

SUICIDE TERRORISM AS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PROCESS: A COMPLEX RELATIONAL APPROACH

Çokboyutlu Bir Süreç Olarak İntihar Terörü: Kompleks İlişkisel Bir Yaklaşım

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Abstract

Although suicide terrorism is a complex and multidimensional concept, the extant literature examines the phenomenon from limited aspects and on an individual basis. This paper argues that the complex relational processes approach developed by Stacey (2001) can be a useful framework for understanding suicide terrorism. The complex relational processes approach asserts that certain behavior patterns emerge through iterative relationships people develop at different ontological levels, i.e., within, between and among human bodies, simultaneously. If suicide terrorism is examined within this framework, the entire process constructing terrorist behaviour at different ontological levels can be better understood and more precise reaction strategies can be developed.

Keywords: Suicide Terrorism, Complex Relational Processes Approach

Öz

İntihar terörü birey seviyesinden devlet seviyesine uzanan ölçekte çok boyutlu ve kompleks bir olgu olmasına rağmen mevcut literatür bu olguyu sadece bir veya birkaç yönü üzerinden incelemektedir. Bu çalışma Stacey (2001) tarafından geliştirilmiş kompleks ilişkisel süreçler yaklaşımının intihar terörünün incelenmesinde kullanılabilecek önemli bir çerçeve olabileceğini savunmaktadır. Kompleks ilişkisel yaklaşım insanın kendi bedeninden başlamak üzere diğer bireylerle ve toplumla gerçekleştirdiği sürekli yinelenen ilişkilerinden zaman içerisinde çeşitli davranış kalıplarının kendiliğinden ortaya çıktığını ifade etmektedir. İntihar terörü bu çerçeveye oturtularak incelendiğinde terörist davranışı ortaya çıkaran

tekil sebeplerden ziyade tüm süreç daha geniş bir perspektiften kavranabilecek ve böylece daha net reaksiyon stratejileri geliştirilebilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İntihar Terörü, Kompleks İlişkisel Yaklaşım

Introduction

Suicide terrorism is a complex issue with individual, social and global components. Traditional efforts to explain this phenomenon mostly focus on one aspect of suicide terrorism and ignore its complexity. Those who attempt to explain suicide terrorism through psychological theories, for example, under-emphasize socio-cultural and economic aspects; and those who explain it through social theories ignore the individual (emotional) side. A holistic approach that captures various dimensions of suicide terrorism is therefore needed to understand this concept more comprehensively and produce precise policy responses. It is argued in this paper that a 'complex relational' approach can help us develop a conception of suicide terrorism, which includes individual, social and organizational aspects simultaneously.

This study aims to develop the first steps of a complexity-based analysis of suicide terrorism, which is promising for future research. The complex relational processes theory explains emergence of social phenomena through the processes that include 'bodily interactions' of individuals, groups and society at the same time and on the same ontological level (Stacey, 2001). The core argument of this study is that terrorism in general and suicide terrorism in specific are the products of certain processes that are constantly reproduced through physical ('bodily' in Stacy's words) interactions of people, groups of people and the society at large. Therefore policy responses should involve all of these components of the phenomenon.

The organization of the paper is as follows: the first section gives the definition and a short history of suicide terrorism; the second section surveys and analyzes traditional approaches to suicide terrorism; the third section introduces the theory of complex relational processes as a theoretical framework of the analysis; and the fourth section applies the theory to suicide terrorism. In addition to the related literature, the suicide database compiled by Gambetta and Tzvetkova (2006) is used to present evidence where necessary. The database includes 513 suicide attacks conducted from 1981 to 2006 by 17 different organizations. Related tables and figures are demonstrated in the appendix.

1. The Definition and the History of Suicide Terrorism

Suicidal behavior can be defined, in the simplest form, as one intentionally ending his or her life. Durkheim (1897/1952) examines the suicide phenomenon within societal context. According to Durkheim, suicidal behavior is strongly associated with "social integrity." While having robust relations and ties to the society tightly binds an individual to life, problematic social relations and too weak or too strong of ties to societal life enhances the risk of suicide. Durkheim identifies three types of suicide: individualistic, altruistic, and fatalistic. Among these, the altruistic suicide model well explains the general characteristics of suicide terrorism from a sociological standpoint. The altruistic type of suicide is a consequence of too strong of ties between the individual and society. Here, the suicidal person expects

to yield high benefits to society through sacrificing his/her life. In other words, the suicidal person sacrifices his/her 'worthless' entity to the good of his society (Durkheim, 1897/1952).

