

The extent of changing role of women participating in 'front line' terrorism
(Women being accepted as suicide terrorists, violent and ruthless; devotion or struggle
for equality)

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Declaration:

I undertake that all the material presented for examination is my own work and has not been written for me, in whole or in part, by any other person. I also undertake that any quotation or paraphrase from the published or unpublished work of another person has been duly acknowledged in the work which I present for examination.

Elizabeth Jandakova

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Dedication

Although there seems to be a trend among authors to dedicate and thank every person possible in this section I will keep mine straight forward as I want to make sure that those who deserve to be thanked are remembered:

To Chris, if it was not for your encouragement and help, this thesis would have never been finished,

and to you my reader.

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Abstract

Suicide attacks and suicide terrorism are an understudied social phenomenon within academia, particularly when it comes to women's involvement. The subject as a whole is not easy to understand within European culture, due to its different culture and subsequent position of women within society. This study aims to identify how the women's role has changed over the decades, why women join terrorist organisations and why they subsequently become suicide terrorists. In order to do so I will analyse Chechnya and the Black widows. Here suicide attacks represented a real mode of operation and the organisation itself also included women in suicide attack operations. I will analyse Black widows in line with cultural, political, economic, organisational and social-psychological factors. To do so I will use three-level analysis. I believe that the findings will confirm that suicide terrorism represents a complicated social phenomenon where the central motivation, in general, is political, more precisely nationalistic. As for women's involvement, the strength and effectiveness of suicide terrorism lies within the connection of other motives – cultural, economic and organisational as well as psychological. Therefore, there simply is not one straight answer in what causes suicide terrorism or what motivates women to become suicide terrorists, instead both have a multicausal nature. As this study will confirm, the reasons for which women join terrorist organisations vary, however, none include weakness or earlier inability to perform acts of violence. Furthermore, the study should confirm that the role of women has evolved from supporting roles – those of mothers and wives to frontline positions, those of leaders with power.

Overview

This thesis is divided into six parts. The first part provides an introduction to the thesis. The second part of this study presents the literature review on suicide terrorism, and its critical perspectives. It elaborates on Robert Pape's theory of suicide terrorism which has been one of the most influential pieces of literature that aims to identify trends in suicide terrorism through the process of statistical analysis. Nevertheless, work of other scholars such as Speckhard (2008), O'Rourke (2009), Bloom (2011) and others, including critiques – in particular by Aslef Moghadam (2006) - were taken into consideration and subsequently used to modify Pape's theories in order to reflect both gender narratives as well as fill the gaps where Pape's theory felt short, such as not incorporating failed attacks (Moghadam, 2006 and Cook, 2007). This serves as a base for the research and analysis in the empirical part.

Also within the second part of this study is the methodology, structure and sets the aim of this study. The three-level analysis along with research questions is presented. An Introduction to the study is also presented followed by the definition of terrorism as well as a brief history of terrorism in general, and suicide terrorism.

The third part elaborates on the methodological and data collection that is qualitative and analytical-descriptive, while presenting the key research questions and type of analysis used in the case study of Chechnya. The key research questions will determine:

1. What motivates women to join terrorist organisations?

and

2. How has the role of women within selected terrorist organisations evolved over the years?

The final part covers discussion and conclusion followed by bibliography and list of tables, diagrams and maps.

List of abbreviations

Action on Armed Violence	AOAV
Algerian National Liberation Front	FLN
Chicago Project on Security & Threats – Suicide Attack Database	CPOST-SAD
Chicago Project on Security & Threats	CPOST
Democratic Society Congress	DTK
European Union	EU
Euskadi Ta Askatasuna	ETA
Federal Security Service	FSB
Free Women’s Congress	KJA
Global Terrorism Database	GTD
Gross domestic product	GDP
International Relations	IR
Irish Republic Army	IRA
Islamic International Brigade	IIB
Islamic State	IS
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam	LTTE
Minorities at Risk	MAR
Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe	OSCE
Palestine Liberation Organisation	PLO
Palestinian Islamic Jihad	PIJ
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine	PFLP
Red Army Faction	RAF
Soviet Union	USSR
Syrian Social Nationalist Party	SSNP / PPS
The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan	PDKI
The Kurdistan Workers’ Party	PKK
The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia	FARC
United Kingdom	UK
United Nations International Criminal Tribunal	UNICT
United Nations	UN
United States of America	USA
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles	UAV
World Health Organisation	WHO

Part I

1. Introduction

Suicide terrorism as a tactic is one the deadliest terrorist tactics currently available to terrorists, and there does not seem to be anything to suggest that this type of terrorism is declining. Instead, the number of such campaigns is rising and so is the number of women involved in it.

As a tactic, suicide terrorism has been deployed across a number of different terrorist organisations and militant movements. It has been used by the Islamist movements Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, secular Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, initially communist PKK or national-liberation organisation LTTE. More recently Iraqi insurgents also started to use this tactic. According to data collected by O'Rourke (682, 2009) women have carried out suicide attacks in the following countries: Turkey, Pakistan, Russia, Somalis, Uzbekistan, Iraq, India, Lebanon and Israel.

A woman, as a suicide attacker, is a fairly recent development as it was not until 9th April 1985 that the first of such attacks happened. That day in Lebanon, Khyadali Sana, a sixteen-year old member of the Syrian National Social Party, drove a car full of explosives into a convoy of Israeli soldiers and killed two of them (Dronzina and Astashin, 30, 2007).

Many explanations of female suicide bombings often portray the bombers as manipulated victims of a Muslim patriarchy and male violence. Those women are looked at as an object of manipulation, locked in the patriarchal system. No thought is given to the possibility that these women are capable of fighting for political, religious or nationalist beliefs (Deylami, 181,

2013). Academia has come up with a number of reasons for women participating in terrorism; the problem is a strong emphasis has been placed on women being fundamentally different to men, making their motivations gendered. Often, women's participation has been linked to their previous experiences; mainly abuse, rape and the loss of relatives. Very few studies have made a link between women terrorist activities and political devotion to their cause. Nevertheless, some scholars have acknowledged that the explanation may lie in the liberation which women are striving for. However, there could be another explanation; a simple political devotion causing women to join the ranks on the 'front line' battlefield as this has been predominantly the main reason explaining why men choose to engage with terrorist acts (Agara, 115-118, 2015; Talbot, 171, 2001).

A number of studies and articles that have been written so far specifically focused on why women join terrorist organisations as well as the groups that appeal to them. However, there have only been a handful of studies focusing on the phenomenon from the group's perspective (Davis, 282, 2013). My aim is to challenge this notion of women being seen as victims of male dominance. This study is to be especially challenging for a number of reasons, yet all of them form the basis of why this research should be conducted. As Beyler (2003) stated, there is not enough information on how women have been treated in terrorist groups; most of the reports have been conducted by a male researcher from a man's point of view; there are not enough testimonies from female members of terrorist groups and so on. Nonetheless, using the three-level analysis to test the set hypotheses will bring new views on the current situation.

1.1 Terrorism in a nutshell

With the occurrence of terrorism as such it is important to understand and acknowledge that rather than the traditional war between two or more states, conflicts operate and are fought

within a network of state and non-state actors, more often without the presence of uniformed personnel, a new type of friend-enemy distinction and so on (Kaldor, 492, 2005). These wars are no longer fought by conducting a traditional battle, instead those wars accumulate usage of massive violence against civilians such as suicide terrorism does.

Since the attack on the World Trade Centre from 11th September 2001 the concept of suicide terrorism has become commonly used. It has been accepted by the general public that people who commit acts of suicide terrorism are irrational, as they willingly kill themselves whilst aiming to kill as many other people as possible. Interestingly, Lewis (20, 2012) argued that it is more useful to think about suicide bombers as a type of human military technology which is deployed and controlled by its owner – organisation – instead of thinking about a suicide bomber as a form of individual fanaticism. Nevertheless, the concept of suicide terrorism remains mysterious to most professionals, academics, and the public. It is no secret that suicide terrorism as a tactic spreads horror and devastation.

Terrorism has been studied and researched for more than 40 years. Yet there is a significant lack of data and research in the field. What seems to have happened is that academia has closed itself in a loop where researchers rely on each other's work, media reports, and government publications without actually bringing new ideas and data into the field. Most researchers depend heavily on analysis of secondary documents (Silke, 2-4, 2001; Ranstorp, 6-7, 2006).

The main area that most academic literature suffers from is the lack of a definition for the term terrorism; and an explanation of what causes terrorism (Crenshaw, 1981; Laquer, 1986; Ranstorp, 4-5, 2006). That is not to say that no attempt has been made. In fact, Schmid and Jongman (5, 1988) listed 109 possible definitions of terrorism that were published between

1936 and 1981. However, none of the definitions published offered an explanation for the occurrence of terrorism, and due to the lack of agreement on the definition the research has been fragmented and too wide (Laqueur, 140, 2003; Silke, 4, 2001). Within the academic sphere, it has not been agreed whether terrorism is a form of violence in general or some particular form of violence. Whether the emphasis should be put on its political aims, the methods of combat it uses or the strategy (Silke, 5, 2010; Gearson, 8, 2002).

The lack of universally accepted definition is primarily caused by the dividing views on what terrorism is; mainly in contrast with people's right to self-determination, as coded in the United Nations (UN) Charter. In light of this, a framework for global cooperation against terrorism has been established gradually since 1963 in numerous international treaties such as *International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 17 December 1979*, *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 15 December 1997*, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 14 December 1973*¹ and others (Pawlak, 1, 2015).

The government of the United Kingdom (UK) defines terrorism as a threat of action where:

(a) the action falls within subsection (2),

(b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and

(c) the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious racial or ideological cause.

¹ For more information please see the United Nations Treaty Collection
https://treaties.un.org/Pages/DB.aspx?path=DB/studies/page2_en.xml - accessed on 20/04/2016

(2) Action falls within this subsection if it—

(a) involves serious violence against a person,

(b) involves serious damage to property,

(c) endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action,

(d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or

(e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system (Counter Terrorism Act 2008)

In contrast, the government of the USA refers to terrorism in numerous context-specific federal statutes and regulations. International terrorism is defined by the USA as '*actions that involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life with the intent to intimidate or coerce the civilian population, influence the policy of a government or affect the conduct of a government; and occur primarily outside the US or transcend national boundaries*' (Pawlak, 1, 2015). While the European Union (EU) approach dictates that terrorism is defined as '*acts committed with the aim of 'seriously intimidating a population', unduly compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation*' (ibid).

Looking at the issue from a typological perspective terrorism can be divided into two separate groups. On one side there are terrorist groups which pursue a grievance or a political agenda without any real purpose or any links to a specific part of a country's population; for instance, the Red Army Faction (RAF)² in Germany in the 1970's. On the other side of the spectrum are

² For more information on this please see Aust, S. (2008)
<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Jqqh0mEvcD4C&printsec=frontcover&dq=raf+germany&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj15Kn-x77MAhXEuRQKHQcWDwsQ6AEILTAB#v=onepage&q=raf%20germany&f=false> - accessed on 01/05/2016

groups which exercise terrorist acts in order to pursue a specific form of ‘freedom fight’ for part of a country’s population. This is specifically represented by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland, LTTE in Sri Lanka or the PKK in Turkey (Walter, 4, 2003). Nevertheless, this remains highly problematic, especially given the issue of what constitutes a legitimate struggle and the use of terror tactics by insurgent organisations (Pawlak, 1, 2015).

Given the vast number of definitions that terrorism has accrued, many academics have become reluctant to revise the issue and simply accepted the lack of definition (Jones, 96). Alexander Yonah (1976) defines terrorism as ‘the use of violence against random civilian targets in order to intimidate or to create generalised pervasive fear for the purpose of achieving political goals’. While Laqueur (5, 1997) proclaimed that ‘a definition of terrorism does not exist, nor will it be found in the foreseeable future’. However, Gibbs (330, 1989) rightly pointed out that it is impossible to study terrorism without having a set definition. He defined terrorism as *‘illegal violence or threatened violence directed against a human or nonhuman object’* (ibid). In the quest of defining terrorism, it appears that scholars somehow forgot about one of the earliest definitions of terrorism noted in the edition of the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (1948); ‘a method or a theory behind the method whereby an organised group or party seeks to achieve its avowed aims chiefly through the systematic use of violence’ (Hutchinson – Crenshaw, 383, 1972).

On the other side of the spectrum a number of typologies have been used to try and classify the phenomenon, but they have mainly focused on explaining terrorist behaviour. Most notably it was Thornton (1964) who split terrorist aims into morale building, advertising, disorientation and elimination of opposing forces and provocation of countermeasures by incumbents. Bowyer Bell (1975) later built on Thornton’s work by considering four types of revolutionary

terror; they are organisational, allegiance, functional and symbolic as well as manipulative terror. Crenshaw (1979) also used Thornton's work and expanded it with typology, incorporating tactical considerations and proximate objectives. However, considering that no universally accepted definition of terrorism has been established along with a lack of a standardised theory of terrorism, typology construction could not be used as an instrument to enhance the understanding of terrorism; let alone the particular involvement of women in terrorist acts (Schmid, 158, 171, 193, 2013).

The research community is unclear whether terrorism is something new or just an evolution of tactics and ideas where the technological revolution plays an important role along with globalisation (Bergesen and Han, 140, 2005; Duyvesteyn, 440, 2004; Ranstorp, 11, 2006). Therefore, there is a need for more comparative historical approaches that will help to understand terrorism and its current developments more clearly. Only then can such analysis be put in the current framework, allowing us to understand the patterns of terrorism. Nevertheless, most definitions of terrorism share the same core pillars – that is the victims, the targets and the perpetrators of the violent act (Badey, 1, 2006).

Perhaps the universally agreed definition of terrorism will never be reached as the term itself is variable; an academic question for which there is no right or wrong answer. The commonly used phrase 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter' (Seymour, 1975) perfectly encapsulates this issue. Over the years states have not managed to reach an accepted definition as each state has a different background, history, and regime. The purpose of this study is not to try and define the rights or wrongs of the groups being looked at. Rather, the aim is to try and understand why women take part in violent acts and whether these acts can be gendered or not. The definition of terrorism is embedded in a philosophy of an individual and a state; as

such, terrorism is subjective (Begorre-Bret, 1988, 2005; Ganor, 287, 2002; Griset and Mahan, 13, 2003). Communities use the word ‘terrorism’ to condemn certain acts of violence, yet they may not consider the terrorists as criminals. The condemnation strongly lies in the fact that it is often innocent civilians that are the instruments for the pursuit of political goals. It is therefore the human morality not the legal concept which condemns terrorism (Walter, 22, 2003).

The public perception of women has been challenged over time, nevertheless some women have strived to overcome these stereotypes. Gender norms have been challenged, along with deeply held biases. Often it has been the case that women involved in violent acts are portrayed by the media as a different kind of violence in contrast to their male counterparts. Women’s motives are perceived as personal and the reasoning behind their attack is linked to their personal life which is nearly always investigated after an attack. Unfortunately, the aim of such scrutiny is not to understand or explain the reasons behind the violence. Rather, much of the effort is put into making women less of a normative threat. Violent women make the public uncomfortable, not only because of the lack of understanding of their actions, but also because their preconceived ideas of women see them as either victims of crime or nurturers. Violence conducted by women has been understood differently than that of men; it has been argued that women’s actions are based in their highly emotional and unstable mental state, rather than being based in a logical and rational frame of mind (Cunningham, 2015).

