**HOW A PERSON BECOMES A HUMAN BOMB: TOWARDS A MODEL ON THE DYNAMICS OF SUICIDE BOMBING**

**özet**

*Bir İnsan Nasıl İntihar Bombacısı Olur: İntihar Eylemlerinin Dinamikleri Üzerine Bir Model Denemesi.* Makalede intihar eyleminin hangi dinamiklerin etkisinde gerçekleştiği üzerine bir model denemesi yapılmakta ve bu modelden hareket ederek intihar eylemlerin açıklanmasına katkı sağlanmak hedeflenmektedir. İntihar eylemleri, genelde son çare olarak hayatı görülen değer ve menfaatler tehlike altında girdiğinde ya da böyle algılanırken karşı koyma biçimleri olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. İleri sürdüğümüz modelimize göre, işgal ve askeri müdahale bu karşı koyma biçimini hareketlendiren fildiş durumları yaratmakta; sosyal ve kişisel dinamikler ise uygun bir ortam yaratıcı formlar olarak devreye girmektedir. Bu naktada, örgütler teknik ve lojistik destek sağlamak suretiyle eylemlerin dinamizmini ve devamlılığını sağlamakta. Sonuçta, intihar eylemleri, işgala karşı etkişi altında şekillenen psikolojik, sosyolojik ve örgütsel faktörlerin bir kombinasyonu şeklinde gerçekleşmektedir.

**anahtar kelimeler:** İntihar eylemi, Filistin, Çeçenistan, sosyal ve psikolojik motivasyonlar, örgütler, askeri müdahaleler
Introduction

The contemporary examples of the suicide bombings in Middle East begin with the actions of Hezbollah against the Western forces in South Lebanon during the 1980s. On October 23 1983, a member of Hezbollah with a truck carrying about 400 kilograms of explosives attacked the American Naval Base in South Beirut. It was the biggest atrocity affiliated with Hezbollah in the Middle East in that 241 American and 58 France military personal perished according to the FBI report (Reuter, 2004: 52-53). From Pape’s archive, Hezbollah carried out 35 attacks against America, French, Israel, and Lebanon between 1982 and 1986, resulting in 746 casualties (Pape, 2006: 265-266; Erdin, 1999: 47).

The formation of Hezbollah in the Middle East is related to a large extend to certain factors such as the establishment of Israel in 1948, the occupation of South Lebanon by Israel, the Lebanon civil war emerging in 1974, the ethnic and religious characteristics of Lebanon, the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979 and the struggles of Ayatollah Khomeini to export the revolution, and the particular Shiite cult on sacrificing and martyrdom. After the establishment of Israel and especially the Six-Day War in 1967, many Palestinians were forced to flee to South Lebanon where the Shiite Amal movement (transformed into Hezbollah upon Husayin Musaavi’s departure on 22 June, 1982) and Yasser Arafat’s al-Fatah already operate in a tactic of hit and run along the Israeli borders (Acar, 1989: 3-4). South Lebanon eventually became the center of both an experimenting ground of suicide bombings and training of Palestinian militias. Reuter argues that Hezbollah members teach how to carry out suicide bombings to the Palestinians (Reuter, 2004: 100). Similarly, Stern says that the Palestinians are trained by the Hezbollah (and that some leaders like Dr. Abdullah Rantisi emerged in that period) (Stern, 2004: 47-48).

If we take a closer look at the Palestine case; however, we see that the three members of the Japan Red Army opened gun fire to civilians in Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv on May 30, 1972 before the attacks of Hezbollah and Hamas in the region. That atrocity leaving 24 dead was a no-escape-attack, and they thought of Palestine as an actual front to fight the imperial powers with the PLO (Reuter, 2004: 136-138). Abufarha also says that the suicide missions were employed by the Palestinian fedayeen (fidai’: one who sacrifices himself) against Israel in the 1969 Al-Karameh War in Jordan as well. Following Al-Karameh the Palestinian resistance throughout the 1970s rested on ‘amaliyat fida’iyah (operations of self-sacrifice) as the main form of resistance, and the fida’i became an icon in Palestine, symbolizing honor, bravery and sacrifice (Abufarha, 2006: 28).

‘Amaliyat fida’iyah against Israel turns into a total shaking off with the first and the second Intifada. Between 1987 and 1993, in the first Intifada the image of Palestinian children hurling up stones and Molotov cocktails against the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) became a symbol of resistance for the
international system, and the Palestinian leaders utilized this symbolism to stand up for the Palestinian thesis for the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and to mobilize the global actors for the withdrawal of Israel (Abufarha, 2006: 29-30). In that sense, the 1993 Oslo and 2000 Camp David Israel-Palestine negotiations can be read as the achievement of the first Intifada in capturing attention of global public opinion to the Palestine problem. Yet the peace negotiations did not meet the expectations of Palestinians, as Israel did not pull out from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the borders guaranteed at the negotiations. Furthermore, the peace process also provided to suppress the radical movements like Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad (FIJ) by using Palestine Authority (PA), the official governing entity of Palestine. In addition, the peace negotiations slowed down the external aids for Palestine, especially for Hamas and FIJ. In this process, while the Islamic groups started to lose their social bases due to a lack of enough financial sources to support their organizations; PA was far from bringing peace and welfare to Palestine society, albeit its large financial sources and being predominantly charged with corruption and degeneration (Bloom, 2005:24-26).

While many Palestinians perceive the peace process as “the intensification of Palestinians’ fragmentation and consolidation of Israeli containment and occupation policies”; the legitimacy of Yasser Arafat’s PA has started to be questioned by both the Islamic groups and a great majority of Palestinians. These socio-political dynamics then have resulted in the reconceptualization of resistance to challenge Israel in Palestine through direct engagements with Israel and Israelis, by depending on their own resources to achieve their political aspirations rather than relying on the international community (Abufarha, 2006: 30). Within this new political aura, with the struggles of Hamas and FIJ to violate the peace process, the second Intifada (al-Aqsa Intifada), which broke out in October 2000, drew mainly on suicide missions including 116 suicide bombings with an average of 27 bombings a year between October 2000 and February 2005 in comparison to an average of 4 in the years between 1993 and 2000. As the quantity of suicide bombings boosted, the organizational structure of actions also changed. Before the second Intifada, suicide bombings were mostly linked to the Islamic groups belonging to Hamas and FIJ, but since 2000 these attacks have been approved by secular factions such as the semi-Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Fatah faction known as the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. Furthermore, previously men were the dominant elements in the bombings, yet after 2000 women have started to get involved to suicide bombings too (Hafez, 2006: 19-20).

