic of suicide bombings.

After recording his will, Zaidan went to the mosque to pray. His friend instructed him on how to arm the bomb he was given, using a simple on/off switch. That evening, he went to his family’s house.

“I sat with my family and acted normal. They didn’t notice anything,” he recalled.

As he often did, Zaidan's father encouraged his son to get married. "I used to think to myself, 'How am I going to get married,' he asked. "Get married for two days and throw the woman away? Then she'd be left alone. Shame!"

The following morning, Zaidan left home at 3:30 AM. He prayed in the mosque and then set off, walking 2.5 miles through Jenin carrying the bag containing the bomb on his back.

With no training, Zaidan made a number of mistakes on his way. After reaching transportation, he put the backpack containing the bomb in the back of the vehicle, but became concerned that the heat of the vehicle could detonate the bomb.

"I didn't have the military mentality you may think I had," he said.

The vehicle started moving, with an Israeli tank next to it.

Instructed to call his friend 90 minutes before he arrived to his destination where he would explode the bomb, Zaidan called much earlier. The organizer of the operation then called the Israeli authorities, he told me, as a form of psychological warfare. At that point, the Israelis announced maximum alert.

Zaidan recalled the tank next to him and an Apache attack helicopter being directly above the vehicle as he traveled out of the West Bank. On his way to the Palestinian city of Um al Fahm inside Israel, he reached a checkpoint with Israeli soldiers but was able to avoid it by walking in the mountains above.

As he reached Um al Fahm, he encountered two Border Police vehicles, one of which almost hit him. Arriving at the central bus station, the Apache helicopter was still just overhead, Zaidan said. He boarded a bus, telling the driver that he was headed to the Meggido Junction.

"The driver said to me, 'You seem like you are going to blow yourself up.' I answered back, 'Come on man. I hope neither of us will ever be close to such a thing.'"

Zaidan got off the bus at Meggido Intersection where there were two Israeli soldiers. He then called the organizer to inform them that he had reached his final destination where he would board a bus and detonate the bomb. “The soldier woman looked at me and wasn’t focused, but I was,” he said.

Standing at the intersection, another bus approached. “I saw kids in it and said, ‘No, I’m not going into this bus,’” Zaidan recounted. “I couldn’t do it. I didn’t have the heart. Not because they were Israelis, but I had a message that was directed to the soldiers because they were the ones who did what I saw to the refugee camp. On the bus, they were just children. They might become soldiers, but who am I to judge them from this age? No mind can agree to kill a child because of what they are going to become. You can’t call my daughter a doctor because she hasn’t studied medicine.”

Another bus was approaching, and the two soldiers became agitated, Zaidan said. He heard them talking on the phone saying that he appeared suspicious, and that he may be holding a bomb. “I understood Hebrew because I worked in Israel,” Zaidan said proudly.

The two soldiers had closed the road and intersection but the bus was approaching Zaidan. “It was full soldiers,” he told me. “The driver didn’t notice the situation and the soldiers didn’t even bother to tell the driver. The two soldiers ran away from me.”

As Zaidan stood at the door of the bus, the door opened. By then, other soldiers from the nearby Meggido prison had pulled up in their jeep and pointed their guns at him without him noticing. “The soldiers next to me were very close,” he said pointing to the chair next to him in his apartment. “I looked at them and I noticed that they were aiming at me, so I switched the bomb on. I laid on the ground as the bus left.”

Laying on the ground with the backpack full of explosives next to him, the bomb malfunctioned. “If it was working properly, when I put it in the car [near Jenin] when I was with another ten people, it would have detonated then. What exploded? Only the trigger,” Zaidan said. “Then I woke up in the hospital.”

The first two years of his incarceration were spent in administrative detention. Zaidan was given a life sentence in early 2004. In prison, he said, “60 minutes per hour and 24 hours a day,

you are wishing to die in the prison. They used to starve us, take our clothes, not let us have breaks outside, and wouldn't let us be in contact with our families. I felt the darkness of the prison and of my life sentence.”

Zaidan complained that the prison punished his family too when they would visit. “What does my family have to do with what I did? They didn't tell me to go fight the Israelis, become a martyr or kill myself,” he said. “No one in my family has been involved with the resistance. Why were they oppressing my family when they would come and visit me, and trying to put pressure on them? Do you want them to explode in your face?”