1.2 Defining terrorism – narrowly or broadly?

According to a narrow definition, a suicide terrorist attack is the only one, when the perpetrator’s death is a necessary condition of its success. On the contrary, according to a broad

definition, a suicide terrorist attack may also refer to attacks, where the terrorist's death is only highly probable, but not necessary (Moghadam, 17, 2006).

We can illustrate the distinction on the examples of the 9/11 attacks on the one hand and the so-called Hebron massacre in 1994 on the other. The latter refers to the moment, when a Zionist fanatic called Baruch Goldstein opened fire on unarmed Palestinian Muslims inside the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron and killed 29 of them. While the death of Al-Qaida terrorists was certainly integral and unavoidable to the mission's accomplishment, Goldstein's death was not a necessary precondition of his mission's success³. The 2011 Utøya massacre⁴ is a similar case. In both Goldstein's and Breivik's attack, there was a high probability of the perpetrators' death, but according to the narrow definition, these were not cases of suicide terrorism.

The broader definition is preferred by most of the experts on suicide terrorism. However, for the purpose of analysis of some specific aspects of female suicide terrorism⁵, it is more appropriate to use the narrow definition, because it characterises better the essence of suicide terrorism. The terrorist determined to carry out a suicide attack has a necessarily different motivation, behaves differently and the process of recruitment differs as well.

The distinction between broadly and narrowly defined suicide terrorism is a key issue, concerning some Chechen terrorist attacks, including two major operations – the so called Beslan school hostage crisis in September 2004 and the Moscow theatre hostage crisis in October 2002. The classification of these operations as suicide terrorism is controversial, since

³ Goldstein was eventually shot dead by a policeman.

⁴ On 22nd July 2011, right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik perpetrated an attack against civilians at the Norwegian Labour Party's youth camp on Utøya Island, Norway. The assault was preceded by a car bomb explosion in Oslo. As a result of these two attacks, 77 people died; most of them were teenagers. For more information see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-14260297> - accessed on 02/03/2016

⁵ For instance, for the analysis of individual motivations or group's strategic logic.

it is not absolutely clear, what the terrorists' intentions were. Some witnesses' description of terrorists' behaviour and the fact, that both events lasted for several days (and were eventually ended by the assault performed by the Federal Security Service - FSB), suggests that these two events differ from typical suicide bombings. Anne Speckhard (1, 2004), who has published an important study about the behaviour of the Dubrovka hostage-takers includes those terrorists in the sample of suicide terrorism, probably because they 'announced to the stunned crowd that they were on a suicide mission'. Elsewhere, she supports its argument by stating that the terrorists announced from the outset that their operation was a suicide mission and that they expected and were willing to die. They called themselves martyrs in their prepared videotape (Speckhard, 10, 2004). However, the fact that the terrorists took hostages and were willing to negotiate suggests that there was a certain possibility they would survive the operation. It would mean that both Dubrovka and Beslan do not fit to the narrow definition.

On the other hand, there is clear evidence that the Beslan and Dubrovka terrorists were prepared to die in their missions: they allegedly did not prepare any escape routes, women wore explosive suicide belts, they announced their willingness to become martyrs etc. Although the terrorists' rhetoric could be a mere strategy to put a higher pressure on the Russian security forces and make the audience outside the theatre more nervous and coerce them to certain concessions, the terrorists must have been aware that they would not survive.

Even though these two cases do not fit perfectly to the narrow definition, they are definitely closer to it than either Goldstein's or Breivik's attacks. That is why we will include both Beslan and Dubrovka to our samples in the case study.

1.3 History of suicide terrorism

It has been established that the number of suicide attacks is increasing rather than decreasing. Explained in its basic form, suicide terrorism is about an individual who is most likely sponsored / controlled / deployed by an organisation, who is also perceived as either a victim or an individual who is willing to sacrifice his or her life for a cause. By its nature, suicide terrorism imposes significant and unselective damage, as such many analysts argue that suicide terrorism cannot be understood in terms of conventional death. This concept is nowadays defined as one's willingness to sacrifice their own life for a larger cause, such as community, organisation or belief.

Suicide attackers are loyal as they believe they will gain glory by dying, and they perceive their deaths as a necessity for themselves, the organisation, their beliefs, values and so on. It is the combination of creativity and reliability which makes suicide attackers so dangerous and for our purposes also difficult to analyse. Those individuals are driven by both individual and organisational motivations. Further, the ease with which the devices suicide attackers use cause damage – tools that can be anywhere on their body, in the car – anywhere where its power can cause maximum damage to the maximum number of people. Nevertheless, the suicide operations also depend on what cause the individual is following – whether it is a desire to change a regime or leader, to make various demands, or to simply spread the message.

From an historical perspective, the most dramatic and memorable attacks were committed by the Russian revolutionaries against the Russian state. Those attacks have significantly influenced the course of events regarding suicide terrorism (Lieven, 54, 1999). Most notably in all of their missions the attacker died. It was understood that those perpetrators were

emotionally and psychologically powerful, they knew when and where to activate their weapons for maximum effect.

As I will discuss in the next section in more detail the difference between Czech or perhaps Central European academia which does believe that suicide terrorism is a rather new thing, the Western – English academia does not necessarily think so as it puts the origins of the suicide attacks back to Shia Assassins. Those assassins led a campaign against kings for nearly 200 years. They used a dagger as their weapon and committed those acts knowing that their death was also inevitable. This act of self-sacrifice leads some academics to believe that this contributed to the beginning of suicide terrorism as we know it now (Rapoport, 48, 1990).

It was not until the first phase of the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1978 where demonstrators sacrificed themselves by putting themselves on the front line being subsequently shot. Many young people followed the calls of the leader of the revolution, Shia cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, to sacrifice themselves by running into Iraqi's mine fields during the Iranian – Iraqi war between 1980-1988 so the regular army could make an advance (Kropacek, 34, 2001).

Modern types of suicide terrorism have been introduced by Hezbollah in 1983 in Lebanon, in the very same country throughout the 1980s this *modus operandi* was refined. According to statistics, there have been about 50 suicide attacks that were executed by secular communist and nationalist organisations, such as the Lebanese Communist Party, the Socialist-Nasserist Organisation, the Syrian Ba'ath Party the PPS, and the other half by Hezbollah and Amal (AOAV, 2017). All of these acts were considered as achievements by other similar groups, and the case of Lebanese suicide terrorism has become a symbol of respect and sacrifice, as well

as inspiration for a number of other organisations in countries like Egypt, Sri Lanka or Turkey and Chechnya. It is fair to say that those countries have adopted slightly different approaches and to some extent have improved techniques for the suicide attacks compared to the Lebanese ones.

After the Israeli occupation of Lebanon in 1982 a new form of suicide terrorism emerged, this form involves cars being loaded with explosives and those later detonated when the car hit its target. This campaign was started by Hezbollah and turned successful as occupants left Lebanon. Given its success, other organisations like Hamas started using it (Kropacek, 40, 2001). The suicide attacks became most 'popular' during the second intifada where Palestinians, having none of their own army, chose suicide attacks as a proven and effective method of terrorising Israeli civilians.

From a religious point of view suicide is strictly prohibited. We cannot take our own life as it does not belong to us...by choosing to die we refuse the existence of God. This is allegedly not applicable in war, animal slaughter and execution (Hillman, 29, 1997). The Koran is equally against suicide. Nevertheless, Islamic culture and tradition respects warriors who died whilst fulfilling a religious commandment. It is a well-known fact that those who die for God are promised their reward. Terminology wise those people are called 'shahid'. This word originates from the Quranic Arabic word meaning 'witness'. Equally this word is also used for women who die during child birth (Kropacek, 49, 2001). The role of religion will be discussed in more detail later in the study.

The act of suicide bombings can be tracked back to the first century A.D., where the Jewish Zealots of Israel assassinated Roman forces that were occupying Israel, along with the Jews

who collaborated with them (Kelly, 6, 2008). Often the act of female suicide bombers is associated with Islamist terrorist groups. However, this is a limitation which has been a recent phenomenon in the literature. Women were active members of the Russian nihilist organisation – Narodnaya Vola and also members of the Socialist Revolutionary Party; this was between the 19th and 20th century. Further, women have also been involved in groups such as the Shining Path group – Peru, the IRA in Ireland, LTTE in Sri Lanka, PKK in Turkey, or Hamas in Palestine. It was not just some ordinary membership women were able to acquire, they have also been able to hold leadership positions, such as in the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany, the Red Brigade in Italy, the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in the Basque region of Spain and France or the Chechen resistance movement; last but not least the Weather Underground in the USA (Agara, 116, 2015).

It is apparent that throughout history women have been active participants and supporters of a broad range of violent organisations. This has prompted academia to ask questions about the relativity, importance, motivations and meaning of the relationship between women and terrorist activities (Cunningham, 117, 2007; Agara, 116, 2015). Notably, a patriarchal structure dominates all the societies of the different countries where female suicide bombing occurs (Beyler, 2003).

As mentioned earlier the first recorded female suicide bomber, was a 16-year-old Lebanese girl Khyadali Sana. She was a member of the secular Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP/PPS) and was dubbed as ‘The Bride of the South’. In 1985 she targeted an Israeli Defence Force convoy in Lebanon, killing five soldiers (Schweitzer, 7, 2006). It was from Lebanon that the use of female suicide bombers spread to other countries and was soon adopted by the LTTE and the PKK (Von Knop, 398, 2007). Some of the factors which have contributed to the

widespread use of female suicide bombers include operational advantage, greater publicity, increased recruitment and competition amongst terrorist groups in the same region (Raghavan and Balasubramaniyan, 202, 2014).

Looking at the statistics; it has been calculated that between 1982 to September 2015 there has been a total of 212 suicide bomber attacks conducted by women. Those attacks took the lives of 2218 people and wounded a total of 4958 people. The list of countries most affected by those attacks is topped by Iraq, Nigeria and Sri Lanka (CPST, 2016)⁶. The attacks were mainly conducted by unknown groups, followed by the LTTE and Islamic State (IS) (ibid). The lethality of the female suicide bombers can be explained by several factors. As discussed earlier, women are not seen as a threat, at least for the time being, therefore they are less likely to be detected. For the very same reason women have been chosen to hit high value targets as well as soft targets with a high victim rate (Davis, 282, 2013).

1.4 Suicide terrorism and women

First and foremost, it is important to establish what constitutes a suicide attack. The definition this work aims to use is as follows: *‘a suicide attack is an operational method in which the very act of the attack is dependent upon the death of the perpetrator’* (Ganor, 6, 2000). Under this condition the perpetrator of such an act is aware of the necessity to fulfil the act by losing their life as otherwise the mission cannot be completed.

Suicide terrorism is a fascinating topic, yet it is nothing new, nor is it an unknown phenomenon. Nevertheless, being born in the Czech Republic and having lived in the UK for the past seven

⁶ http://cpostdata.uchicago.edu/search_results_new.php, accessed – 02/05/2016

years – it was not until I moved to the UK that I have become more familiar with the topic. Czech academia does not really focus on terrorism or any of its subgroups. This is most likely caused by the fact that there has not been a recorded suicide terrorism act within the Czech Republic as of yet. As such it is studied under global terrorism or security studies as a whole. Another reason behind this is the fact that terrorism is rather an abstract word to the Czech society – there really has not been one single suicide attack as of writing this study – 6th April 2018. Instead, for Czech society the term terrorism is rather hidden or put together with other global issues and threats which affect the society more directly. In contrast to this – the UK and the USA research is on a completely different level.

Robert Pape is particularly important in my work as I will focus on his theories which will create the backbone to this work. Going back to my own background, I wanted to combine the two experiences I have had – that is from both Czech and UK academia. From the Czech academia perspective there are two experts in the field of terrorism (or security within the 21st century) PhDr. Jan Eichler and Mgr. Tomas Radej. Even though Czech society does not have ‘hands on experience’ when it comes to terrorism or suicide terrorism it is clear that terrorism does represent a threat to any society – from Europe’s perspective the events in Madrid 2004 and London 2005 made that clear.

As for the gender part of suicide terrorism – it is the fact that I am simply fascinated by the contrast of those two. Purely as many of the academic studies define women as simply not intelligent enough to commit such an attack, subsequently describing women as lunatics who follow men’s orders. This in a way degrades women and does not explain why women are committing those acts of terror at all (Von Knop, 2007).

1.5 Why does gender matter?

The distinction is crucial in order to address the different psychological effect on population, different motivations of those who commit such an act and also different ways of recruitment and to some extent the potentially different efficiency of these attacks.

When it comes to the psychological effect of suicide attacks committed by a female – these have a stronger impact on people and cause a much fiercer response than when the perpetrator is a man (Zedalis, 2-3, 2004). Further, this study will claim the motivations of women-terrorists and the way which they are recruited by terrorist organisations is different to the technique used by males. Authors like O'Rourke (684, 2009) argue that the motivations of female terrorists are the same or very similar to male terrorists. Nevertheless, this argument will be contradicted in this study as it will prove just how important it is to accommodate the gender related differences.

Looking at the process of recruitment of female suicide bombers it is important to note that there is no one single technique used by different terrorist organisations around the world. Nevertheless, the process of recruiting female suicide bombers – irrespective of which groups uses it – displays different features to the male one. For instance, the Chechen terrorist organisation distinguishes itself from others by using the gender-related coercion when recruiting female suicide bombers. The PKK recruiters mainly focused on the poorer classes of peasants and workers – this was before 1990's – and in 1995 during one of its congresses the PKK decided not to recruit females younger than 16 to fight. Further, military service for women was made voluntary within Kurdistan (Hunsicker, 40, 2006).

1.6 Suicide terrorism and terrorism – to separate or not to separate

Indeed, why should we assess the two separately? After all, both involve spreading fear, killing innocent people...however there is a slight difference between the two. Such acts of terrorism, where its perpetrator knowingly sacrifices their own life certainly has a bigger impact on the society. Besides that, the motivation of a suicide attack perpetrator must differ from the motivation of those who are not willing to lose their life in order to ‘accomplish the mission’. As such it is important to access the sources of different motivations, particularly in relation to religious and ideological frameworks as well as on the personal experiences level.

Whilst the impact of a suicide attack on a targeted audience is larger, each act has to be weighed against the benefits it may bring for the terrorist organisation. Suicide attacks may be a ‘useful tool’ as they are considered high in efficiency. However, this efficiency varies between different terrorist organisations and it also fluctuates over time. As such I will also discuss this in my study. Some researchers have gone further and distinguished terrorism further into three forms – that is demonstrative, destructive and suicide terrorism (Pape, 2003) as described in the literature review, but that will not be the case in this study.

Part II

2. Literature review

2.1 Female Terrorism

Over the years female involvement in terrorism has increased across the spectrum, that is regionally, logistically and ideologically (Cunningham, 57, 2003). To reflect this, the female terrorism research has too increased. Traditionally, academia focused on men's involvement in terrorist groups, arguably because of the longstanding belief that women have been taking up more passive and subsequently less interesting roles in terrorist groups (Zedalis, 48, 2004). However, this has noticeably changed in the last few decades, with women taking more influential roles within those organisations.