My model in this article explaining suicide bombings consists of five explanation levels. The first level is occupation -real or imagined- as the main motivation for suicide bombings in both a political and military sense. Occupation, which occurs both in a militaristic way by using armed forces
against a country and in a socio-economic way by dominating a foreign state, is the starting point at which a possible human bomb is manufactured. Since a human bomb is shaped by his/her social environment, it is impossible to describe a possible human bomb without mentioning socio-economic dynamics. Therefore, the second level is social dynamics taking shape under occupation or domination. The third level of explanation is about psychological motivations and personal goals, while the fourth is related to organizational aspiration and political ends. The point, where the individual wish of dying merges with the organization’s wish of killing, is the last level of explanation for the suicide bombing. At this stage, a would-be-bomber is recruited and trained within a special indoctrination process by organizations.

As seen in our model below in chart I, suicide bombings are fulfilled in a complicated context within a combination of different dynamics, and suicide bombings cannot be properly explained depending merely on one or two dynamics without paying attention to the others. Moghadam’s two-phase model is a helpful analytical framework for observing suicide bombings as a process, although it focuses on motivational and organizational dynamics without paying any attention to occupation as a basic political dynamic. Besides, it can be said that in his motivational dynamics, social and psychological determinants are not examined in detail either (Moghadam, 2003: 4). From our model, we argue that occupation and oppression create a “de facto” condition for suicide bombings, and social and psychological dynamics operate in this condition as a catalyst facilitating a possible bomber’s decision. At a point, where the individual has been hard-pressed among political and psycho-social deprivations, organizations uncover the path going to the operation, by supplying technical and logistic assistance.
1. Occupation: The Main Political Dynamic behind Suicide Bombings

Imagined or real, the perception of being under an occupation makes all other social dynamics meaningless. In the Islamic world, the proliferation of terrorist tactics is in a great deal justified within the context of invasion of Muslim territories. In this process existence as a free human being is the basic prerequisite, which discards all other things; that is, groups that feel that their existence is in danger of occupation and oppression may turn into human bombs, which are ready to blow up, whether they legitimize themselves in a religious or profane context.

The occupation of South Lebanon by Israel in 1978 and especially in 1982 was one of the most important developments that triggered off the formation of Hezbollah as a guerilla entity fighting against the Israeli and other Western Forces. As a result, Israel’s control of South Lebanon, Israel was directly confronted with Hezbollah and this confrontation transformed the jihad into an armed conflict. In the perception of a holy struggle, the invasion provided the ultimate legitimation for the terrorist tactics, including certain kinds of suicide bombings (Hamzeh, 2004: 17). The Palestinian case is another example of the resistance against occupation. After 1987 the *Infidas* can be read as reactions against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Given the Palestinians’ own description, all Palestinian territory has been gradually invaded by Israel after 1948, not just the West Bank and the Gaza Strip where the Palestine Authority (PA) was relatively in power. In this context, the suicide bombings emerged as a military alternative to deter Israel’s expansion policy after they practiced some reactions from the demonstrations to total shaking off and to guerilla assaults (Abufarha, 2006: 30; Assaf, 1996: 34).

The latest examples of this process are Iraq and Afghanistan, both of which are invaded by a foreign power. These countries are under a total turmoil. On the one hand, they are fighting against an occupying force and its internal ally and supporters, while on the other hand, they are getting involved in a domestic conflict of power and balance between each other. Today the Iraqi geography, particularly embodied by the occupation and the civil war, has experienced the bloodiest circle of suicide bombings with almost daily assaults (Bloom, 2004: 169). The same assessment is also accurate for the Chechen case where one witnesses “the black widows” for the first time in its history. With the invasion of Chechnya in 1994 and 1996 by Russian Forces, Chechnya was ruined socially and economically by the occupation and began producing suicide-bombing campaigns against Russia, particularly in Grozny and Moscow (Cronin, 2003: 15; Leung, 2004: 33-34).

The occupation as a dynamic behind suicide bombings has been verified by empirical researches conducted with in-depth interviews with suicide
bombers, their relatives and friends. Based on the interviews of the five Palestinian suicide bombers who are detainees in an Israeli prison, Berko and Erez find the recurrent theme in the interviews that the Palestinians’ social identity are marked by being “dispossessed, oppressed and humiliated”. Furthermore these people are raised in homes which are continuously exposed to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They have heard their parents’ stories about houses left behind and about lands lost upon the establishment of Israel in 1948. Palestinians’ anger was exacerbated by the Israeli military control of Palestinian territories after the Six Days War in 1967. A participant explains: “For me, a Jew is not a problem. But he sits in my country, doing things that are not acceptable. I grew up with it.” (Berko-Erez, 2005:609-610).

Interviewing nearly 250 people from 1996 to 1999 in Palestine, Hassan in the interviews also finds the main theme that Israel humiliates the Palestinians, occupying their land and denying their history. In this respect, while one activist says that “The Israelis kill our children and our women. This is war, and innocent people get hurt”; another mentions: “We do not have tanks or rockets, but we have something superior -our exploding Islamic human bombs. In place of a nuclear arsenal, we are proud of our arsenal of believers.” According to Hassan’s findings, Hamas and Islamic Jihad consider suicide bombings as a military response to what they regard as Israeli provocations, rather than a terrorist act (Hassan, 2001: 49). From the interviews of the five suicide bombers, prisoners in an Israeli prison, Soibelman’s findings overlap with Berko and Hassan’s. The interviewee’s account supports the approach that the terroristic tactics occur as a result of foreign rule perceived as oppressive, and this kind of resistance becomes long-lasting and institutionalized, while all participants acknowledge that “they should fight Israeli occupation” (Soibelman, 2004: 177).

Our study about Wafa Idris, the first woman suicide bomber of Palestine, also indicates that the occupation is the main dynamic of the suicide operation besides other socio-psychological determinants. Idris was born into a Palestinian family living in al-Amari refugee camp since they were forced out from Ramla, now within Israeli borders after the 1948 war. Under feelings of expulsion, she lives a life under occupation in the limited opportunities of a refugee life. Observing the conflict and uprisings of the first Intifada as a twelve-year-old girl, Idris’s character is shaped by the pains and losses of the outbreaks. Her mother, Wasfiyyah Idris says that Wefa feels all burns of the occupation from her childhood onward; she is deeply affected by the Israel’s military operations, particularly after her friend looses an eye in a clash. Her relatives and friends also explain Idris’s decision on such a suicidal action within a context of occupation and militarily coercion (Aydinalp, 2009a: 208).