In prison, Zaidan said he was put into solitary confinement for 90 days, unable to distinguish day from night. “Every 24 hours, they would bring three meals. But if you added them up, they wouldn't be enough for a breastfeeding infant.” Zaidan described fending off large rats in order to keep his food. “The rats in solitary confinement used to eat the sheets because there weren't any crumbs for them to eat,” he said. “They used to come out of the pipes and would even eat my clothes. I would hit them and they would come back. If I tried to save some bread crumbs, the rats would try to come and eat your pockets to get the bread,” he said, swiping his hand as if he were shooing away a rat.

After being released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange in 2011, Zaidan was banished to Gaza, unable to visit his family in his native Jenin. “I got out of prison, but the prison is still inside of me,” he said. At 32 years old, Zaidan spent untold hours reflecting on his decision to carry out a suicide bombing.

“I wouldn't do it again. I would help in delivering food and tending to sick people,” he said. “But for me to do a suicide bombing? I wouldn't – not because I failed but because of my age now. I was 17 then. Now it's a different situation, we're in a bloody war in Gaza.”

“I think suicide bombings are still a way to defend ourselves,” he told me. “It's still the same philosophy: You either live free or die free.”

While the prospect of a Israeli reoccupation of Gaza appears unlikely, Zaidan said that if the Israelis attempt to reoccupy Gaza, the suicide bombings will resume. “If you think it's not there, it is. There are many people who would do it,” he said. “The situation now is more than one bullet here and there, or a suicide bombing there or a rock there. Now it's a fierce war.

There were scenes [in the last war] that were a million times uglier than the Jenin massacre,” he said, referring to the areas of Shujaiya, Beit Hanoun, Khuza’a Rafah, which were largely decimated in Israel’s 2014 war on Gaza.

The violence of Israeli occupation and siege continue to fuel the urge to resist, but Gaza now has a well-organized armed resistance that has pioneered new weapons and tactics to repel ground invasions, as well as to strike on Israeli military targets across the border. “There is a study of war and battle. It’s not like I was – just going out to do this operation,” Zaidan said. Ultimately, the impetus to resist is the same, regardless of tactic, Zaidan explained. “My aim in that moment was to deliver a message with my own blood. To deliver a message that this guy who did a suicide bombing didn’t live equally and to [force people to] ask a question: why would a guy like me, who didn’t have any records, go and do such a thing? I only went to suicide bombing because I wasn’t living like the rest of the people. And you, the Israelis, are suffocating us, because of what? Who gave you the power to do that to us? Do you want us to ask for permission to breathe? We will never do that. The [Palestinians] will not ask you how to die and we will not ask how to take their freedom and dignity. All I wanted was to deliver my message and there was a way to do that back then.”

### *Case 2 from chapter four*

*Interviewee: Menake*

*Interviewer: Jan Goodwin*

*Source: <http://www.marieclaire.com/politics/news/a717/female-suicide-bomber/>*

On the day before she set out to blow up the Sri Lankan prime minister, Menake went shopping for a sequined top to hide the vest full of explosives that would turn her into a human bomb. It was the cyanide necklace that gave her away.

The denim vest is a simple garment, tailored to fit the young woman's body. Narrow shoulder straps hold the midsection in place. It's not high fashion, but that doesn't matter, since the first time it's worn will also be the last. The large disk that rests under the breast area is filled with a mass of 3-mm steel balls, and behind that, next to the skin, sits a C-4 plastic explosive. Two detonators, one on either side of her body, require just a gentle tug. Then, in an instant, the vest

wearer becomes a human bomb, capable of killing or maiming dozens of people within a 100-foot radius.

Menake's vest fit her well. She tried it on several times to make sure it lay snugly against her chest. She practiced reaching for the detonators without arousing suspicion. She thought hard about the best outfit to disguise its deadly purpose, settling on a sequined top whose shimmer would distract the eye from what lay beneath.

The 27-year-old woman is not what we picture when we hear "suicide bomber." With her long black hair neatly pulled back from her chocolate-colored skin, she is shy, soft-spoken — the kind of person you'd trust with your kids. But Menake is also a member of the Black Tigers, the suicide commando squad of Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a terrorist group that has more female suicide bombers than any other organization in the world.