Various scholars define suicide terrorism in somewhat similar contexts. That is, suicide terrorism can be defined as a type of terrorist action which is committed to reach a political end through the sacrifice of the attacker together with his victims (Bloom, 2004). Suicide attacks aim to kill as many people as possible because terrorists attack formerly marked targets after meticulous intelligence collection and a preparation process. A high death toll is desired by perpetrators to trigger psychological outrage within society, so that public pressure, triggered by the attacks, makes the government heed to the attacking terrorist organization's requests (Atran, 2003).

According to Pedahzur (2005), suicide attacks have several advantages over other types of terrorist attacks. First, it is the terrorist organization that assesses the target in advance and sends the suicide terrorist there; yet, in most cases the suicide attacker is the one who decides the specific timing of the attack. Thus, the attacker can wait until the most optimum conditions are formed and then attack when he/she can elicit the maximum amount of damage. It is obvious that this kind of an attack would yield more casualties than conventional methods of terrorism. As a matter of fact, Pedahzur (2005) notes that although suicide terrorism accounts for only 3 % of all the terrorist attacks in the world, 48 % of the total death toll- caused by terrorist attacks- is caused by this type of terrorism. Second, since suicide attacks cause more fatalities and fear in society, terrorist organizations using this method are more likely to be taken seriously by governments and media. This, then, will attract more terrorist organizations to resort to suicide terrorism (Pedahzur, 2005).

In addition to high death tolls and the convenience of execution, cost-effectiveness can be noted as another advantage of suicide attacks. That is, suicide attacks are easy to commit because they do not require plans for escape routes for the attacker. Moreover, since the attacker will die in the attack, the risk of the attacker being captured and interrogated is automatically eliminated. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that suicide terrorism is a rather effective method of asymmetric warfare for those who pursue military resistance against regular and powerful armies (Sprinzak, 2000). As a matter of fact, data shows that the number of suicide attacks and death tolls yielded by these attacks have increased considerably from the 1980s to the 2000s.

1.1. The History of Suicide Terrorism

Suicide terrorism is not a new type of terrorism. Hoffman (1993) notes that early examples of suicide attacks date back to 66-73 A.D. when the Romans invaded Jerusalem. According to Hoffman (1993), ancient Jewish Zealots committed individual suicide attacks, as well as other types of attacks such as poisoning the water wells used by the Romans, to resist the Roman occupation. Still, most scholars, including Hoffman (1993), address the "Assassins" as protagonists of suicide attacks horrifying societies to reach political ends. According to this literature, the Assassins was an Iran-originated, deviant fundamentalist Shi'a sect that fought against the Sunni (Muslim) authorities by committing assassinations that also resulted in the death of the attacker. Hassan-i Sabbah, who claimed his prophecy, based in the mountains between Iran and Syria, founded the organization. It was active during



the period between the 11th and 13th centuries. Leaders of the organization made *Fida'is*, assassins who were specifically trained for suicidal attacks, addicted to hashish. By doing this, not only did the leadership easily control and manage the organization, but they also encouraged the *Fida'i* before the attack. That being said, *Fida'is* were promised a life in heaven in return for sacrificing their lives in the holy fight against evil. The Assassins murdered several Sunni leaders and statesmen including khaliphets, vazirs and sultans; and caused great amounts of fear and anxiety among society (Andriolo, 2002; Hoffman, 1993; B. Lewis, 1985; Pedahzur, 2005; Sprinzak, 2000). Hoffman (1993) notes that this is an example of religion playing a role in invigorating terrorism and claims that there exist some religiously motivated terrorist organizations acting based on similar motivations in this very era. In addition to the Assassins, Sprinzak (2000) and Pedahzur (2005) posit that Indonesian and Filipino bigots committed suicide attacks against European colonialists in the eighteenth century as early examples of terrorist groups that resort to suicide attacks.