Research on this topic, produced in the 1970's and 1980's focused on topics such as female involvement in the Russian revolution (Knight, 1979), guerrilla wars of Latin America (Reif, 25, 1986), and also the psychological reasons that underlie female involvement in extremism. In 1990's research was still primarily focused on Latin America, but there was also an increasing interest in Irish terrorism. This decade also saw the only two publications presenting detailed case studies of female terrorists (McDonald, 124, 1991). Even though there has been more publications on female terrorism after 2000, the literature lacks strong theory and cumulative development. (Silke, 2001).

Most importantly, the academia is not in agreement on what actually motivates women to join terrorist organisations; Victor argues that women are drawn reluctantly into terrorism and are motivated by personal and private reasons. In contrast, Cunningham argues that women hold more complex, dualistic reasons for their involvement, combining collective motivations, such as a desire for national independence, with individualistic motivations, such as the desire for equality between the sexes. This conflicting account results in lack of a definitive narrative of underlying factors for female involvement in terrorist organisations.

2.2 Suicide terrorism

Suicide terrorism represents one of the biggest global threats to modern democracies for its very hard to understand its nature. It is however, one of the fastest growing trends in the past decade. It is a relatively cheap tactic (around 150 dollars per attack) (Hoffman, 2003), nevertheless it is still very effective, causing constant fear and upsetting social, political, economic and security situations within the regions affected. It is imposing direct threat to the peacekeeping and peace-making efforts of the nation states and to the international community. Modern suicide terrorism brings devastating results with relatively small expenses, and without battles that involve thousands of people. A few of the examples of such attacks in recent years on western societies are the 9/11 attacks in the United States of America (USA), the 2004 Madrid train bombings, London bombings, as well as a number of suicide attacks in Israel, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Russia and many others. It has become clear that no society or nation can be considered as immune to such a threat.

For any suicide attack, the death of the committer is a key component to determine the success of the mission, especially after the 9/11 (Cronin 2005) events. Therefore, in today`s literature there are various studies that analyse the suicide operations from the perspective of a range of disciplines conducted prior and post the attack (Gambetta, 2005; Richardson 2006; Pedazhur 2006; Criss, 2008). Those studies use various geographical regions for their analysis; just as will be the case in this study. Chechnya and Kurdish regions have not been vastly researched as most of the focus has been put on other regions, such as Pakistan (Eamon, 2013; Kimhi and Even, 2004; Sarraj, 2002; Kaltenthaler, 2010; Reidel, 2008; Chellaney, 2001). Notably very little has been done in connection to women and their motives for joining terrorist organisations and subsequently for committing suicide attacks.

Pape`s work (2005) has been one of the most influential, it tries to identify general trends in suicide attacks through the process of statistical analysis. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Pape`s research and contributions to the academic world have been criticised as it is very doubtful whether the applicability of qualitative analysis to different case studies is really effective and whether it serves its purpose in the suicide terrorism analysis. This has been widely criticized, in particular, by Moghadam (2006) and Cook (2007). Both are criticising the fact that this kind of analysis does not incorporate the terrorist campaigns, including failed attacks, the limited obligation of groups, networks and individuals that have used radical tactics for attacks. Also, in order to explain the nature of the suicide attacks, it is crucial to describe the context why and when they occurred which is one of the major limitations in Pape`s theory.

2.2.2 The nationalist theory of suicide terrorism

The basis of Pape's suicide terrorism theory is rooted in nationalism. His theory also predicts when a suicide attack may occur. However, to make such a prediction one has to know whether the occupied society supports individual sacrifice (suicide attack) and what is the relationship between the identity of a foreign occupier and the national sentiment of occupied society. It is the behaviour of the locals, not the foreign forces, which predicts whether there would be a suicide terrorist attack. Further, it does not matter whether the occupiers feel like an ally or a foe. What matters is how they are viewed by the locals (Pape, 80-82, 2005).

Occupation in its own sense translates to 'exertion of political control over territory by an outside group' (Pape, 83, 2005). The number of personnel occupying a certain territory does not have to be high. The presence itself is important and enough to stop any 'liberation' or independence attempt. Further, if a local government requires or asks for the presence of foreign military or police in order to keep the country stabilised, this in turn is seen as an attempt to prevent any rebellion and subsequent change of government (Pape, 54, 2005).

Even though any occupation of any land can potentially lead to resistance, the thought itself – that a homeland is being controlled by foreigners provokes national sentiment within the occupied society (Pape, 85, 2005). As it is only when we stop having control over our homes, we lose the political, economic and social interests of ours and that of our society. Occupants have the power to threaten national identity. It is the need and urge to protect our identity which can easily lead to even some heroic actions. The society then goes into extremes with the ultimate goal of regaining not only self-control but to get back the control over their land, without having any foreign force present. Even in today's globalised world the question of self-

identity and homeland still creates certain controversy. There is a hardly definable connection between us as an individual and our homeland as it is a place full of memories and emotions.

A homeland is where one can establish political power (Pape, 84, 2005). At first, a certain group occupies and defines a certain territory, then a shift occurs, and the very same territory begins to define the people living there (Herb and Kaplan, 18-19, 1999). It is important to note that an individual does not necessarily have to have a strong feeling of national identity. However, a foreign occupation does create a strong bond among the occupied people since the occupation itself represents a certain degree of danger. Occupiers often resort to the use of force in order to prevent a rebellion of any sort. Innocent people are often killed which leads the surviving society to feel like 'second class' citizens in comparison to the occupiers. The civilians are then more likely to sacrifice their lives for their 'nation' (Pape, 85, 2005).

There would not be 'we', our national identity and subsequently no such thing as nationalism without a dichotomy 'us' against 'them'. It is possible to define a national identity only when one is compared to another and only in certain periods of time. If one national identity is controlled by another then we will look at both more negatively as opposed to if the two were living in harmony. Both occupying and occupied nations are defined by certain features – the more those features differ the more likely it is that the occupied nation will end the occupation no matter the cost. So, we have two types of occupation as Pape (87, 2005) puts it; an alien occupation (where the occupier is highly different to the occupied) – here a terrorist suicide attack is much more likely than in the second type of occupation – kindred occupation (ibid) where both the occupied and the occupier share some of the same national attributes.

Looking at the national identity it is partly subjective since it is prone to manipulation over time. Not all national attributes share the same value. Traditions or languages are not as important, what matters is the religious difference. The problem itself does not lie within the one country or territory to be more religious over another. However, the issue of different religions creates a dynamic which does have the ability to set in motion a degree of fear. The inhabitants of the occupied territory then fear that the occupation itself will inversely change their ability to define its own national features both religious and secular (Pape, 88-89, 2005).

Exclusivity is the main mechanism (ibid) as one person cannot be a member of two different religions. Let's compare the influence of language and religion on national identity during occupation. Some may believe that language itself is more important when forming national identity. Language shapes the nation especially from the economic perspective. It does not matter if we look at the pre-industrial or post-industrial world – the majority of people could have only been employed if they could speak the language used.

When one wants to create an identity during war it is a completely different story. Language may be more important in cases where national identity is not threatened by any outside force. However, the minute this very same nation is at war or is being occupied the importance of religion/language changes drastically (Pape, 89, 2005). Under the occupation those occupied may learn the language of their enemy and still use their mother tongue. However, if that very same person changes their religion they will be viewed as a deserter. Pape does not believe that there may be a mass religious conversion under the occupant's influence.

Thinking about such relationships one has to consider whether Pape means voluntarily religious conversion or one that is forced upon a certain nation or group of people. The fact is

that there has not been any mass religious conversion yet. However, can we be so sure to rule this out as a possibility in the future? Looking at our history we have already experienced the Crusade, pogroms...

2.3 Causes of suicide terrorism

To explain why suicide terrorism occurs one has to look at the issue - the existence of suicide campaigns - as a whole rather than isolating each attack (Pape, 28, 2005). The motivation of each individual plays an important role, however how can we explain the political and social aspects which keep the suicide terrorism campaigns going? Why do they occur in certain places and what keeps them 'alive'?

When Pape was writing his *Dying to Win* book most of the existing studies were focusing on the irrationality of an individual and subsequently individual motives of each perpetrator. Those were mostly religious motives or a psychological instability of the suicide perpetrator. The first explanations of suicide terrorism come from the 1980's. However, as the rates of those attacks were steadily rising the earlier explanations for suicide terrorism simply did not explain why it was happening. During the time when Pape was writing his later book – *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It* (Pape and Feldman, 2010) – the discussion regarding suicide terrorism was being centred towards other explanations and more closely to Pape's hypothesis. The war against terror has been fought for years now. Nevertheless, academia has been missing an explanation as to what really motivates terrorists to kill (Pape and Feldman, 150, 2010).

2.4 The logic of suicide terrorism

According to Pape it is important to understand suicide terrorism as a product of a three-phased process (Pape, 20, 2005). It is important to include each of the phases and then create one cohesive logic putting those three together. There are three logics to suicide terrorism:

1. Strategic logic
2. Social logic
3. Individual logic

The strategic logic focuses on the politics of force (Pape, 21, 2005). Most of the suicide terrorist attacks are conducted by individuals who are members of an organised group with established goals. Very rarely can we see an individual committing such an act without an agenda. Suicide attacks are primarily nationalistic, not religious and certainly cannot be linked to Islam only. The ultimate goal is to get rid of foreign occupiers from the group's homeland. Here the important element is the pressure a suicide attack can create when currently targeted.

The social logic looks at the relationship between suicide attacks and the support community can create (Pape, 22, 2005). There possibly could not be a single terrorist campaign without the support of the community. The suicide terrorists are not devoted to their leaders nor are they part of some religious cult isolated from the rest of the world. Instead those perpetrators actually need the support of their society and community, so they can recruit additional members. Those suicide terrorists are seen as legitimate warriors fighting for their nationalist goals and primarily fighting for liberation from the foreign occupation (Pape, 23, 2005).

What makes an individual prepared to lose its life when executing a suicide attack? There is a degree of altruism (Pape, 27, 197, 2005) which leads those individuals to commit such acts. Motives of individuals committing suicide in Europe were studied by Emile Durkheim. His study comes from the 19th century and shows that the most common type of suicide is the egoistic type suicide. Less common is the altruistic suicide where social integration and respect towards community values leads an individual towards suicide due to a feeling of obligation towards that community (Holmes and Holmes, 30-33, 2005). Most of the terrorist suicide attackers could fit within the altruistic suicide column – well at least from the fighters’/martyrs’ point of view (Pape, 29, 2005).

Prolonged terrorist suicide campaigns really do need the support of a community for three very basic reasons. It is obvious that one cannot lead a suicide campaign without the loss of life. To have support of the community makes it easier to ‘restock’ suicide membership. Further, Pape claims suicide attackers tend to be ‘walk in’ volunteers (Pape, 189, 2005). As such there has to be a profile so the group can be found and sought by potential followers. Terrorist groups have been able to recruit suicide attackers from schools, charities and religious establishments. Even so the numbers of recruits for this purpose are not that high. For instance, the LTTE has deployed about 143 suicide attackers (Pape, 193, 2005). The ability to recruit new suicide attackers lies within the deep support of the society.

The community support is important for martyrdom. Martyrdom is important from the motivation perspective – who would want to be completely forgotten after their death? If the vision of martyrdom is not built the terrorist organisation risks denial from the society. Martyrdom is a social construct. An individual may wish to become a martyr however it is up to the society to determine what is and what is not a martyrdom and whether a particular act

committed by an individual 'ticks the martyrdom box'. It is the society which creates the status of a martyr (Pape, 197, 2005).

2.5 Not so black and white – Moghadam's critique

Moghadam's critique is divided into three sections; in the first section, he criticizes Pape's key definitions and concepts as well as the data presentation on suicide terrorism. In the second section, he questions the success rates of suicide terrorism; where Pape claims that the success rates are around 54 percent, Moghadam concludes that the rate is closer to 24 percent (Moghadam, 707, 2006). Moghadam does not agree with the link between foreign occupation and suicide terrorism; a claim Pape repeats throughout his *Dying to Win* book on a number of occasions. A further additional claim Moghadam makes is the difference between traditional and globalised suicide attacks – such a differentiation is not made by Pape.

Terrorism as such has been studied by scholars, journalists and others from many angles; there have been interviews, comparative studies, historical research, etc. However, what most of those studies were lacking was the statistical data. Moghadam does agree that Pape managed to collect the statistical data other studies were lacking and this in turn has brought a new understanding of terrorism to the field (Moghadam, 708, 2006). However, I would like to point out here that Pape did not study terrorism as such but focused on suicide terrorism as a strategic strain of terrorism. What is more I would argue that Pape actually distances himself from terrorism as such.

According to Moghadam (709, 2006) Pape presents a number of arguments of which some are rather more conventional comparing to the traditional view. Nevertheless, Moghadam concludes that Pape's conclusion is that religion rarely causes suicide terrorism and that the

main objective of suicide attacks is to force democratic governments to recall their military. However, that is again not quite true. Pape argues that the cause of suicide terrorism is nationalism and religious difference between occupying forces and occupied citizens are powerful enough to demonise the enemy and initiate violent attacks. Religion itself, as Pape puts it, is not the cause of suicide terrorism.

Even in Pape's 'gender neutral' portrayal, women are characterised as less rational and more emotional than men. These gender stereotypes remain in Pape's work, even though he tries to distinguish himself from those. *Dying to Win* cannot escape the notion that women's violence is outside of women's nature, which is pure and innocent. In those situations where women's violence remains in the emotional sphere, individual perpetrators are not individually responsible for their actions. To be gender aware in this situation, and to try to understand the differences would rather complicate ideal types of women and suicide bombers, and would implicate questions of agency, emotions and rationality – so many authors try to dodge.

Is suicide terrorism an irrational act? Moghadam believes that Pape does not offer enough evidence to make such a claim. Pape bases his argument on different studies. First is an article called *Moral Logic of Hezbollah* from Kramer (1990). After reading this article it can be concluded that Kramer does not directly argue that suicide attacks are irrational. Instead he argues that from the psychological point of view those attacks were 'psychologically' motivated not politically motivated. However, it was also noted that the attacks could have been a result of perpetrators being brainwashed. Kramer does not argue directly that suicide terrorism is an irrational act however he does admit that there are studies putting forward this argument.

This is not the only, nor first or last critique of the incompleteness or inaccuracy of the rational actor approach to suicide terrorism. There is a number of alternative explanations to this phenomenon. For instance, there is a number of scholars attribute the rise of suicide bombing in the Palestinian territories to a culture of martyrdom present in the territory (Bennett 2002, Rubin 2002). It is important to look at cultural analysis like this, as it adds a much needed dimension to the strategic logic view, but also a perspective through gendered lenses which is crucial to any gender differentiated debate.

2.5.1. Where are the women?

Throughout his book Pape is most persistent with his argument that suicide terrorism is growing because terrorists have learned that it is a working tactic. However, if that is so, why did the PPK actually drop this tactic – in particular in the women's group? Further, not only can this argument be brought to question in contrast with the development of the PPK, but also by simply analysing Pape's account. In his book, Pape claims that suicide terrorism achieved a 54 percent success rate however an analysis conducted by A. Moghadam (719, 2006) reveals that the actual success rate of cases covered by Pape achieved a 24 percent success rate only. On top of this the suicide attacks more often resulted in failure rather than in success. Reading through Pape's work it is evident that he established a pattern between suicide terrorism and foreign occupation – as put in by Moghadam (716, 2006) Pape was the first to make and put forward this argument.