Compiling a database of every suicide bombing around the world from 1980 through 2003 -315 attacks in all-, Pape also argues that the bombers fight
against modern democracies perceived as an occupational force, and aim to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that they consider to be their homeland. Becoming logical when crucial interests are at stake, suicide bombings are the last resort in saving a nation from foreign influence or control, and in gaining independence (Pape, 2005:4 and 42). Also, using different theoretical approaches from different cases, many scholars acknowledge the correlation between suicide bombings and occupation. Tilhami, in this respect, mentions the PA’s failure to establish an independent Palestine state and save the Palestinians from being humiliated by Israel (Telhami, 2002: 36), whereas Pearlman articulates that the phenomena of so-called suicide terrorism is created by the Israel’ invasion and expansion policy in the region (Pearlman, 2002:14 ). Masalqa also highlights the humiliation following the occupation by saying “When an adolescent boy is humiliated at an Israeli checkpoint, from that moment, a suicide bomber is created” (Victor, 2003: 29); while Sarraj says that despite relatively the peace process between 1948 and 1987, facing the occupation damages the trust the Palestinians have on peace and ends the positive thinking in the midst of emerging profound disappointments. To Sarraj, the new social life accompanied by the occupation and violence destroys love, and love is replaced by hatred and jealousy (Victor, 2003: 118 and 180).

Suicide bombings can be read as the reaction of people who are deeply injured by the systematic and intense humiliation arising from the occupation and the exploitation. It is not a proper approach to explain suicide bombings by focusing only on fundamentalism or religious commitment or to merely mention the socio-psychological factors without paying attention to the negative effects of the occupation and oppression. The negative socio-psychological conditions or misleading religious interpretations facilitating the suicidal terroristic tactics have been created and developed by the violation of the other’s borders which actually mean an existential life space. The homicide which is transformed into a multi-directional value on account of the culture of shahadah (being martyrdom) and jihad (holy struggle) is only understandable in the context of invasion, exploitation, and violation of basic human rights.

2. Social Dynamics in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: the Catalyst Forms of Suicide Bombings

The West Bank and the Gaza Strip are two separate geographies under Israeli control after the establishment of Israel in 1948. Although today the concept of Palestine refers to the West Bank and Gaza territories relatively under the control of PA, albeit the “de facto” Israeli occupation; according to the Palestinians, Palestine means all historical Palestinian territories, including
before 1948 (Assaf, 1996: 34). It is a geographically important factor that the new Jewish settlements have been established in the West Bank and Gaza by Israel, which keeps on compressing the Palestinians inside their own territory. Apart from twenty military centers, there are 271 new settlements in the West Bank, twenty nine of which are in East Jerusalem. According to CIA’s Fact Book-2008, 364 000 Israeli are living in these settlements (CIA, The World Fact Book-West Bank, 2008: 4).

According to the December 2007 Census, (2,350,583 in the West Bank and 1,416,539 in Gaza), the total population of Palestinians is 3,767,122, in the Gaza Strip, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, almost 1 million people are UN-registered refugees, the majority of which are descendants of Palestinians who left or were driven from their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The average family size is 5.5 in the West Bank and 6.5 in Gaza. While the population increase rate is 2.9% in the West Bank, this ratio is 3.6% in the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, the total fertility rate is 30.35‰ and the immigration rate is 2.63‰, while in Gaza the total fertility rate is 38.38‰ and the immigration rate is 1.38‰. The rate of the 0-14 age group to the total population is 41.9% in the West Bank and 47.1% in Gaza, while the infant mortality rate is 18.21‰ in the West Bank and 21.35‰ in Gaza (The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2008: 13 and so on).

The Palestinian society has an economic structure that is formed by both external and internal security systems a high population density and geographically restricted mobility. After the second Intifada, regional economy has sharply started to slow down and it has been rescued from total ruin by international support, which amounted to summed up to 1.14 billion dollars in 2004 (CIA, The World Fact Book-West Bank, 2008: 5; CIA, The World Fact Book-Gaza Strip, 2008: 5). The fact that Hamas gained 44% of total votes in the 2006 election was another factor that accelerated the economic crisis. Global actors boycotted the PA because Hamas denied Israel as a legal entity, applied instruments containing violence, and declared the invalidation of retroactive agreements signed with Israel (The World Bank, April 25, 2008).

The Palestinian economy is predominantly a service sector structure that can be easily affected by the political conflict process. The sectoral distribution of the economy is 79% service sectors, 13% industries and 8% agriculture. Beside small family businesses, the Palestinian economy is to a great extend “an aid economy” relying on supports from outside. According to the 2006 rates, in Palestine the current account deficit reached 50%, the real development is -8% the export rates is -8.8%, whereas the import is 11.6% and private investments are -15% while public investments are -47%. 49% of the West Bank population and 79% of the Gaza population has been living under the poverty line, and the national income per capita income in Palestine is about 1100 dollars. If
we are to take a look at unemployment rates, we observe that unemployment reaches 25.9% in the West Bank and 35.3% in the Gaza Strip (IMF-The World Bank, March 2007).

It should be mentioned that Palestine is almost fully dependent on Israeli sources in terms of energy as the fundamental of economic and social life. It can be said that 97% of the total electricity used by Palestinians is still imported from Israel. Abualkhair asserts that 65 regions in Palestine have still no wiring system for electricity. The Israeli monopoly over the electricity results in, on the one hand, unreal consumption fees and electricity cuts in respect of political developments; on the other hand, causes the destruction of Palestine ecology as the people incline toward natural sources for requirements such as cooking and heating (Abualkhair, 2007:2209). For instance, the January 24, 2008 Gaza report of WHO demonstrates that many hospitals could not operate in full capacity and ambulances could not work because of lack of electricity and fuel oil. The same report states that 40-50% of Gazan people still don’t have access to fresh water (World Health Organization, January 24, 2008).

The fertility rate in Palestine which is 5.2 in the West Bank and 6.6 in Gaza is very high compared to Israel or other western countries (http://www.mop.gov.ps, April 27, 2008). We see that ten out of a hundred children suffer malnutrition and 7.7% of all Palestinians have at least one chronic disease. 25.6% of Palestinians 18 years old and above state that their health is not well, the physician rate is 1.6 per 1000 people and the bed rate is 11.4‰ (http://www.pcbs.gov.ps, April 27, 2008). In the West Bank 44.7% of 416 medicines that should be stocked more than three months in the West Bank are not available, this figure is calculated as 19.5% in Gaza according to the Humanitarian Monitor (March 2008). The same report says that in the West Bank 43.92% and in Gaza 63.20% babies aged 9-12 month suffer from anemia (The Humanitarian Monitor: Occupied Palestinian Territory, March 2008).