Nonetheless, several scholars consider Israel's occupation of Lebanon in 1982 as the triggering event of the new wave of suicide attacks (Fine, 2008; Moghadam, 2003; Pedahzur, 2005; White, 2002). Foreigners, for example, established Hezbollah in 1982 to end the occupation of Lebanon. Although the primary enemy of Hezbollah was Israel, the organization committed their first attack against the U.S. embassy in 1983, leaving 63 American citizens dead and hundreds wounded. It was soon understood that the attack was committed by a suicide terrorist who drove a truck full of explosives into the U.S. embassy (Pedahzur, 2005). The impact of suicide bombings in terms of affording recognition for the organization and putting politicians into political limbo paved the way for the proliferation of suicide attacks among many other terrorist organizations (Nikbay & Sahliyah, 2008).

In sum, suicide terrorism is idiosyncratic because the suicide terrorist attacker takes action knowing that he/she will also be one of the victims of the attack. For that reason, the suicide attacker's emotions, internal calculations and his relations to his/her milieu and society need to be taken into consideration to analyze this phenomenon thoroughly. There are psychological, social and organizational dynamics of the phenomenon that should be delved into to get a more robust sense of the suicide terrorism phenomenon. The next section of the paper analyzes traditional psycho-social explanations for suicide attacks.

2. Psychological, Social and Organizational Dimensions of Suicide Attacks

Suicide terrorism is a specific type of both suicide and terrorism. Therefore, it is essential to figure out the psychological and social dynamics of suicide terrorism. Townsend (2007) contends that suicide terrorists cannot be ranked among other suicides because they carry certain distinctive characteristics. Townsend suggests that methods such as psychological autopsy would facilitate the understanding of the corroborating components of suicide terrorism. In fact, there exists a debate among scholars on the merits of profiling suicide terrorists. In most discussions with regard to whether a psychological profile can be declared for suicide bombers, the predominant conclusion is that psychological profiling for suicide terrorists is either impossible (Merari, 2005) or has little use, especially in preventing suicide bombings (Sprinzak, 2000).

Salib (2003) criticizes the existing suicide terrorism literature for ignoring the psychodynamic dimensions of the phenomenon. According to Salib, it is taken for granted by suicide terrorism scholars that suicide bombers are subject to powerful charisma of the leader who brainwashes them through propaganda. Salib stresses that it is also important to know whether or not suicide bombers are mentally normal.

According to Salib (2003), “two main motivations can be identified in the vast majority of suicide terrorist acts: the first is anger and a sense of hopelessness; the second is a deep religious belief that a better life awaits in paradise... The beliefs of the ‘inducer’ or ‘principal’ are transferred to close companions, who share and help to sustain such beliefs. This is not dissimilar to the structure of al-Qaida, with Osama bin Laden as its principal and inducer. His beliefs were shared and sustained initially by one or two close associates, in their self-imposed exile from the outside world, in a possible *folie à deux* (madness of two) or *à trois* (madness of three)” (p. 476).

In fact, the dynamics mentioned by Salib carry significant insights for suicide terrorism. That is, certain types of beliefs that may sound or, actually are, illogical, “evil” or “insane” can be shared and appreciated within a group of people, and this might create a kind of “social capital” through repetition over time.

Kushner (1996) posits that Palestinian suicide bombers are mostly university educated people coming from upper-middle class families. Another study on six Palestinian suicide bombers, (Kimhi & Even, 2004), groups the suicide bombers into five categories. According to this study, *religious terrorists*, who basically seek martyrdom, form the first category. These are single, young and enthusiastic people who are engaged in religious organizations that are ruled by authoritarian and charismatic leaders through strong group norms. The second category includes *exploited* people who do not have self-appreciation and consider suicide attacks a way for freeing his/herself from the world and an instrument for a happy life in heaven. The third category is comprised of those who seek *redemption from sins*. These people are perpetrators of crimes (i.e., homosexuals, drug abusers) and the terrorist organization gives them the opportunity to restore their respect and honor by attacking the enemy. The fourth category includes people who are seeking *revenge* for their beloved ones who were killed by the enemy. Finally, *national liberation seekers* form the fifth category of suicide bombers whose primary motivation is having an independent state, rather than religious motivations.