Pape's argument for foreign occupation is certainly valid when we look at the behaviour of terrorist groups such as Hezbollah or LTTE. Looking at the LTTE group the female combatants, and suicide bombers in particular, played an important role within the group. However, their participation was not widespread until the mid-1980's. Initially, the birds of

freedom – as women in the LTTE were referred to, primarily played a supporting role – such as medical care, recruitment or propaganda (Wang, 101, 2011). However, the Indian occupation in the early 1980's dramatically reduced the numbers of male combatants; therefore, women were strongly encouraged to participate in the armed struggle (Ann-Balasingham, 1993; Bouta, 7, 2005). Yet the foreign occupation – suicide bombing relationship has not been established in every country. Countries like Morocco, Jordan or Indonesia have all witnessed suicide attacks, yet no foreign invasion or occupation occurred (Moghadam, 719, 2006).

Moghadam (720, 2006) distinguishes two types of suicide terrorism; that is the classic or traditional pattern of suicide attacks and the modern type of suicide terrorism – what Moghadam calls the globalisation of martyrdom or the internationalisation of suicide attacks. Suicide attacks have been on the rise since 1981; during this time period, almost all of the attacks occurred locally – that is they were planned and executed by sub-national terrorist groups such as the LTTE, Hezbollah or the PKK. These operations were focused on their subsequent region where each group was fighting for their political, ethnic, or a religious cause. Here the suicide bombing tactic was used by the organisation against another group or a state in order to pursue the group's agenda and to support its community. This agenda includes, as Pape describes it, an end to a foreign occupation, right to self-determination, or increased regional autonomy. Another feature of this strain is that the groups operate within definable areas, for instance the LTTE in Sri Lanka or the PPK in the Kurdish region of Turkey. This is in contrast with Al Qaeda which is described as a transnational movement.

Another distinguishing feature of traditional suicide terrorism is that the groups involved recruit and train suicide bombers within the conflict area. This is in contrast with modern

suicide terrorism where bombers perpetrating their act operate outside their 'hometown'. Last but not least, the targets of the groups involved are also locally based; that is within the groups' territory.

Although the PKK's suicide tactic can be described as following the traditional pattern, it is important to look at the stark contrast this has against the globalised tactic of today's martyrdom. This is something Pape neglected in his study. Primarily the fact that those 'modern' suicide attacks are executed by a group with a widespread transnational network. Those attacks mostly take place outside the actual conflict zone. Classic examples of this are the 9/11 attacks⁷ or the 2008 Mumbai attack⁸ (Moghadam, 721, 2006).

Although *Dying to Win* has its limitations on the modern strain of suicide terrorism it does provide direction for the more traditional strain which is the one displayed by the PKK. Therefore, are we to believe that individuals are motivated differently and subsequently that there is no pattern to follow?

In *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007) it is argued that women are denied their place within the political or even criminal arena because those who study women as women do not recognise their capacity to commit acts of terror. This inability to recognise this fact apparently fits better within the current notion of women and femininity (Sjoberg, 72-73, 2009).

⁷ For more information please see http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/the_september_11th_terrorist_attacks - accessed on 15/04/2017

⁸ For more information please see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/7751876.stm - accessed on 15/04/2017

The next question which pops up in our mind is ‘why do people commit acts of terror’? Again, we encounter the rational/emotional split which dominates current studies. What we see is that terrorists are either rational political actors or emotionally derived sociopaths; there is little or no ground in-between, the basis of assumptions are often placed on gender.

2.5.2 Limitations of Pape’s theory of suicide terrorism

Even though Pape has offered substantial evidence to his study, there are a few limitations where he writes a one-sided argument with a failure to consider the other 41 relevant forces in his writing and therefore is prone to weak claims. For instance, when he is analysing the profiles of the suicide terrorists, he is describing that they can vary from college educated or uneducated, from married to single, mixed gender, from socially isolated towards integrated, from age 13 to 47 (Pape, 344, 2005). Compared to the history when they used to be classified as uneducated, unemployed, socially isolated, single men in their late teens and early 20’s (ibid). What he fails to determine and analyse is the role of the women terrorists and what percentage of the entire statistics they are representing in the suicide attacks.

He claims that *‘the more suicide terrorists justify their actions on the basis of religious or ideological motives that match the beliefs of a broader national community, the more the status of terrorist martyrs is elevated, and the more plausible it becomes that others will follow in their footsteps’* (Pape, 347, 2005). Additionally, he has mentioned that *‘maximizing the number of enemy killed alienates those in the target audience who might be sympathetic to the terrorist’s cause, while the act of suicide creates a debate and often loss of support among moderate segments of the terrorists’ community’* (Pape, 345, 2005). Even though these two

statements make sense on their own, they explain the same concept in two ways that do not overlap easily. This might confuse the reader and make the arguments of the study weak.

In terms of the occupying force, Pape is stating that almost all of suicide attacks are linked to a revolt against those perceived as an occupying force. Some critiques point out that what is important to note and ask is the question: 'Why supporters of a single religion seem systematically willing to express their complaints, territorial and otherwise, in the most unselective and barbaric way possible'?

Finally, what he argues is the scenario where three conditions must be met in order for a suicide terrorism campaign to be launched:

1. Circumstance of national resistance to foreign occupation of lands strongly associated with a nationalist identity;
2. The occupying force originates from a democracy or democracies;
3. There is a difference in religion between those being occupied and those doing the occupying

Additionally, suicide operations are shown not to be isolated or random incidents accomplished by singular fanatics. Instead, it is part of a planned terrorist campaigns with specific strategic goals in mind. As a concluding remark, he argues that one of the main reasons that suicide terrorism has flourished in the recent years is the perception on the part of terrorists of the probable success of suicide campaigns for achieving their immediate strategic goals, which are

usually the withdrawal of combat forces generated and deployed by a democracy (Pape, 110, 2005).

In summary, Pape claims that male and female martyrdom are the same; but in another he blames women's self-martyrdom on their status as rape victims. Pape argues that women turn to martyrdom after rape because it is a stigma that destroys their prospects for marriage and rules out procreation as a means of contributing to the community. And subsequently, to become a 'human bomb' is considered as acceptable offering for a woman who would never become a mother (Pape, 230, 2005). It is hard to say if Pape is breaking from his rational actor model with this, or if he believes that it is rational for a woman to commit suicide because she was raped or because she is incapable of motherhood. Either way, his analysis does show significant assumptions to separate female and male suicide terrorists and diminishes women's agency in their violence.

2.6 Female perspective / motivations

Attempts to understand why people (irrespective of their gender) participate in terrorism often relies on series of factors that makes them especially vulnerable to the recruitment from the terrorist organisation. Jacques and Taylor analysed the following factors specifically for female terrorists – age, educations, employment, disconnection from society; their study also included male terrorists which served as a comparison group. Their conclusion was that terrorists in fact tend to be young (which applied to both males and females), however, in contrast to the stereotype, they were often well educated with majority having secondary or even university education. The employment rate in the study was high (with exception of Chechnya and Iraq).

When it came to terrorist's social status, women were more likely to be divorced or widowed (with even deeper division in Chechnya, as will be shown in the case study). Gender difference was also found when studying the immigrant status. While only a small percentage of female terrorists appeared to be immigrants, the number was significantly higher among their male counterpart (Jacques, Taylor, 2013, 36-41).

Determining specific reasons that motivate women to join terrorist organisations is rather difficult. One of the main problems is the lack of available data or possibilities for primary research stemming simply from the inherent difficulties when studying terrorism. The stereotypes surrounding women, and female terrorists in particular, also complicate the matter. Yesevi (581, 2014) mentions so called beautiful soul narrative. This is an assumption that women are more peaceful, whereas men have stronger connection with violence. Even when women are partaking in the occurring violence, they are considered more vulnerable, weaker and expected to assume their roles as mothers once the conflict is over.

Even scholars analysing the subject of motivations for terrorism seem to be sometimes biased. To that end, Bloom (8, 2011) pointed out that an influential body of research on this topic has alleged that women are motivated by emotions while male terrorist operative are inspired by religion, nationalism, or the desire to combat and occupation.

Different scholars identified several factors that could contribute to the reasons why women join terrorist organisations. Yesevi (588-594, 2014) found a number of psychological and sociological factors related to female terrorism. For example, the appeal for equal treatment has been one of the main themes connected to female terrorism (however, given the masculine nature of terrorism, the situation often led only to furthering female subordination. Group

solidarity and shared ideological commitment are also emphasised as significant motivations (more so than personal attributes). Supporting and even participating in terrorism can be seen by many women as a way to protect their families and communities. Among personal characteristics, redemption, respect, revenge and relationship are the most important factors that motivate female terrorists.

Similarly, Bloom (11-17, 2011) outlined the female motivations as the four R 's' – Revenge, Redemption, Relationship and Respect. It is important to mention that the categories are not mutually exclusive. Revenge for the loved ones that were killed is one of the most mentioned reasons for women's participations. The possibility of redemption is mostly related to suicide operations, where women willingly become martyrs to redeem themselves for the past crimes against gender norms. The third R – relationship, often serves as an introduction to the terrorist group. Familial ties among the group can create a cohesive network; here women may serve as important links that keep the men committed to the organisation. Vice versa, such marriages can, on the other hand, permit the organisation to compel the wife to become a terrorist and commit violence herself. Finally, becoming a part of the terrorist organisation (and especially taking on active roles and committing violent acts) shows that women have the same dedication to the cause as their male counterparts in the society, earning them respect of their community, whilst also giving them a sense of greater purpose.

Bloom (17, 2011) adds one final R for rape since there have been instances of women being deliberately targeted and sexually assaulted with the sole purpose of forcing them to join a terrorist organisation as they are often considered ruined in the eyes of the traditional communities. Conversely, when women are raped by whoever the community considers to be

an enemy, the terrorist organisations do not hesitate to use such cases for propaganda to mobilise both men and women.

However, despite there being no evidence of fundamental difference between male and female terrorists when it comes to their ideological commitments, brutality, motivation or recruitment, there continue to be social gender stereotypes in regards to the subject. A sort of disconnect can be found between the media representation of women in terrorism and their actual reality. For example, Nacos (438-445, 2005) studied how female terrorists are depicted in the mass media and found several repeating framing patterns. Attention tend to be paid to their physical appearance, familial background or their partner (quite common is the assumption that women are motivated to commit violence by the man they love, even more so to avenge his death). In some cases, their actions are explained as an expression of gender equality (especially in culturally traditional countries). Furthermore, women terrorists are seen as ever more fanatical, deadlier than men (the idea that they are not 'real' women is expressed quite often), at the same time, also quite common is the concept that these women are naïve, bored or have issues within the society.

Similarly there is also the so called Mother, Monster, Whore (Sjoberg, 2007) narrative where women who commit violent acts are placed in one of the three categories. The Mother category considers the expected role of women (from another angle, not being able to fulfil such a role might drive women to terrorism). The Monster category creates an assumption that there is something innately wrong with the woman to be able to explain her actions. The women from the last category, on the other hand, use their sexuality to manipulate men. Such categorisation, however, denies women responsibility for their actions. It reflects a desire to explain away the existence and active political agency of women in terrorist organisations (Cruise, 38-40, 2016).

Dalton and Asal (2011) identified four types of benefits women's involvement can bring. First, they can occupy support roles and apply their skills in care giving. There is also the strategic advantage that comes with general perception of peacefulness and pacifism people often attribute to women. Third benefit is related to martyrdom and the symbolic value women as suicide terrorist represent. Lastly, women can benefit the group through reproduction as well as provide physical and emotional solace to the male members.

2.7 Women suicide bombers

A significant part of the academic literature concerning this topic has been focused on female suicide bombers as greater attention has been paid to this phenomenon in the last two decades. The first female suicide bombing has occurred in 1985 in Lebanon on behalf of the secular Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP/PPS) when Sana Mekhaidali successfully targeted an Israeli convoy causing the death of five soldiers (Raghavan, Balasubramaniyan, 200, 2014). Since then, a significant trend has been observed of an increasing female involvement in suicide operations.

At first, it was mainly the ethno-nationalist separatist groups that employed women as suicide bombers, however, recently (especially after 2000) conservative religious movements had begun to use them as well (O'Rourke, 693-697, 2009). There has also been a spike in the number of unclaimed female suicide attacks. The evidence has shown that women are more lethal as suicide attackers than men (Davis, 281-282, 2013). O'Rourke (687-690, 2009) analysed the effectiveness of female suicide terrorism and concluded that such attacks claim more casualties (both on individual and team levels). Furthermore, the effectiveness remains even in the face of increased counterterrorism measures. Women arouse less suspicion and therefore are often subjected to less strict security measures.

The psychological impact female suicide bombers generate should also not be underestimated. When women are involved in suicide operations, the media attention such attacks generate is greater than in the case of male bombers. The media coverage works to instil fear within the population, but also to increase sympathy and support for the organisation and can act as a mobilising factor to recruit more members. In places, where several terrorist groups fight for the same cause, this is especially significant factor as it allows the organisation to differentiate itself from others (Raghavan, Balasubramaniyan, 203, 2014).

Davis (283-284, 2013) studied the factors that could account for the use of female suicide bombers on the group level. Among the most significant is the pressure from limited recruitment opportunities (usually present in long lasting conflicts, as was the case for LTTE in Sri Lanka or PKK in Turkey). There are other strategic reasons to include women in terrorist organisations, like their ability to more easily avoid detection and target high profile targets, greater media attention (which allows the group to broadcast the seriousness of the commitments to the cause) related to the use of female suicide terrorism to recruit men, radicalise them and even shame them into joining.

Following up on the research conducted by Cragin and Daly, Vogel, Perter and Kebbell (99-102, 2014) studied 482 cases of women involved in contemporary political conflicts around the world representing a number causes. The results in this case show four distinct themes – caring, support, active, ideological – demonstrating four broad conceptual roles that symbolise the simultaneous occurrence of specific activities within the theme.

The active theme consist of a combination of leadership and fighting abilities (such as strategy, motivation, ideology, but also murder, kidnapping and fighting). There appeared to be also

activities that are not usually considered to be related with leadership or fighting positions, including administrative tasks, logistical support and gathering resources. The active theme is indicated of the woman's high level of incorporation in the organisation combined with a great degree of trust given to her. Finally, marrying a male member of the group has also been an observable characteristic within the active theme supporting the assumption that women often take part in terrorist violence as a results of their personal relationships. However, the analysis did not differentiate between the relationships that were created before the individual joined the terrorist organisation (Vogel, Porter, Kebbell, 102-103, 2014).

The ideological theme includes activities connected with propaganda and recruitment but also fundraising and presenting the organisation to the population. Quite surprisingly the theme contained the variable of hijacking and hostage taking as well as suicide bombing. For this, the authors offer an explanation that such acts are often committed with the specific intention of publicising the organisation or its ideology (Vogel, Porter, Kebbell, 106-108, 2014).