According to the December 2007 refugee report of the UN, 745,776 people in the West Bank and 1,048,125 in the Gaza Strip are registered refugees. This numbers indicates that more than half the Palestinians have been exiled from their territory in time. While those who live in exile can only supply their basic needs like food and sheltering with international assistances, they lack sufficient education, health and other social services (www.un.org/unrwapublicationspdf/ifuif-dec07.pdf, May 5, 2008).

One of the main factors that effect the Palestinians’ daily life is the “closure and control system” which is comprised of a series of checkpoint and physical obstacles placed by the IDF to control and restrict Palestinian pedestrian and vehicle traffic. The Israeli government states the system is designed to protect Israeli citizens from Palestinian militant attacks; however, the system is seen
by the Humanitarian Update as “a primary cause of poverty and economic depression in the West Bank.” It restricts Palestinians access to health and educational services, employment, social and religious networks and impedes trade and economic movement (Humanitarian Update: Occupied Palestinian Territory, August 2005: 1). ‘Flying’ or random checkpoints “further disrupt Palestinian movement as they are often deployed on key transit roads during morning and evening peak travelling times”, according to the Humanitarian Monitor. Delays of more than one hour are regularly reported at flying checkpoints and their unpredictable nature means that Palestinians are unable to make travel plans (The Humanitarian Monitor: Occupied Palestinian Territory, March 2008: 24).

Gwynne who stories an ambulance driver’s day in the West Bank and Conover who observes the checkpoints, both elaborate how Palestinian patients, from people suffering from heart disease to pregnant and injured persons, have been hindered by IDF on the way by checkpoints (Gwynne, 2006: 26-27; Conover, 2006: 75). Conover also states that the rules at the control points can be arbitrarily changed depending on the daily moods of the soldiers, and this practice makes Palestinians daily life miserable (Conover, 2006: 75-76). Yet another factor affecting the Palestinian’s daily life is curfews which are imposed unilaterally by IDF wherever and for as long as they wish. The average curfews per month in the West Bank have been noted as 5 days in 2005, 2 in 2006, and 3.4 days in 2007. Such bans which interfere with the rhythm of daily life can last for days. For instance in the West Bank curfews lasted 7 days in January 2008, 10 days in February, and 15 days in March (The Humanitarian Monitor: Occupied Palestinian Territory, March 2008: 10).

Saying that “you are a walking human target, shadowed by snipers who can obliterate you and your surroundings at will”, Loewenstein mentions that the Gaza Strip is described often as a prison with the sky for a ceiling. From her observations about Gaza, Loewenstein demonstrates that its inhabitants live surrounded by electrified fences, motion sensors, barbed wire, and metal barriers, except along the sea coastline where Israeli gunboats guard the shores. To Loewenstein, Israel prevents most Gazans from leaving the territory or even from traveling freely between its overcrowded camps and towns; the roads are controlled by extensive checkpoints that can turn half an hour’s travel into a four-day journey (Loewenstein, 2004: 104). As Loewenstein, Doumani, writing on daily life in Nablus, also gives examples regarding how IDF opens gun fire upon civilians, even though they are not a member of any militant group or militarily resisting against the solders. The extermination of Shaden Abu Hijleh and Halid Salah is striking examples of the “shoot to kill” policy of Israel that Doumani presented. From the humanitarian monitors’ reports, we understand that this policy can be used for children too (Doumani, 2004: 42; Cook, 2001: 8-9).
Characterized by a life between a past full of conflict and an unknown future, today “being Palestinian” has become an increasingly complex and heavy identity to bear under these social and political conditions. The Palestinian society becomes one which has been shaped by violence and the threat of violence. Abufarha lists the many ways in which violence influences the Palestinian society: “home demolitions and ethnic cleansing, land confiscation and the uprooting of their trees, encapsulation and restriction of movement, denial of access to their natural resources and the surrounding environment they live in, and isolation from the rest of the world” (Abufarha, 2006: 247; Omer, 2005: 8 and 75).

Finally it is worth mentioning the “segregation wall” encompassing more than 50 Israeli civilian settlements in the Occupied Territories. According to the Israeli authorities, the wall is “a defensive measure, designed to block the passage of terrorists, weapons and explosives into the State of Israel”; however, most of the wall has not been constructed on the Green Line between Israel and the West Bank. Close to 90% of the route of the wall is on Palestinian land inside the West Bank, encircling Palestinian towns and villages and cutting off communities and families from each other, separating farmers from their land and Palestinians from their places of work, education and health care facilities and other necessary services. Describing the Wall as the world’s largest open-air prison, Algadi, Israeli refusenik, says that “this is not just one fence... it is a system of barriers. In Qalqilya, 40,000 Palestinians live behind a steel wall that has only one gate. In Tulkarm, 75,000 people are contained in an enclave. Rumaneh is another walled ghetto” and warns, “the most dangerous areas are the small isolated Palestinian villages vulnerable to strikes by paramilitary settlers” (Twair, 2004: 12 and 33).

3. Personal Goals and Motivations

3.1. Psychology of Suicide Bombings

Nearly all discussions on suicidology studies begin by mentioning Durkheim’s classical work, the Suicide. Although the explanatory influence and power of Durkheim’s concept and typologies are controversial, they are still considered as the main schemes in searching suicidal behavior. One of Durkheim’s suicidal categories akin to the current suicidal attack is the “optional altruistic suicide” which occurs in a situation where the self becomes a part of the group identity, giving up his/her own persona by prioritizing the society or nation’s aspirations without regarding his/her needs and safety (Durkheim, 1951: 221-227).

It is not easy to fully explain general suicidal behavior, moreover it is much harder to comprehend the suicide bombers’ real psychology. Studying
the cases of Palestine and Lebanon from the 1980s onward, Merari argues that it is not possible to develop the psychological profile of suicide bombers, whereas Israili claims, going far beyond Merari’s findings, that not even the risk factors associated commonly with suicidal behavior are seen in suicide bombers. However, with Yang and Lindsay, Lester says that these two results are not precise and most probably incorrect (Lester, Yang, Lindsay, 2004: 286). If we were to summarize the psycho-dynamic speculations on suicide bombings, we could say that: While Kushner and Salib suggest the Palestinian suicide bombers may be “experiencing feelings of hopelessness and anger”; Volkan recommends that potential suicide bombers have “disturbed personal identities and are seeking some external agent to internalize so as to stabilize their internal world.” Mentioning “the motive of vengeance”, Rosenberg advocates “the restoration of self-esteem” in destructing of the enemy rather than conquering it, whereas Lachkar suggests that suicide bombers may have a “borderline personality” associated with emotional disorders, chaotic interactions, profound fears of abandonment and annihilation, tendency to blame others and use defense mechanisms (Lester, Yang, Lindsay, 2004: 286).