For three days last September, Menake staked out the tree-lined streets of Colombo's richest neighborhood, home to Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake. Watching from the shadows, observing the prime minister's mansion from all angles, Menake devised her plan. She memorized his comings and goings, the government sedan he traveled in. The neighborhood — a sort of Embassy Row filled with colonial-style mansions and expansive gardens — was protected by heavily guarded gates and security checkpoints. Menake took note of all this, looking for the weakest link.

Though she kept a low profile, her presence didn't go unnoticed. For one thing, miniskirts and blue jeans dominate the fashion scene in this upscale area of Sri Lanka, and Menake dressed in a traditional shalwar kameez — a long tunic over baggy pants. In those clothes, she could have been a servant, but her face wasn't familiar to the police patrolling the area. For another, her pattern of movement, unlike that of the servants scuttling between homes or to and from the marketplace, was unpredictable. She seemed to appear and vanish, only to re-emerge on another nearby street.

For two days, Menake skillfully evaded the authorities. But on her third day, as she made her final recon mission, she was stopped by guards outside the prime minister's mansion. When her cover story — that she was visiting a sick aunt — didn't wash, they demanded to see her

national ID card, something all Sri Lankans over 14 are required to carry. When her card revealed her to be from Jaffna, an LTTE stronghold, the police took Menake into custody.

The cyanide necklace was her ultimate downfall. The macabre piece of jewelry — deadly cyanide crystals encased in a small glass vial suspended from a cord around the neck — is worn by every member of the LTTE. Once arrested, the wearer is supposed to bite down on the glass capsule. Through the tiny cuts in the mouth, cyanide races into the bloodstream and blocks the body's absorption of oxygen, leaving the victim fatally convulsing and gasping for air. When the police saw the capsule, they beat Menake unconscious.

She was then shipped off to the notorious Boosa Detention Center, where prisoners can languish for years without access to lawyers or family members.

Last March, Menake was brought back to Colombo after Chandra Wakishta, director of Sri Lanka's Terrorist Investigation Division, realized Menake's potential value as an informer against her handler. Catch a suicide bomber, and you stop one explosion. Catch a handler, and you stop dozens.

The suicide-bomber vest was the brainchild of Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers — the design has since been used by Hezbollah, Hamas, and reportedly al Qaeda, and its murderous effects are felt daily in Iraq. The vest was first worn in May 1991, when Thenmuli Rajaratnam, best known by her nom de guerre, Dhanu, blew up herself and 18 bystanders seconds after draping a welcome garland of flowers over the shoulders of India's prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, at a political rally. Gandhi's violent assassination, caught on film, was televised around the world. In the years since, the LTTE has killed one Sri Lankan president and blinded another. Weekly LTTE suicide bombs cause heavy casualties. They are cheap and efficient: On average, suicide bombings kill four times as many people as other acts of terrorism. Up to 40 percent of these attacks are carried out by women.

If not for its bloody recent history, Sri Lanka might well be a honeymooner's paradise. It is a breathtakingly beautiful country, a teardrop-shaped island off the southern tip of India. But for the past 24 years, the LTTE (comprised mostly of Hindu Tamils but with some Christian members) has been fighting for its own independent state in northern Sri Lanka, which the Sinhala-Buddhist government has been resisting just as fiercely. In that time, 70,000 Sri

Lankans have been killed, tens of thousands have fled abroad, and some 600,000 have been displaced within the country. Children on the way to school are regularly abducted and forced to become soldiers. Sri Lanka is also infamous for its vast number of disappeared people — 60,000 abducted and never seen again.

The LTTE is considered one of the most ruthless terrorist organizations in the world, using extortion to raise upwards of \$30 million a month from Sri Lankan expatriates. It also maintains a fleet of suicide boats lined with explosives and a burgeoning air division. The planes, smuggled into the country in parts and reassembled in remote jungle bases, were first used to bomb the main airport in March 2007, causing foreign airlines to halt flights to Sri Lanka.

Last August, when I learned that the Sri Lankan government had a failed female suicide bomber in its custody, I wanted to talk to her. I negotiated with the government for months — the Sri Lankans trying to determine if I was a security risk (was I an LTTE sympathizer?), our communication breaking down repeatedly as fighting in the north heated up. Finally, last December, I received the answer I'd been waiting for: an agreement to give Marie Claire an interview — the first they'd ever allowed.