Part III

3. Methodology, structure and aim of this study

This study will be methodologically conducted as a case study and will include comparative evaluation which will allow me to summarise all findings. In order to answer all set questions, as well as to test the set of hypotheses, it is necessary to use empirical data from a number of secondary resources. This will primarily be the CPOST database.

I picked those terrorist organisations where the use of suicide bombers was (or still is) at its core and where its use was not a coincidence. At the same time, I considered the geographic location and the nature of the terrorist organisation. Last but not least, it was important to use an organisation where both men and women committed suicide terrorist acts in order to make a comparison. Based on these criteria I chose the Chechen Black Widows – a secular terrorist organisation.

As Fjodor Michajlovic Dostojevsky put it, *‘There is nothing easier than to judge a criminal, there is nothing more difficult than to understand him’* (Fisher and Green, 376, 2004). Mr Dostojevsky certainly did not expect for his quote to be used in a terrorism related study, nevertheless his quote does reflect the current terrorism climate. First and foremost, this study aims to explore and understand women’s motivation for a suicide attack - which besides killing innocent civilians leads to the perpetrators death as well. I will also look at how the position of women has evolved over the years – from supporting roles to front line terrorism.

3.1 Potential issues

There is a big issue of obtaining primary data related to female suicide terrorism or as a matter of fact to any form of terrorism which has to be addressed here. As a result of this lack of data, this study will rely on secondary data; that is data collected by researchers who somehow managed to gain the access to primary sources – and published their findings through publications, books, articles in print and internet resources and so on. Ideally, I would prefer to gain the field data myself but in order to obey the UK law, the University's duty of care policy and my own will to live – it simply is not possible to conduct the necessary field research, or at least not at this stage.

Further, there are other methodological problems, which every researcher of female suicide terrorism may encounter. Those are summarised by Clara Beyler (Beyler, 4, 2003). First and foremost, there is a lack of reports with descriptions of the cases. Further, there is not enough documentation on how these women, who became suicide terrorists, were treated during their stay with terrorist groups. Last but not least, another problem is that the few reports that are available *'have mostly been conducted by male researchers and from a man's point of view, which might be inherently gender biased, either consciously or unconsciously. One could imagine the importance of having a woman's perspective on the topic that would bring certain elements to light that had gone unnoticed by male researchers.'* (ibid).

Further, as Beyler mentions (ibid), there is a problem of credibility of male researchers, conducting interviews with the women who either survived the suicide terrorist act or changed their mind before committing the act. Beyler believes that female researchers might be more credible in the eyes of the female terrorists and therefore calls for including more women on

the research side. I must admit I do not necessarily agree with Beyler on this or at least partly do not agree.

It would definitely be beneficial to have more female researchers in the field and get more research done by them on this, so a comparative study based on male and female research can be done. However, with that being said I do not support the idea that research on female suicide terrorism conducted by a male researcher may be gender-biased. It is possible for it to happen, but it is only possible if that particular male researcher would integrate an essentialist view and not consider gender as a culturally constructed issue which has no link to the researcher's sex. Therefore, when conducting these studies, it is certainly important to keep in mind the need for a gender-sensitive approach. Nevertheless, I believe this can be done by both men and women.

I personally would not question the credibility of a male researcher in the eyes of the female terrorist. Although some women may find it easier to relate to other women we could then question the credibility of other sex within all social groups be it religious, national or any other. Therefore, I would not disregard any research conducted by a man purely for his sex as I do not believe this creates a burden when conducting interview.

The earlier described problems can be overcome. For instance, the lack of reports with descriptions of the cases and documentation on how women terrorists were treated in terrorist groups is probably the most serious of the problems. However, these problems originate from the very essence of suicide terrorism itself and it is clear that these problems will never be fully overcome. Therefore, as a researcher one has to search for alternative ways on how to study this phenomenon even without a sufficient amount of first-hand data.

3.2 Three-level analysis

It would be easy to fall into a specific level of analysis trap – that is to focus on each of the levels individually, be it societal, personal or organisational. Therefore, instead of separating the issues and analysing them separately I propose a multi-level approach allowing the development of an integrated framework which would show the relations between these different levels.

Kenneth Waltz first used the distinction of three levels of analysis in his examination of the causes of war in his book *Man, the State and War*. In his research Waltz separated the levels of human behaviour, internal structure of states and the nature of international systems to determine the best approach to answering the following question; What are the sources and causes of war? (Waltz, 1959). To analyse terrorism Assaf Moghadam (2006) suggested to replace Waltz' second level by the analysis of terrorist organisation – which is ultimately responsible for the planning and execution of suicide attacks. Instead of using Waltz' third level of analysis – the nature of the international system – I will use a societal level which will allow me to put an emphasis on the causes lying in the social and political environment from which suicide terrorism emerges.

3.3 Factors within each level

The individual level of analysis is used to identify the personal motivations of the actors involved in suicide attacks (Moghadam, 11, 2006). When it comes to suicide attacks the importance lies not only within the perpetrator, but also within the recruiters and organisation's leaders who inevitably make the suicide attack happen – therefore the existence / links among those have to be examined as well. As a result, on this level, the work will present a

comprehensive analysis which will establish the individual motivation of the suicide attacker but will also attempt to identify what reasons led and motivated the recruiter, the organisational leader or any other role a person whom this study may identify, to contribute by ‘playing’ their role in the planning / execution of the suicide attack (Cragin and Daly, 5, 2009). It is important to note that at this stage the work will heavily rely on biographical data of those perpetrators in order to establish their personal motivations. Nevertheless, this will inevitably result in a certain amount of limitations as there may potentially be a lack of this vital information.

The motives of those committing acts of suicide terrorism have fascinated both professionals and public for years, mainly as to many the idea of losing one's life in such an horrific act is unthinkable. Yet there have been 5,430 suicide attacks in over 40 countries to date⁹. To identify just one motive for such an attack would be most likely impossible. Instead, for one to commit an act of suicide terrorism a series of motives combined to make such a thing happen (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 66-67, 2006b). What this work will most likely discover in terms of motivations towards a suicide attack may include revenge, religious motives, struggle for liberation, and a widespread culture of martyrdom or perhaps posthumous benefits (Moghadam, 20, 2006). Speckhard and Akhmedova (66-67, 2006b) claim that for female suicide bombers there is a common feature of deep personal trauma, be it the violent death of a close relative, rape and others, which subsequently lead those women to commit a suicide attack – something this study will address.

The organisational level of analysis (Moghadam, 12, 2006) will enable us to understand the nature of the terrorist organisation. Even though the study is to focus on a specific element –

⁹ The current CPOST-SAD release contains the universe record of suicide attacks from 1974 to June 2016. The 2016 data is preliminary and is to be updated on the CPOST website as more information become available. http://cpostdata.uchicago.edu/search_new.php - accessed on 23/10/2017

suicide attacks - it is still important to use this analysis not only because we are to look at / compare terrorist organisations but also because most of the suicide attacks are executed by members of a specific terrorist organisation. True, there are cases where a suicide attack is executed by a lone wolf, for example by some Palestinian individuals who managed to get the necessary resources and executed a suicide mission without any organisational support (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 439, 2006). However, this small number of individuals / attacks will not make a difference to this study as it does not influence the importance of organisational analysis.

Some of the already known reasons leading terrorist organisations to deploying suicide tactics are higher public attention rates, the spread of fear, and in some instances stronger support in the international public opinion – that is applicable where individuals or certain members of a community were subjected to gruesome treatment by their enemy resulting in their willingness to sacrifice their life (Moghadam, 31, 2006). It is also accepted that a suicide tactic means higher lethality, cost efficiency, and easier to execute as there is no need to plan an escape route for the perpetrators (O'Rourke, 687, 2009; Moghadam, 32, 2006). This level of analysis will give us answers to why and how terrorist organisations deploy women.

The first two levels of analysis are connected to each other for a number of reasons. First of all, the two may come from the same environmental context but also belonging to a group or an organisation provides the individual with a social status which subsequently leads to an empowerment of that individual.

The third level of analysis is the environmental analysis. This level focuses on a number of different structural factors and conditions which are affecting the occurrence of suicide

terrorism as such. Among those factors are various cultural, historical, political as well as economic circumstances. The importance of these factors lies within the fact they all affect individual motivations and actions as well as ideology, tactics and goals of organisations.

The above explanations provide a clear argument that if one was to single out one or another analysis, each alone, would simply not provide enough evidence to explain why suicide terrorism occurs and why women become suicide attackers. Instead, this multi-level analysis should provide a framework within which it will be possible to explain both the occurrence of suicide terrorism, as well as the reasons behind women committing such acts.

3.4 Research questions

In light of the above, this study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What motivates women to join terrorist organisations?

and

2. How has the role of women within selected terrorist organisations evolved over the years?

Part IV

Case Study

4. The Chechen Republic¹⁰ (Chechnya¹¹)

4.1 Brief history of Russo-Chechen conflict – dissolution of USSR and the rise of nationalist ideology

The reasons and consequences of the disintegration of Soviet Union (USSR) and the rise of ethnic nationalism are not the topic of this work. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this work, it is useful to mention the ideological turn, which happened in the late 1980s¹². In those years, declared internationalism was progressively replaced by ethnic nationalism, based on the idea that the ethnic nation is the given and natural political entity. Christopher Zürcher characterises the new concept of nation in the post-Soviet era as the following: *‘The nation was depicted in substantial ethnocultural terms, whereas the concept of a political nation, where ethnicity was not the main precondition, hardly resonated’* (Zürcher, 38, 2007).

Many ‘communists’ were calling for greater sovereignty and later for the independence of their respective nations and were providing mutual support for each other’s claims. The dissolution of the USSR became their main goal. At that time, ethnic nationalism turned into a tool of emancipation from an oppressive Soviet communist regime. *‘It was the possibility, emerging*

¹⁰ Although Chechnya is an autonomous region it is under firm control and part of the Russian Federation – BBC, (2018), Chechnya profile, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-18188085> - accessed on 08/04/2018

¹¹ See map 1 for location details.

¹² Nationalism had an ambiguous position during the Soviet era. On one hand, any manifestations of nationalism were suppressed as reactionary, preventing the triumph of progressive internationalism, on the other hand, in some cases nationalist sentiments were encouraged as people’s right for self-determination. Although internationalist doctrine was in practice largely abandoned since the 1940’s, it remained part of the official ideology of USSR until the very end.

in the course of the late 1980s, of realising new collective political projects beyond the Soviet system that lent the concept —nation, its potency, its mobilisation effect, and its immunity to deconstruction. The concept of the nation as a substantial, real group was in great demand because the establishing and legitimisation of new institutional rules and new policies relied on there being a ‘real’ group as subject and beneficiary of these innovations’ (Zürcher, 38, 2007). However, this very concept of nation soon became the engine of several bloody conflicts, including the one in Chechnya.

4.1.1 Chechen independence

Political changes in the late 80’s also brought a new hope to Chechen dreams of freedom. For the first time in modern history, Chechen independence seemed to be realistic. This nationalist wave rose in practically all Soviet republics and autonomous territories. In addition, a new kind of solidarity emerged too – from Estonia to South-Caucasian republics, nationalists suddenly had a common aim, and therefore even the leaders of different national movements supported each other. A typical example could be the first Chechen president Dzhokhar Dudayev, who first flew the Estonian flag on a Soviet air force base in Tartu (Cornell, 195, 2003), then started to organise a nationalist movement in Grozny.

On the eve of the Soviet Union’s break-up, Chechen leaders caught the scent of opportunity to gain an even greater autonomy. In November 1991, the Supreme Council of then Chechen-Ingush declared State Sovereignty. The newly elected first president of independent Chechnya, Dzhokhar Dudayev, was expecting a confrontation with Russian central power and declared general mobilisation. 62,000 men, together with volunteers from other regions of Caucasus, stood up for the independence of Chechnya (Šmíd, 193, 2007). It is important to note that Chechen politics was anything but Islamist at that time. Popular leader Dudayev, supported by

the overwhelming part of Chechen society, was a typical nationalist politician, similar to national leaders in many post-Soviet republics. His political project was to create an independent, secular Chechnya, not an Islamic state with sharia as its constitution (Kullberg, 114, 2004).

For the Russian government, the loss of Chechnya was unacceptable and – not only as the possible first step toward further disintegration of the Russian federation itself, but also because there were valuable pipelines on the Chechen territory. Therefore, after the events of November 1991, newly elected Russian president Yeltsin declared the Chechen independence to be illegal and created the Chechen Interim Council to oppose Dudayev. Some minor clashes between a Russian airborne regiment and Dudayev's forces resulted in Russian defeat (Cornell, 199, 2003) Chechen rebels were encouraged by this victory and, in addition, they gained a substantial amount of weaponry (Tishkov, 63-64, 2004).

At the beginning of 1991, charismatic leader of Chechen militants Shamil Basayev first drew attention to himself when he, with several other armed men, hijacked an aircraft flying on the Mineralnye Vody – Ankara line. Among their demands was the lifting of martial law in Chechnya and the organisation of a press conference (Zürcher, 97, 2007; Cornell, 300, 2003). This operation ended peacefully and, although Basayev's demands were not satisfied, all hostages were freed. The hijackers were guaranteed a safe return to Chechnya.

In autumn 1993, Boris Yeltsin consolidated his power and began to consider a military solution to the Chechen issue. In order to gain public support, politicians and mass media started an anti-Chechen campaign, depicting Chechens and other nations from Caucasus as criminals and a grave danger for the security of Russian people (Ram, 15-17, 1999). The campaign was

supposed to persuade the public that a military invasion of Chechnya was necessary in order to provide local Russians with help. At the beginning of the conflict, Moscow preferred the indirect involvement through supporting the Chechen anti-Dudayev opposition led by Umar Avturkhanov (Zürcher, 80, 2007; Cornell, 204-205, 2003).

The first major attack of anti-Dudayev forces began on 26th November 1994, when paramilitary units with the clandestine support of Russian federal military forces attacked Grozny. However, this operation ended as a fiasco for Russia and even caused an unprecedented unity between Chechen clans and increased their commitment to resist (Cornell, 206, 2003). After this failure, on 29th November 1994 president Yeltsin started to strongly consider an official involvement of the Russian army in the conflict (Zürcher, 80, 2007) and began to prepare a massive attack on Grozny (Smith, 142, 2001). As a pretext for the invasion, he declared a 48-hour ultimatum for Chechen separatists to lay down their arms. Although Dudayev was not willing to surrender, Yeltsin did not even wait for the ultimatum's lapse (Cornell, 210, 2003) and the next day issued Decree no. 2137 '*On measures for the restoration of the Constitution and the rule of law on the territory of the Chechen Republic*' (Šmíd, 202, 2007). This decree officially launched the First Russo-Chechen War.

4.1.2 The First Chechen War

On 11th December 1994 some 40,000 Russian troops crossed the Chechen borders, but their initial advance met self-confident Chechen resistance. The Russian army especially suffered from the disunity of its leadership, low motivation and morale of soldiers, (Gall and De Waal, 179, 1998) but also from an underestimation of the Caucasian winter climate. However, after two months of heavy fighting, the Russian troops eventually succeeded and conquered the Chechen capital Grozny. According to different estimates, up to 7000 Chechen fighters died in

the siege of Grozny, and Russians lost some 2000 soldiers (Smith, 165, 2001). From the rebels' point of view it could be perceived as a success, considering the Russian material superiority (especially massive use of aircrafts). However, around 20,000 civilians died during this siege, including many ethnic Russians, mainly as a result of the Russian indiscriminate bombing and shelling (Cornell, 226, 2003).