Merari finds in his case study that there is no significant evidence for the risk factor of suicidal behavior, saying that “existing sociological and psychological theories of suicide seem to be inappropriate for explaining suicidal terrorism.” Despite lacking clear psycho-pathological symptoms, Merari points out that there is a correlation between suicide bombings and wishes for revenge following a personal trauma arising from killing, torturing or arresting of a family member, a sibling or friend by a paramilitary unit (Merari, 2004: 438-439).

A leading psychiatrist in Gaza and a cited reference on Palestinian suicide bombers, Sarraj says that, determining a zero point from the Gazan social life before 1967, even regular homicide events were occasional in Gaza -maybe one for every few years, and adds that this society was not a violent one. Mentioning that the Israeli occupation brings violence and hatred into the society and destroys love and affection, Sarraj reads the suicide bombings as a reaction of people who are hurt because of systematic and chronic humiliation (Sarraj, 2002: 73-76). The another psychologist from Beit Zafafa in Palestine, Shalfic Masalqa argues that the suicidal acts are directed by the atmosphere of hopelessness caused by the occupation, rather than religious, political or nationalistic reasons. She says that as the main stimulation “[t]here is something in the atmosphere that touches everyone and that can explain a major part of the phenomena: hopelessness, helplessness, despair, thinking of death rather than life, which is opposite to human nature” (Victor, 2003: 28-29).

According to Altman, due to their interpersonal and interactive features, suicide bombings can be perceived as a means of communication. He further
adds that the bomber integrates his/her real death with the psychological death already occurred, a death upon which the bomber puts the blame his/her surroundings. “Extreme shame and extreme humiliation can be experienced as psychological death. People will kill and die for their honor or their self-respect, because to lose their dignity can be experienced as a fate worse than death”; at this point, throwing away his/her real death upon an audience consisting of those who he/she feels are responsible for his/her death, the bomber takes revenge of his/her psychological death (Altman, 2005: 16).

Besides being a symbol for humiliation and psychological death, the bombings are a transformation of utter feelings of powerlessness into challenge and rebellion. As an answer for his/her sense of victimization, the suicide bomber directs his/her own existence by taking control of his/her own death, and challenges to foe by his/her death which is already in the hands of others. While the actions turn into a form of self-expression against powerlessness and helplessness, the bombers also struggle to create a consciousness of the liability for their people’ psychological death; the suicide bombings denote “a communicative intent”; so they to a certain extent designate a hope and expectation for salvation. Nonetheless, that Israel denies the responsibility of killing Palestinians causes the guilt representing the suicide bombing unilaterally to falls upon the Palestinians. This vicious circle escalates the humiliation and provides the persistence of the suicide bombings in a form of chain (Altman, 2005: 16-17).

2.2. Personal Motivations

The argument that suicide bombings are perpetrated by psychopath and insane people is not backed up the researches on the subject. The attacks are been carried out by a depressive personality completely. Saying that suicide bombings are martyrdom, and fulfilled in a normal mental attitude, Richardson asserts that abnormal persons are not definitely utilized in suicide actions. In fact, while Hamas states only normal persons are used in the attacks, the spokesperson of the Palestine Islamic Jihad says “we are not recruiting depressive people. Such a person should not be allowed to be martyr even if he has a chance in a thousand. Martyrdom operation (al-’amaliyâtu-l istishâd) is an accurate for the person who wants to live” (Richardson, 2006: 117).

Even so, there are some personal motivations affecting the decision of a possible bomber. Victor, who studies four Palestinian women suicide bombers, indicates that the suicide bombings are fulfilled in a mixture of religious fundamentalism and ardent patriotism under destructive effects of the occupation. According to Victor’s observations the women suicide bombers’ personal motivation and psychology can be listed in the following way: to
have a painful life after being left by a husband, to find yourself at the focus of ridicule and disdain because of an unapproved woman-man relationship within the cultural structure, not being able to have a child, to be forced to bear the full responsibility for raising a child as a single mother, to crave an education unavailable to you, to be compelled by tradition to an arranged marriage, to feel profound sympathy and responsibility towards a beloved male killed or humiliated, to have financial problems, not to have professional fulfillment and not to have enough official and unofficial support to put up with personal problems (Victor, 2003: 233-234).

Victor observes the nihilism and emptiness in Darine Abu Aisha and the feeling of self-loss in Ayat el-Akrhas, explains that in Wafa Idris’s situation, which is also accurate for the other bombers, Wafa has courage and mentality given by religious and nationalistic goals in combination with her depression after getting divorced because of not being able to give birth (Victor, 2003: 47 and 246). In spite of Victor’s conclusion that Wafa was in depression, Idris’s family members and co-workers don’t admit that she was a depressive person; on the contrary, despite the hardships related to getting divorced, they insist that such an attack carried out by Wafa was motivated by the Israeli occupation and coercion, instead of her depression and trauma (Aydinalp, 2009a: 209; Matza, 2002: 25; Bennet, 2002: 37).

Especially feelings of revenge and ineptness stand out as the main personal motivation for suicide bombings. When a person feels that he/she has run out prevailing options, the human bomb emerges as a strong alternative to deal with problems encountered. Saying that her eldest son, Abdullah, was in his twenties when he was killed by Isreli soldiers, Sihab Gadallah, a forty-year-old mother, explains her motivation in her last will just before the attack: “My boy was killed. I had not any reason to live anymore. I wish to get the vengeance of my boy, and I believe that Allah will look after my husband and children I left behind” (Richardson, 2006: 122).

The human bomb establishes a dual relationship with death. In the mind of a bomber, the dying and killing become a kind of way to live and to make live. Another suicide bomber declares the final point in his last video in this way:

“I am not in love with death...I want to live. I want to have a home filled with children, and still want to be a doctor. From the age of about six, I dreamed of becoming a doctor, of being able to save lives. I want to do something real that would save the lives my people. And yet, I see that there are many ways of saving lives, and that taking lives can be a part of the process of saving lives. That is where I am now, preparing to take lives to save my people” (Atvan, 2006: 108).
As the conflict process results in persistent hatred, a final triggering event directly experienced causes the bomber to focus on the enemy. Obeida Khalil, Palestinian woman arrested on her way to carry out a suicide bombing, says on the way to her bombing:

“I was young during the first intifada but I saw how Israelis killed our little children and destroyed our houses... during the current intifada I was engaged, but four days before our wedding my fiancé [was] killed by Israelis. My brother and female cousin were also shahids.”