It's a sunny, hot day when I arrive at the prison, a former fortress that seems to attract the heat. Menake is brought up from her isolation cell behind a massive steel door to meet me in the interrogation room at the Anti-Terrorism Division Headquarters in Colombo.

Dressed in a simple maroon tunic and pants and green plastic flip-flops, Menake takes a seat opposite me. (For security reasons, the government asked that her last name not be used.) The blacked-out windows make the space uncomfortably warm. In her unventilated 7' x 5' cell in solitary confinement, Menake has no access to water or a toilet unless she can persuade hostile prison guards to unlock her cell and escort her to both. She sleeps on the bare, tiled floor without a mat or sheet.

She is clearly surprised to be sitting in an armchair — albeit one that is aged and leaking foam rubber — rather than the usual hard seat in front of the interrogator's desk. When tea is served to me, she appears so unnerved she has to be coaxed into accepting a cup. The hospitality makes her suspicious. In the past, interrogators have threatened her with beatings, rape, and torture.

Menake is hesitant to talk about her life in the LTTE. "Maybe there are Tamil Tigers inside here," she says nervously, through an interpreter. It's not an unreasonable fear — the terrorist organization has successfully infiltrated Sri Lanka's army and police force. As she speaks, three miniature security cameras, monitored by two technicians at computers behind a screen, capture her every word and movement. "I'm frightened if I talk to you, they will find out and kill me. My life is at stake. Maybe one day I will walk out of here, and then what will happen to me?"

The irony of a suicide bomber fearing for her life is not lost on either of us. "I was fed up with life before I was caught," Menake says, her voice so low I have to strain to hear her. "But now, I feel I could lead a normal life. I want to live, not die."

"Do you know the legal penalty for trying to assassinate someone?" I ask, expecting a hardened reply. To my surprise, she begins to cry, burying her face in her lavender-colored dupatta, a shawl which conservative Sri Lankan women use to cover their upper torsos. "The punishment is jail for the rest of my life," she murmurs. She also knows she may hang — capital punishment was reinstated in Sri Lanka two years ago after a government crackdown on suicide bombers.

The look on Menake's face turns to wild desperation. She wrings her dupatta in her hands. "I beg you, can't you get me out of this country?" she pleads, almost hysterically. "I want to live. To live the life I might have had before, if I wasn't going to kill myself."

Of course, it's the life she had before that brought her to this point. Home was an impoverished fishing village in northeast Sri Lanka. Her alcoholic father drank more than he fished, and he often hit his wife. Menake was 3 when her mother died from one of his frequent attacks. When Menake was 7, her father raped her repeatedly for four days during a drunken binge. Finally, her grandfather rescued her, and her father disappeared. She never saw him again.

Rape is something many female suicide bombers have in common. Considered spoiled goods and unmarriageable in their patriarchal cultures, they view becoming human bombs as a form of purification by fire. Dhanu, Prime Minister Gandhi's assassin, was also allegedly raped by soldiers from the Indian Peacekeeping Force when it was posted in Sri Lanka for three years.

When Menake was 15, her grandparents died. Her uncle and aunt reluctantly took her in, making it known that she was a burden. Two years later, in 2000, faced with a shortage of fighters, the LTTE levied a human tax — Tamil families were ordered to give a member, male or female, to the organization to be trained for combat. Menake's relatives gave her up for the cause.

"They just said, 'She is yours,'" Menake tells me. "I cried. I begged [the LTTE] not to take me. I told them I didn't want to die so young. But a woman officer told me, 'Sorry, we can't help you. Your relatives said you came here of your own volition.'"

For seven months, the LTTE training camp was Menake's home, with its tents for sleeping and cement-block classrooms, surrounded by dense jungle. She lived with 150 other conscripts, all females in their teens and 20s. She was given the Tamil Tiger green-and-yellow camouflage uniform to wear.

The training-camp rules were rigid: The LTTE prohibits alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. "Unlawful sex" — anything ranging from masturbation to romantic relationships — is banned. Velupillai Prabhakaran, the cultlike founder of the LTTE, executed two of his closest aides after they were caught having intercourse. Marriage was initially outlawed by Prabhakaran, now 53 — until he fell in love with a female prisoner, an agricultural student kidnapped by his guerrillas. The rules were subsequently altered to allow senior cadres to wed. More recently, the LTTE decreed that members may marry once women turn 35 and men turn 40.