Sprinzak (2000, p. 68) cites Ariel Merari’s study on 50 suicide bombers from Hamas, Amal, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad. According to this study, it is impossible to develop a single psychological or socio-demographic profile of suicide terrorists. The study highlights external dynamics of conflict as the primary determinants of suicide terrorism categories. Multiple dimensions of conflicts engender several types of motivations for suicide bombers. Other than the most famous one- which is martyrdom- desire for revenge, hatred from the enemy, patriotism and a sense of victimization can be mentioned as examples of these motivations (Merari, 2005). The conclusions of Merari’s study concur with those of Kimhi and Even’s in terms of explaining the basic motivations behind suicide terrorism.



Stern (2003) also posits that it is impossible to constitute a single psychological profile for suicide terrorists. On the other hand, young people with certain problems (i.e., personal, economic, family-related, etc.) are mostly preferred by terrorist organizations; more specifically, recruiters desire people who are mentally immature; unemployed; and lack any social refuge, such as a girlfriend or wherewithal to enjoy life.

Referring to psychological profiling studies, Sprinzak (2000) contends that suicide bombers' personalities are constructed by circumstances in which they function. In that context, Sprinzak analyzes the profiles of suicide bombers from an organizational standpoint. According to this analysis, Hamas and Islamic Jihad use *Shahids* (martyrs) who are predominantly 18-27 years old, high school graduates and unemployed religious single males who have had someone killed or tortured from their milieu or consanguinity. These individuals do not become suicide attackers voluntarily. They are, rather, marked and convinced by their religious leaders and then undergo elaborate brainwashing processes before committing the attacks.

The Black Tigers, similarly, recruit young, unemployed and single individuals, though they do not offer any training program but choose guerillas that have already demonstrated excellent fighting skills. Finally the PKK prefers female suicide bombers because they can conceal the bomb easier than men (i.e., pretending to be a pregnant woman). In addition to this, these bombers are between 17-27 years old and generally come from poor and large families. Similar to the Palestinian organizations, the PKK recruits those whose relatives or friends have been killed or mistreated by the military or the police. Although being secular organizations, the PKK and the LTTE developed their own concept of martyrdom to construct a socially respected basis for their suicide attacks (Sprinzak, 2000).

Khashan (2003) surveyed 342 Palestinians in the refugee camps in Gaza to develop a profile of suicide bombers in terms of four criteria: political Islam, social functionality, socio-economic conditions and refugee camps as sources of suicide terrorism. Khashan finds that political Islam plays a significant role in galvanizing refugee camp residents for suicide attacks. Refugee camps are the focal point where poverty, desperation and fundamentalism converge. In addition to that, being subject to vulgar words and insulting behaviors of Israelis (especially employers and army officers) at work or at checkpoints during body-searches makes Palestinians feel humiliated and this is a pivotal causal factor for them to refer to the Palestinian terrorist organizations.

Finally, some scholars approach the terrorism phenomenon from a 'complexity' standpoint. Such approaches generally view terrorist organizations as networks or fluids. Network centric approaches (Carley, Dombroski, Tsvetovat, Reminga, & Kamneva, 2003; Dekker, 2005; Lewis, 2006) basically posit that terrorist organizations in the modern era are organized as scale-free networks in which most of the nodes are trivial, since they have only a few links. Scale-free networks are extremely resistant to random disruption (elimination of a cell for example) of their nodes because it is highly probable that the disrupted node is a trivial one. Therefore, it is suggested that law enforcement units organize as asymmetric units and focus on "critical hubs" to combat these types of organizations.

Some other scholars (Elliott & Kiel, 2004) perceive terrorist organizations as fluids rather than networks. This approach asserts that networks have constant relationships

across regions, thus disrupting a critical region will destroy the network. Yet, fluids are more flexible and not dependent on the boundaries. This approach regards modern terrorist organizations as fluids that are hard to terminate, since they easily adapt to new situations.

What is missing in both of these complexity-based approaches is that they cannot structure the relationship between individuals and society without separating them from each other. By so doing, they fall into the same handicap with the traditional approaches. Also, complexity based approaches mostly miss the emotional part of the picture by over-emphasizing the structure.