Another Palestinian, Hanadi Jaradat, stories why she made a decision to be a part of the Palestinian resistance. Just four months before her action, she mentions how her brother, to be married three days later, had been murdered in front of the entire family by an Israeli paramilitary unit which had come to execute her cousin Saleh, who was also there. “Since the day I saw my brother’s blood”, Jaradat says “I have determined to play a part in liberating Palestine. That goal is bigger and more important than my private pain” (Ibid, 115).

Besides the feeling of revenge and ineptness, the religious legitimation of the suicide bombings is an important part of personal motivation. Given the last wills of the bombers in the final videos, bombers legitimate their actions within sense of sacrificing themselves to the Creator (Victor, 2003: 232). Here we should mention the differentiation between the bomber’s religiosity and the bomber’s usage of religious justification. Even if the bomber is not so a practical Muslim in terms of religious faith and commitment, the bomber can rationalize his/her attack within a religious meaning system. In the same way, Ephrahim Kam, a former intelligence expert, draws attention to this point by saying: “they don’t strike you anymore as being particularly religious” (Reuter, 2004: 109).

When suicide bombings are interpreted as martyrdom operations, religious explanation and legitimations on dying and killing function to a great extent as a source of motivation for a possible bomber. Within the religious frame of reference, the martyr/shahid sacrificing himself/herself for Allah gains a very high status just beside Prophet Muhammad. There are many benefits for the shahid, including forgiving of the shahid’s sins, redemption from the torments of the grave, security from the “fear of hell”, the chance to get married with seventy two huris (beautiful virgins), and the ability to extend these privileges to seventy relatives as a shahid being worth more than the world and all that is in it. The psychological realm constructed surrounding the martyrdom cult or being a shahid makes all other profane dynamics and speculations regarding the suicide bombings meaningless (Moghadam, 2003: 72; Victor, 2003: 29-30). The shahid who believes that he is gaining a very high status throughout his
operation, on the one hand, frees himself from the negatives of the world, and on the other hand, copes with the fear, pain, isolation and separation that he will go through during the process of dying (Kearl, 1989: 178).

When religious legitimation is used in to explain suicide bombings, the essential character of bombings are totally transformed. This is noticeably illustrated in the words of a bomber who stories his experience:

“We were floating, swimming, in the feeling that we were about to enter eternity. We had no doubts. We made an oath on the Koran, in the presence of Allah -a pledge not to waver. This jihad pledge is called bayt al ridwan, after the garden in Paradise that is reserved for the prophets and the martyrs. I know that there are other ways to do jihad. But this one is sweet -the sweetest. All martyrdom operations, if done for Allah’s sake, hurt less than a gnat’s bite!” (Hassan, 2001: 41).

Nonetheless, Ahmed Yasin, the former spiritual leader of Hamas, points out that religious gratification and rewards have been misunderstood by outsiders, and that the ultimate goal of these operations is to obtain Allah’s satisfaction and consent (rıdâ-i ilâhi). He describes the power behind the bombings in this way:

“Love of martyrdom is something deep inside the heart. But these rewards are not in themselves the goal of the martyr. The only aim is to win Allah’s satisfaction. That can be done in the simplest and speediest manner by dying in the cause of Allah. And it is Allah who selects the martyrs” (Hassan, 2001: 40).

The standards of individuals are sociologically determined by their social environment. The social environment that graces the operations, and the sub-culture created by this environment should be playing an active role in the process of personal motivation. The fact that being a shahid is institutionalized beyond its theological meaning as a societal norm in the way of heroism results in the internalization of the suicide bombings by the young with a hidden subtlety. While the shahid prepares himself for eternal salvation in an eschatological sense, the shahid, who already believes that his/her prevailing life has no meaning, is transformed into elusive hero in his societal environment by means of the operation (Oliver-Steinberg, 2005:76; 92 and 100; US Army, August 15, 2005).

4. Strategic Goals and Motivations

From the perspective of the “Rational Choise Theory”, terroristic behavior is a willful choice within a rational logic and calculations as an outcome of a
political strategy after its efficiency and value are assessed by organizations as a chosen alternative within other options. Terrorism is generally carried out as a last resort following the failure of other methods. Crenshaw says that this is true for the conflict between Palestine and Israel, where terrorism is applied as a tactic after the failure of Arab struggles at conventional warfare against Israel (Crenshaw, 1998: 7-8).

In fact, the Palestinians tried the peace way to obtain their political goals as well as armed resistance. The organizations in Palestine rely on the argument that the peace process and the struggles for compromise don’t meet the expectation of Palestinians, and they uncover a need for an alternative strategy that will fulfill the Palestinians’ national goals; in this respect, as an alternative strategy the martyrdom operations (amaliyât-ul istishâdiyya) are more efficient in comparison to the peace negotiations. As a matter of fact the PA’s failure to get the concession to establish an independent Palestine state has increased the terroristic tactics carried out to push out Israel from the Palestinian territories (Hafez, 2006: 27).

Hafez argues that the asymmetry in the powers forces the weaker to produce well-timed, smart and also deadly human bombs to shock the stronger, and he adds that in the Palestine case from the perspective of the organizations, the human bombs depend on strategic calculations within the asymmetric warfare context that has been shaped by the asymmetries between the powers (Ibid, 7). Shalabi, the member of al-Fatah, explains this asymmetry shaping the perpetrations: “You have to bring in Israeli losses for the resistance to continue. The Israeli soldiers are very protected in his tank, they hardly get their heads out of their tanks. The lack of weapons that can damage these tanks allows these tanks to come in and tear down half of the Camp and we cannot do any damage to it, so we want to retaliate, one way or another. At the organizational level the members of the organization are always pleased, even though its outcome has grave consequences for the members of organization...” (Abufarha, 2006: 424). Reminding the same perspective as Shalabi did, Muhammad Nazzal, in charge of the foreign relations for Hamas, also states that the martyrdom operations provide a balance of power for the Palestinians who don’t have any apache helicopters or war planes like the Israelis (Hafez, 2006: 174).