For Menake, daily life in the camp was hard and monotonous, starting at 4 a.m. with an hour-long run. "At 5 a.m., we got tea and a bucket of water to wash with," says Menake. "Then we did push-ups." The raw recruits spent hours learning to dismantle, reassemble, and fire their guns. "They watch you closely. Some girls were so fast they won prizes — clothes, a watch. I was always in the middle. If you were slow, you were punished. Sometimes I'd get so tired, I'd fall asleep in class. Then I had to run 20 times around the camp perimeter [about 18 miles] or do jumping jacks until I thought I'd die. You'd be so exhausted, you could hardly move." The rest of the day was divided into sessions of intense political indoctrination and sentry duty.

Listening to Menake talk, it's hard not to sympathize. Her fingernails are bitten down and raw. Her face is streaked with tears and sweat. Her future will be at least as grim as her past has

been. And yet, had she not been apprehended, her legacy would have been that of a mass murderer. I ask her how she learned to kill.

Menake remembers her first weapons class: "They gave us sticks at first, just poles, to practice with. Then we got Kalashnikovs. I'd never held a gun before. I knew I would eventually have to kill another human. They said we needed our country, and we would have to take lives to get it. When you're with the LTTE, there's nothing else to think about; it's all they put into your head — the Sinhalese are our enemy, the Sri Lankan government is our enemy. That's all you're allowed to concentrate on. Before, I never thought about whether the Sinhalese people were good or bad. But the officers kept telling us about murders committed by these people. They said we must kill them to regain our Tamil motherland."

Every evening, Menake and the other recruits watched military films, many of them Chinese, some produced by the LTTE. "They were always about war," she says. "The training videos showed us how to fight, how to use weapons, how to kill. Some talked about how, when girls die, they become heroes."

Escape attempts were rare. Those who tried were invariably caught and never seen again. "I don't know what happened to them," says Menake. "We were closed up in the camp, with so many restrictions. It was dangerous to try and escape. The jungle was thick with poisonous snakes and wild elephants. When the elephants were nearby, we'd set fire to bushes or bang metal plates together to scare them away so they wouldn't trample our tents. But even if I could have escaped, who would have taken me in? I was an economic burden. On my own, I would have starved."

At the end of basic training, the recruits were split up and dispatched to other divisions. "I was supposed to get computer training," Menake says, "but that went to a girl who had lost both her legs in the fighting. So I was sent to the intelligence-gathering camp." There, she claims, she spent her days clipping newspaper articles on the conflict. "It was very boring."

In 2002, the LTTE and the government signed a cease-fire agreement, putting Menake and the other Tamil Tigers' lives on ice. Both sides suspected it wouldn't last. During the four years of uncertain peace (throughout which the Tigers continued their military training in secret),

Menake wrote to the LTTE secretariat. "I'm willing to become a Black Tiger," she wrote. "It would be an honor. Please let me have your permission to join."

"I was depressed and in pain," she says simply when I press her as to why she made the leap from fighter to would-be martyr. "I had nerve damage to my spine after falling from an LTTE tractor. The doctor said I might become paralyzed when I got older. I thought, Why continue to live? A lot of girls were volunteering to be suicide bombers, so I thought I would, too."

It was more than a year before she received a response that summoned her for an interview. The LTTE, preferring its suicide bombers to be stable (by which it means sufficiently brainwashed to the point of reliable devotion) and idealistic (and therefore likely to carry out their assignments), screens candidates carefully.

In a region where women's rights are few, the LTTE provides an ironic twist: One reason the group is believed to have the highest number of female suicide bombers in the world (and a high percentage of female fighters) is its vocal emphasis on gender equality. Army roles are gender-neutral, and the glory of martyrdom can be bestowed equally upon men and women. But unlike young men who seek the role of suicide bomber with great fanfare from their families, some female bombers gravitate toward the role as a last resort.

"Do you understand you will become a human bomb?" Menake was asked by the Black Tiger leaders in her interview.

"I told them that I did," she says. "I felt I had no other choice." The LTTE calls its suicide missions *thatkodai*, Tamil for "gift of self." It made her feel, Menake says, that her life still had a purpose.

Then came the training. "We were taught how the vest works, how to jump onto a vehicle in case our target was a bus or a truck," she says. She learned how best to position herself, depending on her target.

"Do you know what a suicide bomb would do to your body when it explodes?" I ask her.