In short, there are various reasons and motivations behind suicide terrorism. The literature surveyed above mostly agrees on the argument that developing a single pattern of behavior for suicide terrorists is not possible. Still, it is likely to have more specific profiles if biographical databases of the known suicide attackers are constructed and conferred within scholarly research. Psychological autopsies of the suicide bombers are also considered worthy (Townsend, 2007). As a matter of fact, the arguments raised by traditional approaches imply the complex nature of suicide terrorism. Still, it is obvious that they fail to present a substantial explanation for suicide terrorism since they focus only on one or two dimensions of it. Data presented in Table-1 in the appendix, as well as some of the scholarly works cited above, demonstrate that very different types of terrorist organizations resort to suicide terrorism. The problem, then, is that the efforts to categorize suicide terrorists based on their psychological characteristics ignore individual processes that occur within the body of the attacker. They, then, explain the variety of categories with external dynamics. In other words, it is impossible to understand the big picture without seeing the micro level interactions- those that take place within human bodies and between human beings- and the dynamics that frame and are framed by these interactions. In the next section, the complex relational process model will be introduced as a basis for a more holistic explanation to the complex phenomenon of suicide terrorism.

3. Theoretical Framework: The Complex Relational Processes (CRP)

Stacey (2001) introduced a complexity based approach in organizational learning, knowledge management and knowledge creation to explain how certain dynamics that play important roles in organizational success emerge out of micro level interactions of individuals at the local level. In this approach, Stacey analyzes the emergence of individual-social relations, causal frameworks and organizational reflections of these relations from a complex relational point of view. In other words, “Why do people do what they do?” (Teleology), “How do they form their relationships?”; “What are the projections of these relations in organizations?” are the basic questions answered in his theory. Stacey’s explanations about the emergence of self, power relations and organizational identities are very much related to the issue under scrutiny here. The CRP approach is a harsh criticism of existing dominant theories of knowledge management and organizational learning. These theories basically posit that everything starts in the human brain, which structures external reality into mental models. Individuals process information through “mental models” and then make a choice and take action based on them. Communication between people is the mutual sending and receiving of mental models as signals. These individual relations are rectified through repetition and



this forms social patterns (structures) such as culture, values or beliefs that are stored as “collective memory” and constrain the actions of the individual. Thus, social structure is generated by iterative interactions among individuals but then becomes a higher level entity that is superior to the individual (Stacey, 2001).

Stacey stresses that the traditional approaches are not robust and therefore he develops his complex relational processes theory by mixing Complex Adaptive Systems, Evolutionary Psychology, Symbolic Interaction, Structuration and Social Constructivism theories together on a transformative teleology base. In other words, Stacey successfully synthesizes these theories by correcting one’s deficiency with another’s strength. For example, all but the structuration theory implicitly (CAS) or explicitly (constructivism, Evolutionary psychology) assumes that the individual and society are separate from each other. Stacey takes the structuration approach that suggests that both the individual and society emerge simultaneously and at the same level. Yet this approach ignores biological “bodies” of individuals, thus, Stacey uses psychology to correct that. When it comes to the outcome of this process, according to the Complex Relational Processes Theory, humans are both biological and social entities and they act towards both themselves and each other simultaneously to “go together”. This interaction occurs in the form of bodily gestures (actions) that create bodily responses in the form of body rhythms that then create feelings and emotions. The cause of this interaction is “the deepest existential anxiety of human: separation”; that is, people have to interact in cooperative ways to be a part of society. These interactions (gestures and responses) happen through three types of symbols: 1) proto-symbols, when the action of A triggers a response in B but does not trigger the same response in A; 2) significant symbols, when the action of A triggers a response in B and triggers the same response in him/herself as well; and 3) reified symbols, abstractions of reality in the forms of theories, books, datasets, etc. People generally use multiple symbols at the same time when interacting. People also use tools and technology to facilitate their interactions (Stacey, 2001).

As the number of such local interactions increase, certain patterns emerge and differ from one another. Some types of actions, beliefs, and values are repeated more than others, and these form culture, institutions, norms, etc. Language is the most important tool enabling human interaction, since most of human interaction is in the form of conversation (Stacey, 2001).

The key point is, the individual and the community both affect and are affected by one another simultaneously and iteratively; none being prior to or superior over the other. Hence, human action proceeds towards a future that is under perpetual construction through local and physical interactions of individuals (transformative teleology) in the medium of symbols. Culture, identities, values, habits, etc. are always under construction. A very important point here is the self-similarity, or fractality, of human interactions. That is, as mentioned above, each individual experiences the same responsive process within his/her own body similar to “the others” and takes action accordingly. When he/she tells a story to a friend, for example, he/she hears his own voice, predicts the outcome to be yielded and his/her body rhythms and emotions are shaped similarly to those that are subjected to the same circumstances. All these conflicts, misunderstandings and power relations have the potential for change in

the behavior of both individuals and organizations because the micro level interactions are never repeated the same (Stacey, 2001).