Confronted with Russian military superiority, the Chechen rebels changed their strategy and resorted to guerrilla warfare. They withdrew to the Caucasus Mountains and carried out raids on Russian military bases. By this strategy, they were able to maintain the balance of power, but were not able to achieve victory and drive the Russian army out of Chechnya. The turning point came when Chechen rebels started to conduct diverse actions and hostage taking on the territory of Russian cities.

On 14th June 1995 a group of Chechen rebels, led by Shamil Basayev, carried out an attack on the hospital in Budyonnovsk in South Russia. They took more than 1000 hostages (Smith, 201, 2001) and announced their demands, including the ceasefire and Russian withdrawal from Chechnya. After several days of negotiation (during which female suicide bombers twice tried to storm the hospital), (Zürcher, 83, 2007) the hostages were released. Although the rebels' claims were met only partially, the shock caused by this hostage crisis seriously changed the course of war. Russian commanders were forced to ceasefire, not only by the newly appointed Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) mediators but by the Russian public as well. Although the fighting and guerrilla operations continued (the hostage crisis in January 1996 in the Dagestani city of Kizlyar, the assassination of Chechen rebel-president Dzhokhar Dudayev in April 1996, and the recapture of Grozny by rebels in August 1996) a new wave of negotiation started in summer 1996.

These negotiations were probably the side-effect of Russian presidential election campaign – the factor which was to affect the Chechen-Russian conflict many times again in the future. The elections were held in June and July 1996 and therefore Yeltsin desperately needed the Chechen conflict to be resolved. After the peace talks in Moscow, where Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and Akhmed Zakayev were present, the ceasefire agreement was signed. The withdrawal of the Russian federal force was planned for August. However, Russian public rather perceived this agreement as Moscow's capitulation and Yeltsin won the election with only 35 percent of votes.

The war seemed to be over, but the Russian army surprisingly attacked the village of Mekhkety, where at that time almost the entire Chechen leadership were present - including Basayev, Maskhadov and Yandarbiyev (Smith, 239, 2001). All of them survived and escaped, but the peace process was in grave danger. As a result of this betrayal, Chechen leaders decided to launch the counter-attack and recapture Grozny (Cornell, 218, 2003). At the beginning of August 1996, Chechens launched a coordinated attack on Grozny, Gudermes and Argun. A few days later, 1500 fighters under the command of Basayev, Abdulhajiev, Ismailov and Gelayev conquered Grozny, even though they faced overwhelming Russian superiority (Cornell, 218, 2003).

The re-conquest of Grozny was most likely one of the most humiliating defeats of a modern army (Zürcher, 83, 2007). Chechen fighters succeeded partly because of improved tactics of urban warfare, when small groups of fighters were assaulting clumsy Russian tanks and troops unprepared for this kind of fight. Eventually, the Russians agreed to a peace negotiation and on the 15th August a ceasefire was declared. However, during August fighting, more than

30,000 Chechen civilians were forced to leave their homes. These displaced civilians headed mainly for Ingushetia.

Peace negotiations were concluded on 31st August 1996, when Khasav-Yurt Accord was signed by Aslan Maskhadov and Alexander Lebed. This peace treaty officially marked the end of the First Chechen War. Russia granted Chechnya autonomy, although not formal independence, withdrawing its troops from Chechnya by January 1997. In Chechnya this treaty was celebrated as a great victory; however, the impacts of this war were gruesome - some 60,000 Chechen civilians were killed in those two years (Sarkees and Wayman, 436, 2010).

4.1.3 Partakers, motives and strategies

Under the commonly accepted view, this conflict is presented as a clash of two parties – the Russian central power, and Chechen separatists. However, this image is misleading and rather blurred. Firstly, it is incorrect to portray the parties as cohesive, unitary subjects – in fact, both ‘Russian’ and ‘Chechen’ sides are internally divided. Of course, this disunity evolved during different stages of war and inter-war period, nevertheless on the Russian side it is necessary to differentiate between hardliners (*siloviki*)¹³ and those who preferred a more peaceful solution (e.g. Alexander Lebed). Apart from this distinction, there were also some personal rivalries, based on completely pragmatic interests of certain figures – for instance between Y. Luzhkov and A. Lebed, who became quite popular with Russians because of his activity in peace negotiations.

¹³ The so called —*Siloviki* (derivate from *Сила*, ‘force’ or ‘power’) is an informal group of politicians, connected to Russian security forces and services, who, according to current opinion, have a huge influence on the government’s policy.

However, Chechens were divided as well. There was not only division between those who were more willing to collaborate with Moscow and those who were not (this division was in fact far less important in the First Chechen War than in the Second one). There were also other competing factions – namely those which favoured civil government and those which supported field commanders and warlords in their call for power.

With regards to tactics, Chechen military leaders managed to take advantage of urban guerrilla warfare. Asymmetry of conflicting parties and partisan character of Chechen rebel forces is one of the key reasons why Russian forces were not able to achieve a decisive victory for such a long time. Partisan warfare has a number of advantages as well as a number of limitations. According to Carl Schmitt, one of the constitutive elements of partisan warfare is his so called ‘telluric nature’, or his connection to the land. This important characteristic means that partisan warfare is territorially limited and inherently defensive (Schmitt, 48-49, 2004). In short, the irregularity of Chechen rebel troops was their greatest advantage. They could be both fighters and civilians practically at the same time.

Last but not least, both sides of the war used different strategies. Russian troops waged attrition warfare, in which they attempted to win by exhausting the enemy and causing higher casualty rate on the enemy side. This strategy is usually used by those sides of a conflict which have a large and strong army on their disposal. On the other hand, Chechen partisans chose a manoeuvre strategy in which the moment of surprise, high mobility and spatial dispersion are the key elements. The aim of a manoeuvre strategy is to make the enemy feel insecure and cause the constant fear of assault (Kaldor, 22, 2001). According to Clausewitz (1832), both those strategies are complementary, and a combination of both is necessary for the final decisive victory.

4.1.4 New Wars

A character of the wars in Chechnya (especially of the second one) could be hardly considered traditional. It is the subject of long discussions, but we can say that they fulfil at least some of the defining features of so-called New Wars, term introduced by the British scholar Mary Kaldor (2001). First of all, Chechen wars were based on ‘identity politics’, unlike ‘old wars’, which are fought rather for geopolitical or ideological goals (Kaldor, 6, 2001). ‘Identities’ could be national, clan, religious, or language, and they are usually reproduced by collective memories and myths. Unlike material goods, identities could not be divided and therefore it is very difficult to solve identity conflicts by compromise. Therefore, conflicts over identities are much more permanent and sometimes end only when one of the conflicting sides is eliminated (as we saw recently in Tamil-Sinhalese conflict in Sri Lanka).

Secondly, ‘new wars’, unlike the traditional ones, are not usually decided on a battlefield. The key is the political control of the population – or, in extreme cases, the physical elimination of people of a different identity (Kaldor, 7-8, 2001). That is why ‘new wars’ are quite often characterised by mass killings, ethnic cleansing, expulsions, intimidations etc. The main object of violence is the civil population. There then comes new, once tabooed forms of violence, such as rape as a weapon of war, indiscriminate bombings and executions, exemplary tortures and others. Similarly, cultural sites, buildings, symbols and monuments are being destroyed, in order to destroy the identity itself. Another distinctive feature of new wars is that unlike ‘traditional wars’, they are fought by a diverse range of paramilitary troops, local warlords, criminal gangs, police, militias and international mercenaries, rather than large, hierarchically organised armies. Additionally, each partaker has its own specific interests and motives.

In the case of the first Russo-Chechen war in early 90's, we can consider the Russian army to be 'traditional' – but not in the second war in late 90's. In the second war, the Russian (or more correctly 'pro-Moscow') side changed and differed substantially – namely by including diverse Chechen factions (that is those loyal to Kadyrov's clan – so called Kadyrovtsi).

The 'new wars' differ also in terms of their financing. While 'old wars' were usually funded by local sources, those fighting in 'new wars' (and Second Chechen war especially) were financially dependent on other, external sources, such as foreign states' support, diasporas, international terrorist and criminal networks and even by the misuse of the material support of humanitarian organisations. Especially criminal activities (drug smuggling, human or arms trafficking, kidnappings for ransom and others) are almost inseparably connected to 'new wars'.

4.1.5 Inter-war period

Both Chechen wars were characterised by strong dynamics – if we compare the situation at the beginning of the first war in 1994 with 2009, when the second one officially ended, we do not find many features in common. All participants underwent profound change; some of them even changed sides, the rebels' ideology as well as demographic composition of Chechen society, Russian interests in the region, and even the territory where the war was taking place changed. While the First Chechen war could be called 'Russo-Chechen' or 'War in Chechnya', to call the second one the same would be hardly correct. The latter one did not take place only in Chechnya and there was neither a 'Russian' nor a 'Chechen' party.

Officially, after the first war Chechnya became independent. In fact, it was a hardly functioning state, facing immense humanitarian disaster. The war caused up to 100,000 civilian casualties

and 40 percent to 50 percent of the population became refugees (Šmíd, 213, 2007). 80 percent of population ended up unemployed and for many of them criminal activity became the only source of income. According to some estimates, only 10 percent of the Chechen population was earning their living entirely legally (Moskalyov, 64, 1997 in Šmíd, 213, 2007). There were practically no social services, health care or even schooling. Furthermore, it is necessary to count immense physical and psychological harms of the civilian population, which made themselves felt during the second war.

Independent Chechnya had almost all the typical features of a failed state: an absence of state institutions capable of securing the society's needs, a regulated anarchy based on clan reciprocity, a high level of crime¹⁴, huge amounts of weaponry in people's hands, but also nepotism and particularism (Šmíd, 213-214, 2007).

In this period, both (or all) parties underwent profound development. Yeltsin's popularity was almost completely wiped out (he resigned on 31st December 1999) and together with a new president, the group of so called 'siloviki' came to power. These hardliners preferred a vigorous military solution of the Chechen case (Cornell, 235, 2003). Similarly, the power of Chechen warlords (namely of S. Basayev, Z. Yandarbiyev and M. Udugov) considerably rose, largely at Maskhadov's expense. Although he won over Basayev in the presidential elections in January 1997, the real power was already in the warlords' hands (Zürcher, 87, 2007). Additionally, the ideological background of the Chechen rebels also significantly changed. Islam (in its various forms) became increasingly attractive. *'Recently freed from Soviet-imposed atheism, underground Muslims openly displayed their faith and many younger-generation Chechens reconnected with their spiritual roots as the means of coping with an*

¹⁴ For instance, several hundreds of people were kidnapped for ransom in those years. (Zürcher, 86, 2007)

environment that was —marred by warlordism, rampant criminality, hostage takings, chaotic violence, grisly attacks on foreign aid workers and general lawlessness’ (Pape and Feldman, 256, 2010).

It seems quite natural that in such a devastated country Islam could provide a certain level of stability, order, and social cohesion. Islam also functioned as an identity-building factor, which perfectly fitted on the distinction between (Christian) Russia and Chechnya as a part of Islamic world. This ideological turnabout was used mainly by Chechen warlords to weaken the authority of president Maskhadov. Most of the warlords accepted the Wahhabist doctrine – the extremely fundamentalist form of Islamism (there was a substantial influence of the Saudi Arabia Emir Ibn Al-Khattab)¹⁵ and started to create anti-Maskhadov opposition. This anti-Maskhadov Wahhabist opposition presented itself for the first time in June 1998, when it refused to submit to his authority (Cornell, 236, 2003). Although Maskhadov later reacted to the rise of radical Islamism and Wahhabism by the adoption of Islamist rhetoric¹⁶ and proclamation of sharia law, he did not gain a greater popularity among radical Islamists.

The confidence of Chechen field commanders had grown to such an extent, that they decided to expand the Islamic resistance in the Caucasus to other regions. The newly created Islamic International Brigade (IIB), which consisted mainly of Chechens, Dagestanis and Arabs¹⁷, led by Basayev and Khattab, carried out on 2nd August 1999 an attack on several villages and Russian military targets in Dagestan. Although at the beginning it seemed that the event would be successful, the Dagestani militia resisted the IIB invasion and Wahhabists have not

¹⁵ Also known as Habib Abdul Rahman, although his real name was Samir Saleh Abdullah Al-Suwailem.

¹⁶ Maskhadov’s first post-war trip abroad was to make the *hadj* pilgrimage in April 1997 at the invitation of Saudi King Fahd. (Smith, 265, 2001)

¹⁷ There were also numbers of Arab volunteers, often veterans of other wars (Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Bosnia).

succeeded in sparking an Islamist uprising in Dagestan¹⁸. The Dagestani militia with the support of the Russian army repelled Chechen fighters in two weeks.

4.1.6 The Second Chechen War

The invasion of Dagestan together with a series of bombings in Moscow and the city of Volgograd (allegedly carried out by Chechen rebels) became the pretext for the new war on North Caucasus. The so called Second Chechen War started on August 1999, when Russian government forces and the Federal Security Service (FSB) crossed the Chechen border and started to take territory from the north. The Russian air force started massive bombings – even of civilian targets. They bombed even highly crowded sites, such as the market in the centre of Grozny, where on 21st October more than 100 civilians died¹⁹. In total, as a result of bombings, more than 100,000 civilians were forced to leave their homes (Šmíd, 219, 2007). During the so called second phase of the operation, which lasted until the end of November, Russian forces (with the overwhelming power of 100,000 soldiers in arms (Zürcher, 93, 2007) took most of the strategically important strongpoints. The number of refugees reached unprecedented levels – according to different sources²⁰ from 200,000 to 350,000 people had been forced to flee their homes.

¹⁸ They understand the invasion rather as an expression of Chechen territorial aspirations rather than as a legitimate resistance to the Russian oppression. Moreover, given the fact, that Wahhabism was considered by most Dagestanis as an imported, non-indigenous form of Islam, Chechen rebels failed in the introduction of the myth of still continuing Caucasian Islamic resistance, initiated by Imam Shamil in the 19th century. The social situation in Dagestan was also quite different than in Chechnya. In Dagestan, where traditional social, political, and religious order was still relatively functioning, Wahhabism could not play the role of an alternative as in the totally devastated Chechnya.

¹⁹ BBC News (1999), 'Rockets Blast Grozny', BBC News, October 21st, 1999. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/481663.stm> - accessed on 15th December 2017. Guardian (1999). "Russian Rockets Hit Grozny Market." The Guardian, October 22nd, 1999. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/oct/22/chechnya.ameliagenteleman> - accessed on 15th December 2017

²⁰ Kullberg, 91, 2004 compared with Šmíd, 220, 2007

By the end of January 2000, Grozny was conquered. Chechen fighters left the city and headed for mountains on the south (Zürcher, 93, 2007). Many Chechen commanders were killed during this escape. During spring 2000, fighting slightly slowed down – which was probably once again the effect of ongoing presidential election campaign. That time, the character of conflict significantly changed. Since Chechen rebels lost their positions in most towns, they resorted to sabotages and surprise assaults of small groups of fighters. According to different sources, there were from 7,000 to 40,000 Chechen fighters in arms (Šmíd, 221, 2007). In June 2000 the very first suicide attack took place – two young women detonated themselves in a OMON (Special Purpose Mobile Unit) base at Alkhan-Yurt in Chechnya²¹.