"I know once I put it on, I will kill people, and I will also die," she says unemotionally. "My whole body will be in pieces. But this type of death is very fast."

I ask Menake about her victims — the ordinary people passing by who would be killed or maimed in her attack. "I came to Colombo to destroy, to kill. We are taught to forget the victims," she says. (Her handler remained close by, to make sure she didn't have a change of heart.) "I was just focused on the target. I never had time to think about who else I would kill. I was simply told it was the enemy. It was a job to go and do."

This automaton-like reaction is not unusual. "I knew I was going toward death and just kept walking," says Menake. "You're told this is part of your duty. I didn't think about fear. I was shown what to do, and I never questioned it. We knew there would be a time when we would see today and not see tomorrow. I saw other girls go off who never came back. Then, in the next batch, they took me."

In 2006, after a four-year cease-fire, fighting broke out again in northern Sri Lanka. On August 6, Menake was informed that her target had been chosen — she was being sent to Colombo. Like all suicide bombers, she was given a last supper with an LTTE leader — in this case, Pottu Amman, the LTTE's second in command and head of intelligence. She was offered her choice of meal and selected chicken, fried rice, vegetable curry, and vanilla ice cream. Wanted by Interpol and the Sri Lankan government, Amman seemed like a movie star to Menake.

"He was tall and handsome," she says, her voice lighting up for the first time. "We had a last photograph taken together" — the idea being, once she was dead, the photo, decorated with flowers, would go on display at the local clock tower, as happened with the images of other suicide bombers before her. Amman told her she would be known as a mahaveera, or "great warrior," and venerated in a way she'd never been in life. Only then would she be given a military rank, based on the importance of her target.

The LTTE financially rewards the families of suicide bombers by paying for a surviving brother to go to college, for instance, or helping a family build a home. "When you die, your relatives get the honor. But my aunt and uncle betrayed me," Menake says angrily, "so I said no to any money for them. It would have been different if my mother were still alive."

After the hour-long dinner, Amman was all business. "He said, 'We expect you to do a good job. Don't change your mind. Don't mess up. We're watching you,'" Menake recalls. The following day, she headed to the capital, where she planned to buy the sequined shalwar kameez.

I imagine this small, stocky woman, who barely had enough money to buy basic clothing, splurging on a festive top that Sri Lankans wear to weddings — the sequins glittering in the sunlight as she headed off to die. I ask her if she considered changing her mind at any point.

"If I felt sad, it was because I would never have the opportunity to have a family and children, to hold my own baby in my arms. That was my biggest sorrow," she says. "The difference between Black Tigers and normal Tamil Tigers is that normal Tigers don't know when they will be killed. Black Tigers know only their ultimate achievement."

At the beginning of September, Menake checked out of the Appolli Inn, a low-cost lodge on the edge of Colombo, and caught a bus into town for a final reconnaissance of the prime minister's home. As she approached the building, three police officers stepped from their security booth and stopped her in the street. Menake's suicide mission was over.

Later, after Menake has left the interrogation room, officials carry in a crumpled-up piece of clothing. When they stretch it out on the table in front of me, I see the vest. As I stare at it, all I can think is, Who made this? Did they ever stop to think about the young woman who would wear it?

I place a call to Irasiah Ilanthirayan, the LTTE military spokesperson. (Despite their secretive attacks, the LTTE is remarkably visible on the global political scene — a few strategically placed phone calls put me in direct contact with its headquarters in Kilinochchi, in the northern region of the country, although cell and e-mail communication with the LTTE is frequently disrupted by the Sri Lankan government.) I ask Ilanthirayan how his organization justifies sending young women to kill innocent civilians and, ultimately, themselves. "Our suicide bombers do not take their own life, but give it to the cause," he says. "They are not killers, they are givers. They give their lives for the Tamil nation."

And the cyanide? "Even myself, I still wear it," Ilanthirayan tells me. "Our secrets should be protected. My son, my father, and my sons and daughters to follow would prefer to die before bowing down in front of the enemy."

As for a solution to the conflict, Ilanthirayan sees only one: "We were two nations, Tamil and Sinhalese, before the European [colonials] came. And two nations is a very good model, a very good solution to this problem."