Although the complex relational processes theory is meant to explain how learning and knowledge creation happens in organizations, it can be applied to many other areas of social sciences, too. In fact, Stacey's theory is more applicable to "emergent" organizations, such as terrorist organizations, rather than "pre-designed" ones, such as firms, because in pre-designed organizations most of the organizational activities are performed to fulfill organizational goals, which considerably limits organizational processes and the actions of the staff.

Suicide terrorism is a rather complex issue, such that none of the traditional approaches can develop a broad explanation that encompasses individual, social and organizational characteristics simultaneously. The traditional approaches either emphasize social environment or individual –albeit with a greater emphasis on social environment. Even those who address individual aspects, ignore private role-playing of the individual and its effects on others. Given the basics presented above, the CRP can provide a comprehensive framework to explain the emergence of terrorism in general and suicide terrorism. Such an approach can analyze each of these layers within the same ontological level (See figure-1 in the appendix for the model). The next section of the paper, therefore, is an attempt to apply the CRP theory on suicide attack terrorism.

4. Suicide Terrorism as a Complex Relational Process

Vallis, Yang and Abbas (2006) surveyed several studies on terrorism literature to reveal the general characteristics of the phenomenon. They found that scholars within this field developed three main categorical explanations for terrorism. Among these, psychological (behavioral) approaches explain terrorism through individual mental models and idiosyncratic experiences; social approaches explain terrorism as the function of environment, socio-economic or cultural drives. This category also involves the proposition of the social construction of terrorism. Finally, rational actor models explain terrorism as acts by groups that use violence to reach their political ends. In other words, this approach accepts terrorist organizations as pseudo-political parties that resort to violence (Vallis, et al., 2006). These findings from a broad survey of terrorism literature demonstrate that the existing state of thinking involving terrorism consists of separated explanations that focus merely on one or two aspects of the complex phenomenon of terrorism. Nonetheless, it is possible to develop a more comprehensive explanation using the basic propositions of the CRP theory that explains individual, social and organizational aspects of the issue at the same level in relation to one another.

As mentioned above, the CRP theory postulates that social patterns emerge out of micro level interactions within individuals, between individuals and between an individual and society in a historical background (experiences, knowledge, habits, etc. that form expectations).

Starting from the larger concept, terrorism emerges in societies where there are deficiencies, be it ethnic, religious conflict or occupation. These factors can be sudden or slow changes in the social environment that affect individual behavior. The causes of discomfort

become the primary issue pervading everyday conversations of individuals. People feel frustration, anxiety or agony seeing or experiencing unpleasant events (occupation, poverty, misbehavior, etc.) and develop explanations for these situations first, in his/her own mind then in his/her conversations with others by exaggerating the existing differences between the 'enemy' and themselves. This automatically creates 'in' and 'out' categories. Thus, a new group identity emerges out of conversational interactions of people and it determines the new state of power within the group, that is, those who support us are "in" and those who don't are "out".

It is usually the leader of the (terrorist) organization who constructs and frames this new group identity. Media and other means of propaganda (tools) are widely used to spread the deed of the leader across the target population. It is important to remember here that complex relational processes are highly and historically dependent (path-dependence). Namely, the previous experiences of individuals play important roles in their current roles. Leaders, then, are those who have the ability to generate discourse and manipulate the conversational interactions of people in the way they want.

When it comes to suicide terrorism in specific, here, there is a primary constraint in the external environment of the individual (say, a potential suicide attacker), which is the terrorist organization. Suicide terrorists, subsequently, are people who deeply feel the agony within themselves as well as the agony of society. A terrorist organization translates the feelings of it's members into practical ways in an effort to emancipate the individual from the source of discomfort. Within the organization, the power relations never end, and those who come up with the most sensational plans can frame the borders of conversation as they delve into the "inners" category. Suicide attacks are seen as the shortest way to a fusion between the individual and the holy identity of the organization, as explained earlier. Thus, the potential attacker's mind is constructed simultaneously through the iterative external messages from the rhetoric of the leader and the media sources of the organization, and internal feelings and emotions he or she already has due to the source of discomfort. The tools are the weapons used for attacking (See figure-2 for the model).