When the fact that the ultimate goal is to gain freedom in Palestine is taken into consideration, it can be observed that the suicide operations not only provide this goal, but also cause a heavy military response from the other side. It is typical that while Israel pulls out from the Occupied Territories within the process for a while, it keeps its main politics and prevails its military control over the West Bank and Gaza, continuing to establish new settlements. Despite the fact that this makes the strategic logic of suicide missions controversial; at
this point, it is more appropriate to see the human bombs as “dying not to let you win” rather than “dying to win”. According to Anwar, “the overall strategy [of resistance] is the liberation”; however, the operations “will not liberate Palestine”. Anwar, a member of the military wing of Hamas, interpreters the strategic logic of suicide missions by stating that: “they are an expression of no surrender to the reality and for the Palestinian cause to remain alive in our memory and Israelis’ memory” (Abufarha, 2006: 436).

Furthermore, the operations aim not only to utilize means of violence; but also to create an elusive fear of violence and terror by disrupting the routine of daily life. By the concept of organizations, martyrdom works militarily endeavor to create “tawazun al-ru’ub” (the balance of fear), and give a message of “you are paying the price” to the Israelis. Anwar explains this point:

“…asserting to them while we are not safe in our homes, you are not safe in your homes. Before you launch a shell on our people, you must calculate a thousand calculations for the _istishhadiyeen_ and the explosive work. These operations played a role in bringing such a balance of fear. When they assassinate Palestinian leader, their newspapers report that there is what looks like a curfew in Israel. Their buses would be empty. The last statistics say that there were 25 families that left Ashdod and many others may leave. This _intifada_ had a role in immigration and migration” (Ibid, 427).

The Organization gives a message to the world that they are people under occupation who seek liberation, as it also gives a message to the West and the Americans, in particular, through these operations that there will not be any economic and political stability in the Middle East, the Arab and Islamic region as a whole. There is also a warning and calling for the Arab nations by presenting Palestine as a dramatic example, that they should make a right choice and stand up for the Palestinian cause. A Hamas member, Hassan argues the correlation between the operations and the Zionist plans concerning the region by saying that “their dreams of expansion to Jordan and Lebanon are shattered because they are forced to work in the Palestinian areas and to concentrate on the land of Palestine”, he also mentions that “these operations obviate the wider Zionist project concerning the region” (Ibid, 438-439).

The Organization’s wish of killing can be seen as a part of the political strategy; that is, the operations are used in coordination with the political developments, not just aiming to kill people. Sheikh Omar, Hamas Political leader, briefly explains this strategy: “The struggle cannot be built on disorder. There is a political objective. The rifle plants and the politics harvest...we want to coordinate the rhythm, the rhythm of resistance. There are various methods to throw out the occupation; both tracks [the resistance and politics] have to be in harmony (Ibid, 440-441).
The Organization’s wish of killing by utilizing the suicidal mission is also motivated by some tactical advantages. The suicide operation is generally more destructive than other tactics and, the attacker is much more likely to accomplish the mission, causing maximum damage at target. The human bombs can also hide weapons on their body and make last-minutes changes more easily. Because there is no need for any escape plan or rescue team, they are be able to break into heavily guarded targets whoever or wherever they are. In addition, the human bomb leaves the targeted authority with damage without any deterrence, coercion, and revenge. The havoc coming out from the attack encourages new recruits for such perpetrations as well; in this respect, the suicide bombings almost turn into “the art of martyrdom” as a kind of vicious circle (Pape, 2005: 28). That is why military commanders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad asserted that the human bombs were one of the precise ways of striking a target. A senior Hamas leader states this point: “The main thing is to guarantee that a large number of the enemy will be affected. With an explosive belt or bag, the bomber has control over vision, location, and timing” (Hassan, 39 and so on).

Another advantage of human bombing facilitating organization’s wish of killing is that it is a low-cost strategy. According to a Palestinian security official, apart from a willing young man or woman, the most expensive item among all is transportation to a distant Israeli town. The total cost of a typical operation is about a hundred and fifty dollars (Ibid, 40 and so on). Khosrokhavar, depending on a cover story in the Time magazine, states that an explosive belt has a cost changing from 1500 to 3000 dollars (Khosrokhavar, 2005: 126). However when the human body going through demise is taken into account, it can be said that suicide bombings are actually a high-cost strategy. Yet suicide operations clearly illustrate how people can sacrifice themselves when their crucial interests are at stake. Besides many of them already feel dead, and they want to transform their body into a strategic weapon for gaining independence and recovering their dignity again (Pape, 2005: 42).

5. The Point at which Wishes Merge: Bomber on the Way to Operation

A would-be-bomber gradually gets ready at a point where the organization’s wish of killing and the person’s wish of dying merge. For a bomber on way to his/her operation, the line between living and dying loses meaning. It is preferable to choose to end one’s own life on one’s own terms for a glorious cause than to have it taken in an unknown manner at an unknown time for nothing in a conflict determined by the realities of an asymmetrical battle. At this stage, suicide terrorism is increasingly becoming an evil but rational choice.
when all other fighting options are similarly suicidal (Speckhard-Ahkmedovax 2006; 460).

The suicide bombings are not fulfilled alone, the bomber is chosen, encouraged and indoctrinated by a guiding group on way to operation (Richardson, 2006: 17). Organizations play a critical role from the recruitment stage to planning, and the execution of a suicide attack. Moghadam analyzes organizations’ roles in the bombings by referring to Jessica Stern and explains that they provide the several resources and services necessary to sustain a prolonged and effective campaign of suicide terrorism, including fund-raising. Organizations also supply the procurement of weapons and the technical know-how for their assembly and use and they are in charged of the recruitment, training, and indoctrination of the shaheed; making overall decision and planning; intelligence-gathering; target selection; and public relations (Moghadam, 2003: 76).

Operations have been carried out by means of the “martyrdom cell” (al khaliyya al istishhadiyya) which is the main unit organizing attacks. After organizations make a decision for an attack, they structure martyrdom cells consisting of two or three backing youths with a cell leader. These cells are where extreme organizational motivation takes place. Each cell operates separately and secretly; nobody knows other cell members except cell leaders. A candidate placed in a cell doesn’t discuss the martyrdom cell with anybody, including family members and friends and, just focuses on the mission assigned to him/her. A candidate in a martyrdom cell is called as a “living martyr” (al shaheed al hay) within the indoctrination process. Apart from the leaders, nobody, including living martyrs and other cell members, knows exact time and place of the operation until just before the attack on the grounds of security and, the cells are dissolved right away after the operation has been completed (Hassan, 2001: 41; Moghadam, 2003: 76).