The conflict has become increasingly intractable. While the Sri Lankan government officially states that a military solution is not the answer, it launched major offensives against the LTTE this past winter and spring. It also stands accused of bombing a Tamil orphanage (the government claims it was an LTTE training camp) and shooting 17 Tamil aid workers point-blank in the head. In response, the U.S. and U.K. suspended aid to the Sri Lankan government.

The day before I left Sri Lanka, I learned that two suicide-bomber vests had been found during a security sweep of a train coming into Colombo. The bombers, taught not to stand near their lethal cargo, planned to retrieve the vests upon arrival and disappear into the throng of passengers disembarking at the Fort Train Station, the city's main terminus. This time, at least, the antiterrorism unit got there first.

### *Case 3 from chapter five*

*Interviewee: Anonymous*

*Interviewer: Raza Rumi*

*Source:*

*<http://googlf.fr/index.php?q=Interview+with+a+Takfiri+Suicide+Bomber+Arrested+in+Pakistan&id=4715f5198834f8623fa5c4b0269d2e3435a2c36a427aa13459b22800ccfc33c2>*

*Who is this suicide bomber? Why did he go for training to Waziristan? What are his intentions now? What arguments do they have in light of Shariah? And what are their motives behind such acts?*

Q: If you are released, will you still follow the same path?

A: God Willing! (I will do so)

Q: Has there been no change in your thinking?

A: No

Q: Will you do the same if you get the order?

A: God Willing! (I will do so)

Q: Will you do it on your own, or you will do it on the orders of your leader?

A: I will do it on the orders of my leader, because I have accepted him as my leader according to Shariah.

Q: Will you take revenge on all?

A: Yes, I will, as much as I can—even if it includes my family. I am for suicide bombing, and I will blow myself up even if I see my family there.

Q: In suicide bombing, innocent Muslims, and even those who hate America, are killed.

Therefore, are you not killing those for whom you are fighting?

A: No, those who are not taking part in Jihad are not innocent. Only those are innocent who are taking part in the Jihad in Miramshah, etc.

Q: Is there no one innocent in all of Pakistan?

A: No. We have no repentance, no sorrow for killing. Even if our leader orders us to kill two people and a hundred are killed in the process, then we will do so.

Q: Sometimes, suicide bombing takes place in mosques, and even very young children are killed.

A: Why do you consider these children to be innocent?

Q: A child who is newly born may become like you when he grows up; you kill even him—so are you not killing the innocent?

A: No. No one is innocent.

Q: Not even the young child?

A: No.

Q: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

A: Nine, including myself.

Q: Do they know about the path you are following?

A: Yes. All praise to Allah.

Q: Have they granted you permission?

A: No. Permission is not essential when Jihad becomes obligatory.

Q: The Taliban says that Jihad has become obligatory, but our religious scholars say that for Jihad, permission from Islamic State is essential.

A: I accept neither the scholars of Pakistan nor the Government of Pakistan.

Q: Do you have any fatwa about the legitimacy of suicide attacks?

A: Yes.

Q: Which scholar?

A: I do not know his name, but his verdict is there.

Q: Is there any justification from the Quran and Hadith?

A: There is a book justifying suicide bombing by an Arab Scholar.

Q: The Quran says to not commit suicide.

A: But there are many reasons for it.

Q: You say that you do it to seek Allah's blessings, but Muslim scholars like Maulana Hassan Jan and Mufti Sarfarz Naeemi have also been killed in suicide attacks.

A: These scholars neither participate nor believe in Jihad. On the contrary, they condemn the Jihadi Taliban. Mufti Naeemi had issued a fatwa against the Taliban.

Q: Are you married?

A: No.

Q: Do you wish to marry?

A: No. Seventy-two virgins are waiting for me in Heaven. So why should I prefer only one here?

Q: Are virgins waiting for those who are killed at your hands?

A: They will be treated as per their intentions. If they support the Government, then they will be answered accordingly. Our leader has told us that you are not responsible for the killing of those who are not your target. No one in Pakistan is innocent. Whoever is outside Waziristan is not innocent. They will be innocent if they go and support the Taliban in their fighting.