This conceptual framework can be used for re-examining suicide terrorism cases. Although this study merely aims to present this framework, leaving its application to future research, a few examples presented below show how close they get to the framework suggested in this study.

Fattah and Fierke (2009) underscore 'emotions', especially "humiliation" and "betrayal", for explaining suicide terrorism. According to them, past experiences of Middle Eastern people are coupled with emotional drives elicited by the sense of getting humiliated or betrayed and as these emotions get more and more intense, the individual becomes more prone to justify using violence on civilians. Although feelings such as humiliation or betrayal can be common all over the world, historical, cultural and socio-economic context of each nation or society plays a determinant role in the ways people express these distractions. In other words, while the U.S., feeling humiliation after the 9/11 attacks, started a comprehensive war with her economic, political and military power; Palestinians who feel the same humiliation after an Israeli attack can resort to a suicide attack (Fattah & Fierke, 2009).

Similarly, Demirel (2004) reveals, through the examination of police testimonies of captured Al Qaeda militants after the 2003 suicide bombings in Istanbul, that the suicide terrorists are regular people with average education and income levels. Their stories of becoming suicide bombers support almost every suggestion of the complex relational processes noted above. In their testimonies, terrorists stress that they got frustrated when they had watched the atrocities of Serbians in Bosnia in the 1990s. Furthermore, their everyday informal conversations were generally taking place on issues such as the humiliation of Muslims all over the world by Westerners. Then one day they are introduced- by some of their close friends whom they talk with about such issues- to someone who looks like a religious cleric and asked by them if they want to join the Jihadists against infidels. Finally, they help these newly minted recruits pass across the Iranian border and take them to the camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Although neither study above takes a complex relational approach, analyzing these with a complex relational framework gives insight about the emergence of suicide terrorism. In other words, re-designing existing studies with a complex relational framework can help scholars in the field to develop new and broader insights in explaining suicide terrorism.

Conclusions

What emerges from this analysis is that trying to categorize suicide terrorists is a futile effort since it is the process that generates suicide terrorists. That is, if the resonance between public and private role-playing of an individual and his relationship with the external environment is provided, any person might become a suicide terrorist.

This study presented a framework for analyzing suicide terrorism based on Stacy's CRR model (2001). It was demonstrated through surveying the main approaches in the existing literature that suicide terrorism is a complex issue, which has specific individual, social and organizational characteristics. The above cited studies found that it is impossible to draw a single mental or socio-economic map of suicide terrorists. Data including suicide attacks between 1981 and 2006 supported this argument by showing that several terrorist organizations from very different ideological backgrounds use suicide terrorism as a method of attack.

The existing explanations of suicide terrorism mostly focus on one aspect of the phenomenon and ignore the others. Even complex adaptive approaches focus generally on structural aspects of terrorism and consider terrorist organizations either networks or fluids. What is necessary, though, is a holistic approach that encompasses and merges individual, social (structural) and organizational aspects of the suicide terrorism phenomenon. Stacey's (2001) complex relational processes theory presents significant insights as to merging every single level, that are taken for granted by traditional and even complex adaptive systems approaches, and developing an explanation where individual and societal issues emerge together through relational processes of bodies. According to this theory, terrorism is an outcome of any type of political discomfort and the frustration it yields within individuals. A leader then manipulates this frustration through the form of organizational rhetoric. Thus terrorism is a process, not a single phenomenon, which always re-constructs itself through developments in the external environment and their use in the form of local conversations



in everyday life. This type of an approach is necessary for understanding the root causes of terrorism in general and suicide terrorism in private. A complex relational approach presents a more comprehensive explanation for suicide terrorism.

When it comes to policy implications, the most significant policy implication is the need for a shift in the approach to terrorism. CRP reveals that it is impossible to capture the real causes of terrorism without understanding the local characteristics that shape everyday conversations in conflict regions. Focusing on organizational structures or terrorist leaders without knowing these characteristics will fail because the same process will create another leader and another organization even if one is taken out. In other words, combating terrorism should go beyond military strategies and incorporate social and emotional motives of the target populations. The theoretical framework represented in this study presents promising insights for future studies.