The Second Chechen War differed from the first one in many aspects. Globalisation of this conflict greatly influenced its outcome. The ratio between local territorially-tied inhabitants and globalists changed in favour of the latter. It was the involvement of not only international jihadists, but also of diverse international organisations, including humanitarian ones. Their aid, intended officially for war-affected civilians, paradoxically often ended up in the hands of militants and local mafias. The other effect was that both sides understood that the information war is at least as important as the successes on the battlefields (Zürcher, 93-94, 2007). Chechen warriors tried to present themselves as noble freedom fighters, while Moscow was disseminating the image of Chechens as bandits and terrorists, who are even connected to the global terrorist networks (Ram, 18, 1999).

The other important change was the diminishing role of moderates and civilian leaders and the increasing power of those who profited from the conflict – siloviks on the Russian side, field

²¹ In December 1999, the town of Alkhan-Yurt became a scene of a massacre committed by Russian forces, when several dozens of civilians were killed, and number of others were wounded or raped. However, though the link between this massacre and the terrorist attack is not proven, it is highly probable.

commanders on the Chechen side, and criminal groups on both sides. Finally, there was a significant attempt by Moscow to 'Chechenise' this conflict. As a part of the Chechenisation, the Russians transferred power to pro-Russian Chechen officials (at first to Akhmad Kadyrov) in order to shift from a Russo-Chechen to Chechen-Chechen conflict (Šmíd, 221, 2007). Russians were actively supporting diverse Chechen factions be they anti-Maskhadov- or anti-Islamist orientated, in order to create a pro-Moscow opposition in Chechnya. Eventually they succeeded and found their ally in the once Islamist, Chechen Akhmad Kadyrov, who had been appointed president of Chechnya, and later in his son, Ramzan Kadyrov, a man of infamous reputation.

4.1.7 Cease fire and present-day situation

After the end of the strongest fighting in 2000, the character of conflict transformed to carrying out unilateral ad hoc acts of aggression. While Chechen rebels were attacking not only military targets, but civilian ones both in Caucasus and Russia as well, the Russian army and FSB were carrying out so called counter-insurgency operations (zachistki), causing the death of many civilians²². The largest amount of Chechen terrorist attacks was executed between 2002 and 2004. In this period, bomb attacks alone caused the death of more than 200 people. At this time, Chechen terrorist organisations started to deploy to a large extent the so called 'Black widows'. Besides that, two major operations were carried out during this period; the hostage taking in a Moscow theatre in 2002 and the Massacre in a Beslan School in 2004.

Although the Second Chechen War ended officially on 16th April 2009, in fact it only entered a new stage. Military operations were replaced by the police. Moscow continues to support

²² For details - BBC News (2001), 'Russia's 'Dirty War'', BBC News, August 9th, 2001; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/crossing_continents/europe/1480159.stm - accessed on 16/12/2017

Ramzan Kadyrov, whose father Ahmad Kadyrov was assassinated in 2003 by his Chechen enemies. Officially, there is peace in Chechnya nowadays; in fact, there are frequent clashes and skirmishes among different clans, paramilitary groups or mafias (Sarkees and Wayman, 2010). Kadyrov himself is allegedly connected to different criminal activities and must be protected by his private army.

4.2 Political and societal environment of Chechnya

This level of analysis is to show some structural causes and conditions which have the effect on radicalisation of both individuals and organisations and their eventual decision to adopt female suicide terrorism as a tool of their struggle. On this level it is necessary to emphasize *‘political, economic or social grievances that prompt anger and motivate individuals’* (Cragin and Daly, 12, 2009). It is clear that individuals and organisations do not act in a vacuum and that the social and other conditions form the process of radicalisation. In other words, the aim of this chapter is the analysis of the role of a specific social condition in influencing the human behaviour. The underlying hypothesis, which will be discussed in this chapter, states that the emergence of female suicide terrorism would be impossible without a specific mixture of political and societal preconditions, such as the impact of the Russian occupation of Chechnya and the increasing brutality of the conflict²³, the influence of Wahhabist ideology on the traditional social structure and its interaction with customary law, large-scale rape, and the desperate social situation in post-war Chechnya.

²³ For further debate about the relation between suicide terrorism and foreign occupation see Pape and Feldman, 19-41, 2010

4.2.1 Politics and radical Islamism

Some authors (such as Pape and Feldman) emphasize the importance of the Russian occupation of Chechnya for the emergence of suicide terrorism. These authors depict suicide terrorism as a weapon of last resort, after ordinary resistance failed to achieve Russian military withdrawal. Based on the fact that there were no suicide terrorist attacks during the First Chechen War, but later the variation in the trajectory of suicide attacks (such as the spikes in 2003 and 2009) corresponds to counter-terrorism campaigns that were first initiated by Russian occupational forces and then by the Russian-backed Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov (Pape and Feldman, 251, 2010). Therefore, the key question is to determine what factors changed between First and Second Chechen wars.

It can be reasonably asserted that during the First Chechen war the national-liberation ideology was dominant over the religious one. Islam did play a certain role, but it was rather ‘a supporting self-identification element’ (Šmíd, 204, 2007) than an ideological motive. Much stronger than the influence of Islam itself was the effect of diverse national myths that ignited a new wave of enmity between Russians and Chechens. Especially important was the still living memory of the deportation of Chechens (and several other nations) to Central Asia in 1944.

The reason why Islam did not play a role of leading power against the Russian rule at the beginning of 90s, consisted also partly in the character of the local form of Islam. Most Chechens (if they were believers at all) were followers of its specific form sometimes called ‘narodnyj islam’ (‘popular Islam’), which was the unique combination of local pre-Islamic cults with Islamic beliefs and mystical branch of Islam – Sufism (Souleimanov and Šmíd, 24, 2010). This form of Islam is widely considered to be very tolerant, which does not make it very suitable for creating a base for liberation struggle. Sufism is characterised by substantial non-

orthodoxy and decentralisation, but also by isolation from other branches of Islam (Kullberg, 100, 2004). Only with the arrival of adherents of Wahhabism, the radical and far less tolerant Sunni movement, radical Islamism could become a fundamental source of Chechen struggle²⁴.

Although Islam was not such an important motivation during the First Chechen War, at that time some Chechen rebel leaders tried to make contacts in several Muslim countries and to get some material and financial support for their organisations. Connections to the international Islamist networks were still relatively sparse. However, this changed during several following years and the reality of the Second Chechen war became very different (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 444, 2006a). Nevertheless, the role of Islam in Second Chechen war is still debatable, and it is evident that at least some of rebel leaders adopted Wahhabism out of purely pragmatic reasons.

4.2.2 Wahhabism

The so called ‘Wahhabism’²⁵ came to Chechnya in a larger extent in the inter-war period. Prior to the war, almost nobody in Chechnya had known about it (Tishkov, 172, 2004). As Pape and

²⁴ This dichotomy between Sufism and Wahhabism is nonetheless questioned by some scholars. For instance, Knysh (2004) states that this dichotomy is too simplistic and rather blurring the normative meaning of those terms. While ‘Sufism’ is presented by politicians, journalists and academics as a “traditional” and “peaceful”, ‘Wahhabism’ is presented as ‘imported’ and ‘aggressive’. Knysh quite rightly points out that the term ‘Wahhabism’ is quite often misused as a label for any Islamic opposition against the establishment in the Post-Soviet space, even by those *muftis* loyal to the political power. Aware of this terminological and ideological problem and given that a detailed analysis of this issue cannot be undertaken in this paper due to lack of space, I will keep using the term “Wahhabism” as a covering term for all those fundamentalist Sunni organisations and individuals willing to fight in the name of a pure, original form of Islam and *sharia* as the only law.

²⁵ The term ‘Wahhabism’ itself is quite controversial. Some authors point out its inaccuracy (See Souleimanov, E. and T. Šmíd (27, 2010), since Wahhabism in the original meaning was a radical religious movement, founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in 18th century. His aim was to purge Islam of everything that did not come directly from the Quran and return to the true, original roots – *as-salaf as-salih*. To be accurate, we should use this term only for the followers of Wahhab and not for overall tendency, comprising of people, often with very poor or diverse theological ideas. Salafism is a wider term – Salafists seek for pure Islam, Islam of the Arabs of 7th century and they are not necessarily followers of al-Wahhab. However, in Russian media discourse, term “Wahhabism” is used for any ideas, groups or tendencies, seeking for the introduction of Islamic norms into

Feldman (257, 2010) state, *'international Islamist organisations were eager to support the resurgence of Islam throughout the entire Caucasus region, and money from wealthier countries supported the rebuilding of mosques, schools, and other forms of Islamic expression'*.

Most of these Islamic organisations and missionaries came from Arab countries (above all Saudi Arabia), but some of them were also from Turkey, Pakistan or even Shi'a Iran (Souleimanov and Šmíd, 25, 2010). However, not all of them were Wahhabist, with an even smaller percentage of really militant ones. Some of them even tried to create a synthesis between Islam and liberal democracy and openly supported Boris Yeltsin (Souleimanov and Šmíd, 25, 2010).

There were many Wahhabist mosques and madrassas (religious schools) opened in Chechen towns, many Wahhabist publications started to circulate within the country and a growing number of clerics took the Wahhabist side (often because of the generous material rewards) (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 445, 2006a). The economical support provided by Wahhabist missionaries became an important factor in gaining new supporters. The majority of those who joined the Wahhabists in the first years were young men from underprivileged clans and poor families (Standish, 7, 2008). By joining a radical Wahhabist organisation, they gained not only material rewards, but also a sense of security and belonging to the wider cohesive brotherhoods.

Wahhabism rejects as un-Islamic the local Caucasian form of Islam, which combined elements of Sufism with customary law (adat). As Zürcher (89, 2007) points out, since the traditional regulatory frameworks of Chechen society—especially the centrality of clergy and the elders—are questioned, Wahhabism contains considerable social explosiveness. Although many

the every-day life, opposing everything they consider non-Islamic and are in the opposition against secular government.

authors see Wahhabist ideology as an important factor in the emergence of suicide terrorism in North Caucasus²⁶, it would be quite misleading to claim that Wahhabism is the root cause of suicide terrorism, especially of the female one. On the contrary, Wahhabist doctrine actually prevents women from an active participation in fighting, let alone their activity in suicide terrorist campaign. Either way, Wahhabism helped to radicalise the Chechen resistance and cleared the way for future cooperation with terrorist organisations across the Chechen border and by doing so it later indirectly contributed to the application of extreme forms of violence such as suicide terrorism²⁷. Moreover, by glorifying martyrdom, Wahhabism contributed to the gradual change of public attitudes towards suicide terrorism (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 74, 2006b). To conclude, the presence of Wahhabist ideology aided in the emergence of female suicide terrorism, but it should not be considered one of key causes of female suicide terrorism in general.

4.2.3 Chechen customary law

The second important phenomenon, which is considered to have a positive effect on the emergence of female suicide terrorism, is a specifically local customary law. Although it already largely disappeared from regular everyday life, some of its elements still live on, especially in the more traditional remote villages of Caucasus. Caucasian customary law (so called *adat*) is a set of unwritten laws that have been developed in the conditions of hardly accessible and remote areas of Caucasus Mountains, which were during a long period of history relatively autonomous and independent. *Adat* comprised of both penal and family law.

²⁶ 'Chechen suicide terrorism is bound to Wahhabist terror ideology', Speckhard and Akhmedova, 11, 2006b

²⁷ Other important impacts, such as giving the sense to suffering, idea of martyrdom or the illusion of kinship, will be analysed later in the study.

The main motive which pervades traditional Chechen customary law is the idea of honour. However, the meaning of honour in adat is very broad and concerns a wide range of social norms. Honour means that *'a man was expected to keep his word, support his family materially so that its members may lead a dignified life, but honour also involved independence, faithful friendship, nearly irrational courage or rather ostentatious fearlessness, tremendous hospitality, honesty and truthfulness, 'purity' of girls and women and so on'* (Souleimanov, 2003). Breaking the adat law is considered to be a grave shame, sometimes falling not only onto the wrongdoer himself, but on his/her family or clan as whole. In such instances the life of the offender was unbearable. His own teip²⁸ would excommunicate him landing him beyond law, his daughter could never get married, his son would live in humiliation, and his parents would lie down in their graves with a sense of shame. It was the life in the mountains which practically meant that those people lived outside the developed system of mutual help within the community – something those in smaller towns enjoyed. Many, what could be referred to as mountain people, therefore kept a so-called —pledge of honour, even though they knew in advance it might cost their life. If they were confronted with a choice of either shame for their family and clan or death, they would usually choose the latter (Souleimanov, 2003). The honour also means the duty to avenge the offence and in history it often took the form of the blood feud. Blood feud was declared in instances where fatal injury, murder, taking of land or a serious insult was committed. Where a woman or a girl had been dishonoured, the blood feud was usually declared by the entire dishonoured clan and was aimed against all the men of the clan that caused the insult as the honour of the whole clan was in question (Souleimanov, 2003; Jaimoukha, 142-143, 2005).

²⁸ Teip is Chechen and Ingush basic unit of social structure, or clan. There is a long tradition of clan and tribal structure, which still play an important role in the Chechen society. In contemporary Chechen society there are approximately 200 teips.

For the emergence of suicide terrorism in North Caucasus, two phenomena seem especially important – the social ostracism, caused by breaking the strict customary law, and the sense of duty to revenge any injustices against one's family or clan. As we can see from the data collected by Dronzina and Astashin, (2007) many female suicide terrorists were bearers of some kind of 'sins' or shame. In their sample of thirty²⁹, eight were proved to bear this kind of social stigma, while only six were proved otherwise. These social stigmas could originate from breaking both Islamic or adat law³⁰, but the results for the individual are the same – ostracism and exclusion from the society. Sometimes the 'sinner's' only way to purify her name and the name of whole clan is to sacrifice herself.

As for the duty to avenge, Chechen customary law is quite clear and explicit and includes the following rules:

- Murder should be avenged with murder.
- Only males may avenge; females are only allowed to avenge if there are no males in her family and among her relatives.
- For the murder of a female, two males should be killed: the murderer and one of the murderer's family members.
- The revenge should be directed only at the murderer, not at his family members or close associates.
- Revenge is not limited in time; it can be executed many years after the murder.

²⁹ This sample, encompassing the period between 7th June 2000 and 1st September 2004, includes both the Dubrovka and Beslan hostage crises.

³⁰ However, in fact there is a strong conflict between those who favour the introduction of *sharia* law (Wahhabists) and 'traditionalists', favouring *adat* and sufist norms. Given the fact, that Wahhabism seeks to purge Islam of everything that did not come from Quran, it is clear that Wahhabism strongly oppose any non-Islamic or non-orthodox influences – namely *adat* and Sufism Zürcher 89, 2007

- This revenge can be averted if respected elders intervene and ask the victim's family to forgive the murderer.
- Revenge does not mandate that the avenger should kill him/herself while committing the murder (Kurz and Bartles, 534, 2007).