## *9.2. Example of coding and labeling categories for analysis*

### MISSION/FUTURE

Q: If you are released, will you still follow  
the same path? 1 I  
2 I  
A: God Willing! (I will do so) 3 I religious

### MISSION/FUTURE

Q: Has there been no change in your  
thinking? 4 I  
5 I  
A: No 6 I

### ORDER/MISSION

Q: Will you do the same if you get the order? 7 I order  
A: God Willing! (I will do so) 8 I religious

### ORDER/MISSION/LEADER

Q: Will you do it on your own, or you will do  
it on the orders of your leader? 9 I  
10 I leaders  
A: I will do it on the orders of my leader, because  
I have accepted him as my leader according  
to Shariah. 11 I  
12 I  
13 I law

### REVENGE

Q: Will you take revenge on all? 14 I  
A: Yes, I will, as much as I can—even if it includes  
my family. I am for suicide bombing, and I will blow  
myself up even if I see my family there. 15 I  
16 I  
17 I

### MISSION

Q: In suicide bombing, innocent Muslims, and even  
those who hate America, are killed. Therefore, are you  
not killing those for whom you are fighting? 18 I Muslims  
19 I Westerns  
20 I  
A: No, those who are not taking part in Jihad are 21 I

not innocent. Only those are innocent who are taking part in the Jihad in Miramshah, etc. 22 I innocent  
23 I

#### MISSION

Q: Is there no one innocent in all of Pakistan? 24 I Pakistan

A: No. We have no repentance, no sorrow for killing. 25 I kill

Even if our leader orders us to kill two people and a 26 I quantity

hundred are killed in the process, then we will do so. 27 I

#### MISSION

Q: Sometimes, suicide bombing takes place in 28 I

mosques, and even very young children are killed. 29 I place

A: Why do you consider these children to be innocent? 30 I

#### MORAL

Q: A child who is newly born may 31 I

become like you when he grows up; you kill 32 I

even him—so are you not killing the innocent? 33 I children

A: No. No one is innocent. 34 I

Q: Not even the young child? 35 I children

A: No. 36 I

#### FAMILY

Q: How many brothers and sisters do you have? 37 I family

A: Nine, including myself. 38 I

#### FAMILY

Q: Do they know about the path you are following? 39 I convinced

A: Yes. All praise to Allah. 40 I religious

#### FAMILY

Q: Have they granted you permission? 41 I approval

A: No. Permission is not essential when Jihad 42 I

becomes obligatory. 43 I law

## LEADERS

- Q: The Taliban says that Jihad has become obligatory, but our religious scholars say that for Jihad, permission from Islamic State is essential. 44 I religious  
45 I  
46 I national?
- A: I accept neither the scholars of Pakistan nor the Government of Pakistan. 47 I  
48 I accept

## MISSION

- Q: Do you have any fatwa about the legitimacy of suicide attacks? 49 I  
50 I law
- A: Yes. 51 I
- Q: Which scholar? 52 I law
- A: I do not know his name, but his verdict is there. 53 I rule

## RELIGION/MISSION

- Q: Is there any justification from the Quran and Hadith? 54 I religion
- A: There is a book justifying suicide bombing by an Arab Scholar. 55 I  
56 I

## RELIGION/MISSION

- Q: The Quran says to not commit suicide. 57 I
- A: But there are many reasons for it. 58 I contradict

## RELIGION/MISSION

- Q: You say that you do it to seek Allah's blessings, but Muslim scholars like Maulana Hassan Jan and Mufti Sarfarz Naeemi have also been killed in suicide attacks. 59 I religious  
60 I  
61 I  
62 I
- A: These scholars neither participate nor believe in Jihad. On the contrary, they condemn the Jihadi Taliban. Mufti Naeemi had issued a fatwa against the Taliban. 63 I  
64 I  
65 I law  
66 I contradict

#### RELATIONSHIP STATUS/FAMILY

Q: Are you married? 67 I family

A: No. 68 I

#### RELATIONSHIP STATUS/FAMILY

Q: Do you wish to marry? 69 I

A: No. Seventy-two virgins are waiting for me in 70 I 72 virgins

Heaven. So why should I prefer only one here? 71 I religion

#### RELIGION

Q: Are virgins waiting for those who are killed at 72 I

your hands? 73 I virgins

A: They will be treated as per their intentions. 74 I

If they support the Government, then they will 75 I

be answered accordingly. Our leader has told us 76 I leader

that you are not responsible for the killing of those 77 I

who are not your target. No one in Pakistan is 78 I nation

innocent. Whoever is outside Waziristan is not 79 I

innocent. They will be innocent if they go and support 80 I

the Taliban in their fighting. 81 I