A person who already has personal motivation passes into the institutional stage with assistance of organizations. During this stage, the “volunteer for martyrdom”, taken entirely under the control of the organization, is indoctrinated and trained by the organization, which molds the individual into a highly committed “living martyr.” According to Moghadam, at this phase, the goal of the organization is “to take all measures necessary to assure the individual’s commitment to perpetrate the act -in fact, to morally bind the volunteer to his commitment and to make sure that he will not change his mind. To achieve this goal, the organization, during this phase, will use several techniques, including pep talks, group pressure, and extrications of personal and public commitments from which the candidate will find it difficult, if not impossible, to turn back” (Moghadam, 2003: 69).
Within this indoctrination process a candidate reaches “a point of no return”; however, it is a known fact that some bombers give up the operation just before the execution of the attack. A mutual commitment formed between the candidates which is a very powerful motivation to go through the mission, eliminates hesitation and second thoughts. By doing so, cell members are mutually committed to an unbreakable “social contract”. After this point, going back on one’s word or making a sudden change is not only perceived as bad and contradictory, but also inconstancy and a big disgrace (Merari, 2004: 444).

In the process of being a human bomb, religious text and symbols have been utilized by both religious and secular groups to recruit, to prepare and motivate a candidate. Although it does not seem to be an accurate explanation to directly link the suicide bombings to religious radicalism without other social and political dynamics, in this process religion is particularly used as the mechanism of motivation and legitimation for the attacks (Aydinalp, 2009b, 145-146).

During the training period, the candidates are subjected to both religious indoctrination and anti-Israeli propaganda. Volunteers attend special classes, usually between two and four hours a day. In those classes we see that the emphasis is particularly placed on those parts of the Quran and Hadith that glorify martyrdom, and that describe the benefits of the afterlife. Harvey Kushner adds that “students are assigned various tasks to test their commitment: delivering weapons for use in clandestine activities is a popular way to judge the student’s ability to follow orders and keep a secret” (Moghadam, 2003: 84). Here the preparation of the candidate mentally and technically should not be misunderstood. As Merari points out, the candidate is already convinced of the justification of the cause for which he/she wishes to die, the training stage aims to further strengthen the motivation and to keep the candidate from changing his/her decision. Besides religious themes, nationalistic themes are a part of the training process as well. In this respect, the dichotomy of the Arab glory from the days of the Prophet Muhammad and the Caliphate to the humiliation of Palestinians today by Israel functions to encourage the candidate (Merari, 2004: 444).

Many bombers undergo the training process differentiating between several weeks to several months; however, the training and preparation time change according to the urgency of the operation. In fact, the more planning period extends the larger risk of being deciphered and the more danger the security of the organization is in. Furthermore there is a lager risk that the candidate might change his/her mind or let other people know their secrets. Therefore, it can be said that the operations are fast and simple without detailed planning, but in a secret and attentive way. After the decision to carry out the operation has been made, the organization gathers intelligence, supplies the
bomb material and assembles it, and plans the departure of the attack to the target selected (Moghadam, 2003: 84-85).

The candidate records a video before the operation in which he/she articulates his/her last wills and declares the sponsoring organization and the aim of the operation. The records function in several ways. Firstly, saying that “this is my free decision”, the candidate articulates his/her willingness with his/her own words and, this declaration prevents possible objection and blames that will put forward by the families. Secondly, saying that “I urge all of you to follow me”, the candidate gives a strong social message to the others on sacrificing for the freedom of Palestine, and the candidate becomes a role model for the younger generations. Thirdly, watching his/her record and the videos of his/her predecessors again and again, the living martyrdom is completely integrated with the operation and accustomed to being a martyr. Furthermore, the records which are sent to local and international media are aimed to create global sensation, in doing so; on the one hand, the world public opinion pays attention to the Palestinian problem and on the other hand, the sponsoring organization has a chance to promote itself to a global extent. Finally, the recorded declaration is not only a means of propaganda and publicity or just a last will; but also an assurance of the operation. Once the candidate declares his/her decision in front of the whole word, he or she enters a path in which there is no return (Hassan, 2001: 42; Merari, 2004: 445).

Just before the bomber sets out on his final journey, he/she undergoes the last several processes. The stage regarding technical details like how to camouflage the explosives, how to work the detonator, what time the detonator should be pressed or what should be done if the detonator gets stuck follow the extensive spiritual stage. The candidate takes the ritual abolition, cleaning the whole body, puts on clean clothes, and attends at least one communal prayer at a mosque. He prays the traditional Islamic prayers prayed before battle, asking Allah for forgiveness and blessing for his mission. Hassan stories the bomber’s last minutes on his way to operation: “He puts a Koran in his left breast pocket, above the heart, and he straps the explosives around his waist or picks up a briefcase or a bag containing the bomb. The planner bids him farewell with the words “May Allah be with you, may Allah give you success so that you achieve Paradise.” The would-be martyr responds, “Inshallah, we will meet in Paradise” (Hassan, 2001: 42)

Conclusion

An analytical framework, which includes individual motivations beside organizational ones, is helpful in examining the process of how a human turns into a deadly bomb; however, it misses out the occupation as the main
political dynamic that has been motivating the suicide bombings. To explain
the suicide bombings just depending on personal and social factors without
paying attention to a foreign occupation or oppression provides us to see
the facilitating dynamics of the suicide bombings, not the main stimulation
that launches the suicide campaigns. Since the occupation creates a new and
different aura which shapes other personal and socio-economic conditions,
where persons feel that the existential problem is threatening their life and
find power to sacrifice themselves for their people’s freedom, we consider that
a proper model to examine suicide bombings should begin with occupation as
a main political dynamic behind the bombings.

According to the model introduced in this article, the occupation creates
an actual situation mobilizing the resistance whether it be children hurling
stones or human bombs. The social and personal motivations on the other
hand are catalyst forms, which generate an appropriate environment and
accelerate the decision making for the operation, not the causes producing the
human bombs. Furthermore, the organization organizes the dynamism and
momentum of the resistance and provides the technical and logistic assistance
for the person, who already feels psychologically and sociologically suffocated,
paving the way for the operation. Thereby it can be concluded that the suicide
bombings have been carried out as a combination of psychological, sociological
and organizational factors with the destructive effects of occupation; thus, an
appropriate explanation of suicide bombings requires that all these factors be
analyzed. We think that the understanding of suicide bombing requires the
“process approach” from occupation to indoctrination period, rather than one
or two sided approaches, which focus on just organization or social dynamics.

Notes
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1. According to Pape, from 1980 to 2003 overall suicide attacks amount to 3 percent of all
terrorist attacks, yet account for 48 percent of total deaths, excluding September 11.

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