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Appendix

Table 1. Suicide Attacks Sorted by Ideological Affiliations Of Terrorist Organizations
(Gabetta & Tzvetkova, 2006)

Group	Ideology	# of Attacks	Percent	Cum.
PKK	Marxist	15	2.53	2.53
LTTE	Marxist	94	15.85	18.38
Al-Qaeda various (outside Iraq)	Religious	27	4.55	22.93
Al-Qaeda in Iraq	Religious	42	7.08	30.02
Ansar al-Sunna	Religious	9	1.52	31.53
Other groups in Iraq	Nationalist	107	18.04	49.58
Hezbollah	Religious	37	6.24	55.82
Afganistan	Religious	31	5.23	61.05
Kashmir	Nationalist	38	6.41	67.45
Hamas	Nationalist	62	10.46	77.91
PIJ	Religious	41	6.91	84.82
PFLP	Nationalist	11	1.85	86.68
Fatah	Nationalist	3	0.51	87.18
Al Aqsa	Religious	25	4.22	91.4
Claimed by more than one group in Israel	Unknown	11	1.85	93.25
Group not known	Unknown	23	3.88	97.13
Pakistan	Unknown	17	2.87	100
Total		593	100	

Figure 1. The Emergence Of Self and Identity (Reproduced from Stacey, 2001, p.97)

Mindful Cooperation: Emergence of Self

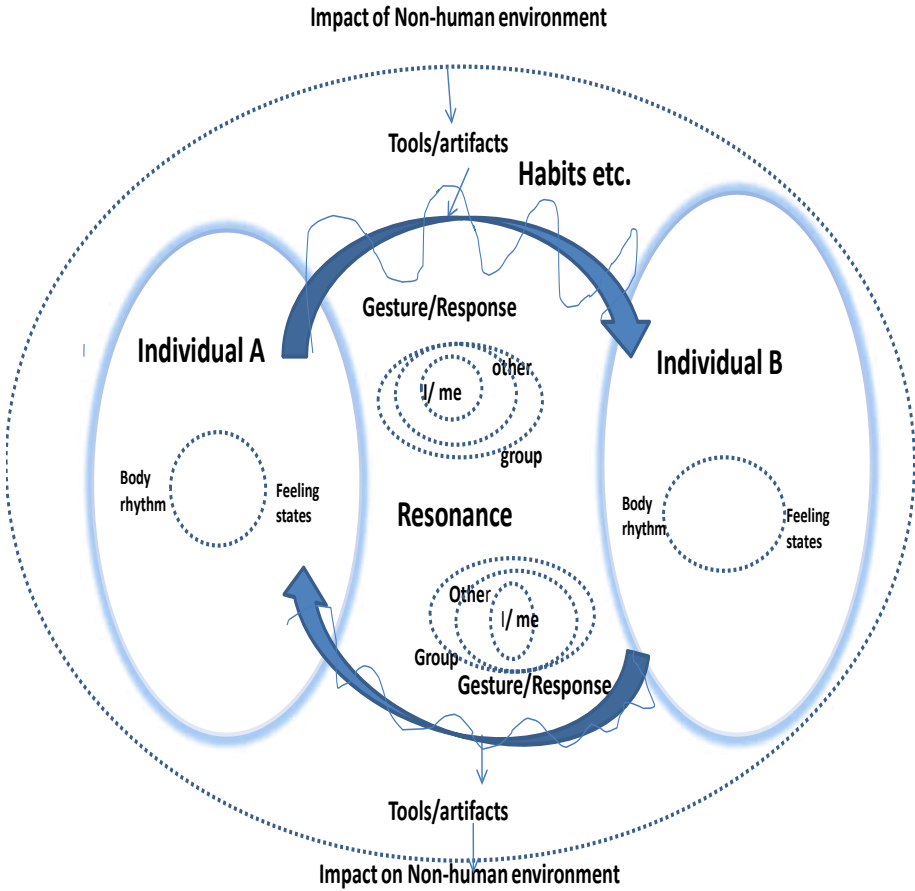


Figure 2. The Emergence Of (Suicide) Terrorism (Adopted from Stacey, 2001, p. 97)

Emergence of Self of Suicide Terrorism