Although the Shariatic law, adopted in interwar Chechnya, interdicted blood revenge, it never had a significant influence on traditional practices (Jaimoukha, 143, 2005).

4.2.4 Post-war society

It is quite clear that the society as damaged as the Chechen one was, generates many negative or socially pathological phenomena. The number of people who lost their relatives in the war, who were tortured, raped or psychically harmed is substantially higher than in society without this recent war experience. Therefore, the number of people suffering from any kind of trauma-related psychical harm, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, is also higher, as well as the number of people who have 'nothing to lose'. This issue will be discussed in more detail later in the study, but for now, it is necessary to acknowledge that the roots of these psychological factors originate largely from the societal or environmental level.

4.2.5 Community support for suicide terrorism: cult of martyrdom?

The other important factor in the emergence of female suicide terrorism is the community's support for it, typically in the form of the cult of martyrdom. But, as the results of Speckhard and Akhmedova's research (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 441, 2006a) surprisingly finds, almost no such influence exists in the Chechen society, unlike in Palestinian society. In Chechnya no public community-wide celebrations take place after a suicide act, nor are posters

or any other markers of honour placed in public places proclaiming the terrorists as either religious or national heroes (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 441, 2006a). These celebrations take place in terrorists training camps at the most. The celebrating YouTube videos are rather aimed on the external audience for fund-raising.

Speckhard and Akhmedova (442, 2006a) reach the same conclusion from interviews with the family members of Beslan and Dubrovka hostage-takers; none of them proudly acknowledge their sons or daughters as a martyr – instead they express pity for the killed hostages. This is in a sharp contradiction with data from Palestinian samples (Oliver and Steinberg, 2005).

4.2.6 Unemployment and poverty

The extent of destruction caused by the wars is clearly expressed by the Chechen scholar Dzhabrail Gakaev: *'Out of 428 villages, 380 were bombed, 70 percent of houses were destroyed, and large parts of the city of Grozny were razed to the ground. More than 60,000 houses and administrative buildings have been completely or partially destroyed..., and more than 30,000 hectares of agricultural land were contaminated with explosives...A whole generation of young men (some 150-200,000) have grown up without education. Many of them are involved in the armed conflict and the only skill they have is to wage war'* (Gakaev, 40, 2005). The destruction of infrastructure and manufacturing facilities, along with soil that was made difficult to be cultivated caused immense unemployment, which subsequently created a whole generation of young people who had never had a proper job and whose frustration became one of the factors which perpetuate the conflict.

The Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov himself admitted in 2009 that unemployment in Chechnya remains above 50 percent. That means there were tens of thousands of young men

with no formal income and nothing to do³¹. According to other sources, the unemployment rate was as high as 80 percent (Puddington, 2011; Isayev, 2008). The data on poverty is similar. In 2005, around 90 percent of the Chechen population lived below the poverty line (with less than 72 euros per month³²). To compare, at the national level, an average of 17 percent of people were living in poverty³³. Individual impacts of poverty, (lack of) education, or unemployment will be discussed in more detail later in the study, but as for the impacts on the population as a whole, it is useful to emphasize several important things.

Available evidence about unsuccessful Chechen female suicide terrorists shows that out of six, at least four were unemployed – the occupational status of one of them is unknown and one was only thirteen years old (Dronzina, 82, 2008) (we can reasonably expect that the percentage is similar for successful ones). According to Speckhard and Akhmedova (425, 2006a) 88 percent (30 out of 34) of Chechen suicide terrorists (both male and female) included in their survey were technically classified as unemployed. It seems quite convincing that the lack of legitimate employment opportunities can lead to the frustration, which can become the cause of people's further radicalisation and eventually to joining a terrorist group.

In a war-torn society as the Chechen one was, people who achieve a higher degree of education on one hand realise the overall misery of their communities and therefore tend to be more frustrated, and on the other hand they feel obliged to pay society back because of their education. In those circumstances, for many, especially those most sensitised by traumas in their own lives the only positive repaying option seemingly open to them is to become martyrs for their communities (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 454, 2006a). The general atmosphere in

³¹ For more information see BBC News (2009). 'Chechen Problem Is Far from Over', BBC News, April 16, 2009 – accessed on 26/12/2017

³² Agence France-Presse (2005). 'Russian Fed. – Nine Tenths of Chechens Living in Poverty'

³³ Index Mundi, <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=rs&v=69>

post-war Chechnya was depressive, as one Chechen journalist sums up: *'The entire territory of the post-war republic is an aggressive space. The gutted houses, dirty markets at every turn (there is no other source of income), heaps of garbage even in the centre - and crowds of men in camouflage fatigues, all armed, always gloomy. Total unemployment, most of the people living below the poverty line, young people having no prospects. An environment devoid of any aesthetic impulses - depressing, alienating, embittering. No wonder we have in today's Chechnya so many destructive people, so few creative ones'*³⁴.

4.2.7 Rape and violence against women

Rape was an extremely scarce phenomenon in traditional Chechen society (Jaimoukha, 96, 2005) and remained very uncommon even during the First Chechen war. Few cases of rape by armed groups were reported, even at the height of the violence, and federal soldiers, too, rarely violated this taboo. In this respect, the first Chechen war differed from many other violent conflicts, in which rape is common (Tishkov, 154, 2004). However, the situation changed for the worse during the Second war. The Second Chechen war brought a drastic decline of the status of women in Chechnya. At that time, rape began to be used as a weapon of war, mainly by Russian federal and contracted soldiers.

War could be considered the most powerful expression of patriarchal power and rape during wartime is the extreme case of demonstration of the men's control over women as well as a tool of ethnic cleansing. Like in many other places where ethnic cleansing took place, women's bodies are controlled by the enemy, in order to obtain control over the ethnic group's future (Rousseva, 65, 2003). The traumatising experience of brutal rape makes women either

³⁴ Words of a Chechen journalist Aset Vazayeva, in: Tishkov, 44, 2001

physically or psychologically incapable of child bearing in the future. In a patriarchal society like Chechnya, women who were raped subsequently face even more troubles due to their inability to fulfil traditional roles as mothers. On top of being traumatised physically and psychologically, married rape victims were also more likely to get divorced (Jaimoukha, 96, 2005), which creates another social stigma. Specifically, the rape by Russian soldiers is the most traumatic and debilitating experience, by many Chechen women referred to as worse than death.

The implications of rape by a non-Muslim man on a Muslim woman's life, seen through the lenses of the specific culture and religion, could alter fundamentally her prospects to marry and have a family, and her role in society (Rousseva, 65, 2003). In accordance with some Chechen 'traditions', a raped woman should commit suicide or be murdered by her family members (Liborakina, 1996).

As mentioned, the practice of rape ceased to be taboo anymore and since then on it also started to be used by Chechen para-militaries against local people suspected of collaborating with the enemy. The social conditions of overall post-war anomy only contributed to the occurrence of rapes. As we will see in the following pages, rape also became a favourite method of 'recruitment' of female suicide terrorists. Given the fact that until Second Chechen war rape as a weapon of war was not widely used, and that the very first female suicide attack emerged only in June 2000, there is reason to formulate a hypothesis about a connection between sexual violence and female suicide terrorism. Sexual violence seems to be a necessary condition which under certain social settings creates the possibility for female suicide terrorism. However, this hypothesis should be tested on cases of female suicide terrorism in other regions as well as on

the cases where there was also a high level of sexual violence, but suicide terrorism did not emerge (for instance Yugoslavia during the war, Rwandan genocide).

4.2.8 Clan and family structure

A long tradition of clan and tribal structure still plays an important role in Chechen society. There is a strict hierarchy within the family, and the young people are obliged to manifest a proper respect to the elders. A family's honour is the most important factor and the keeping of the honour is the responsibility of each member of the family (Jaimoukha, 91, 2005). All members of the same teip are considered brothers and sisters. There is a rule of exogamy and marriage is prohibited between members of the community who share common descent up to the twelfth ancestor. According to Chechen customary law, a widow could only remarry one of brothers of her deceased husband, or any other member of the teip, with the offspring of the union being considered those of the deceased. The widow is allowed to remarry outside the group only if she could redeem her price (Jaimoukha, 88, 2005). Although these traditions were largely abandoned during the Soviet era, some traces of them still exist at least in the most remote mountain villages.

Not only the Caucasian customary law, but also some aspects of 'pure Islam' contribute to shape Chechen society. In the Soviet era, the Muslim practice of polygamy was officially prohibited. However, after the introduction of Shariatic law in the interwar period, the position of women in the family substantially changed and polygamy was legalised³⁵. Polygamy could be also seen as a response to the current demographic situation, especially to the lack of

³⁵ However, it has not become a widespread phenomenon, probably due to further extensive legal regulations, namely concerning the wives' property and to overall mistrust of large part of society to the Islamic norms.

marriageable men who had been killed in the war or had fled the region (Tishkov, 163, 2004; Jaimoukha, 138, 2005).

As for the Chechen post-war families, almost everyone had lost a family member. In the kind of society that is based on close family ties, the loss of relatives also has serious social consequences. Especially for women, the loss of their husbands or brothers creates great problems. In such cases, the woman lost her protector and became extremely vulnerable. This vulnerability could even be multiplied by her economic insecurity and subsequent dependency. The women's position in the Chechen family is subordinate to the men's. In the traditional way of social life, they did not participate in clan's decision-making, were not allowed to eat with their husbands at the same table or travel unless they were accompanied by the husband or another male member of his family. Wives were considered to be the property of their husband's family and after his death, other members of the household could lay claim on her as their wife (Jaimoukha, 138, 2005).

4.3 Chechen terrorist organisation

Most of the Chechen female suicide terrorist attacks were executed by a single person³⁶. However, it does not mean that these terrorists acted alone. Suicide terrorism usually requires cooperation of a number of people – apart from suicide terrorists, also recruiters, suppliers of the necessary material, trainers and ideological or religious leaders. As Harrison (2, 2006) states, *'at the core of suicide terrorism are specialisation and exchange'*. Although worldwide there are some known cases of individuals who planned suicide attack solely by themselves, there is

³⁶ See Table 6 - List of all Chechen suicide attacks.

no proved case of such individuals in Chechnya. All Chechen suicide terrorist attacks were planned and carried out by terrorist organisations.

The main objective of this part of the study is to emphasize the importance of organisational level of analysis, since the motivations of terrorist organisations are substantially different from motivations of individuals. Information about organisations linked to the conflict in Chechnya is hard to obtain, however, available sources indicate that there are several terrorist groups deploying female suicide terrorists acting in the North Caucasus (Kurz and Bartles, 2007).

In most cases, Chechen (or rather north-Caucasian) terrorist organisations are not strictly organised, permanent groups, but rather loosely organised groups with semi-independent commanders. Sometimes they are only ad hoc groups of fighters loyal to a certain commander. However, some of these groups show more continuous activity and therefore could be called terrorist organisations. The best known are the following (Kurz and Bartles, 539-542, 2007): Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)³⁷ with possible links to al-Qaeda's financial funds from the Middle East, Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)³⁸, and the Riyad us-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs. In addition to the aforementioned groups, there are some others operating in the neighbouring regions of North Caucasus – e.g. Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat and Ingush Jama'at Shariat (Kurz and Bartles, 541-542, 2007).

³⁷ IIPB has reportedly been running training camps in Georgia (Pankisi Gorge), Azerbaijan and Turkey.

³⁸ SPIR was allegedly responsible for the Dubrovka hostage crisis as well as several suicide bombings.

4.3.1 Rationality

Suicide terrorism follows a strategic logic and it would be a mistake to consider it to be irrational. Although the personal behaviour of suicide bombers could in some cases be irrational (to be discussed later in the study), the organisation's behaviour is definitely not irrational. Terrorist organisations have certain objectives and choose the best tools to achieve them. As Pape points out (344, 2003), *'viewed from the perspective of the terrorist organisation, suicide attacks are designed to achieve specific political purposes: to coerce a target government to change policy, to mobilize additional recruits and financial support, or both'*.

Using the suicide terrorist tactic has several strategic advantages for the organisation. First of all, suicide attacks are generally more destructive than other terrorist attacks. That is because an attacker who is willing to die is much more likely to accomplish the mission and to cause maximum damage to the target. Weapons used for the attack can be concealed on bodies of the suicide attackers and further, as human beings, they can make last-minute adjustments easily. Suicide terrorists do not need an escape plan or a rescue team. As such they are better choice for infiltration of heavily guarded targets. Suicide attackers are also able to use certain especially destructive tactics such as wearing 'suicide vests' and ramming vehicles into targets (Pape, 346, 2003; Moghadam, 32, 2006). What is true for suicide terrorism in general is even more valid in the case of female suicide terrorism, because women (at least at the beginning of their campaign) are less suspicious and can go through security checkpoints much more easily. Moreover, women are able to hide the explosive devices more easily by wearing loose clothes or pretending they are pregnant.

Another reason which could lead the organisation to adopt suicide attacks concerns the public opinion. Suicide attacks, especially perpetrated by women, are likely to draw greater attention to a group's goals and also create extreme fear in the larger population – the key aim of terrorist attacks. Moreover, by using the tactic of suicide attacks, the group may gain stronger support in the international public opinion. There is some evidence that outside audiences may sympathise with groups who are using martyrdom tactics. That is providing that members of a community willing to sacrifice themselves were subjected to a particularly gruesome treatment by their enemy which subsequently left them with no other option than to seek death (Moghadam, 31, 2006). This argument is in accordance with that of Pape and Feldman, who consider suicide terrorist acts as a weapon of last resort³⁹.

A terrorist organisation usually tries several different terrorist tactics before adopting suicide attacks⁴⁰. As Moghadam (93, 2006) points out, 'most terrorist groups existed for years or decades before they began executing suicide missions'. Similarly, in most suicide terrorist campaigns, female suicide terrorist attacks usually occurred several years after the first male suicide terrorist attack. The first time Hamas claimed responsibility for female suicide terrorist attack was only in 2004, 17 years after it was founded, (O'Rourke, 697, 2009) and it took almost 30 years in case of Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In this sense, Chechnya is a rare exception – female suicide bomber attacks emerged literally at the same time with attacks of their male counterparts⁴¹, soon after Chechen terrorist organisations were founded⁴².

³⁹ See Chapter 5.1.

⁴⁰ E.g. Hamas, being founded in 1987, first time used strategy of suicide terrorism in 1994, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (founded in 1976) only in 1987. See Global Terrorism Database (GTD) <http://www.start.umd.edu>.

⁴¹ See Table 6: List of all Chechen suicide attacks.

⁴² E. g. Riyad-us Saliheen Brigade of Martyrs was founded only in October 1999, the Islamic International (Peacekeeping) Brigade in 1998.

4.3.2 Frequency of female suicide attacks

In our sample, which includes all suicide terrorist attacks, carried out by North-Caucasian rebels on the territory of Russian federation, there are 56 events. The sample also includes two major hostage crises – in a school in Beslan and the Dubrovka theatre in Moscow. Out of these 56 attacks, 31 were carried out by men only, 21 by women only and in 4 cases both women and men were involved. That means that women were involved in 25 cases out of 56 (see Diagram 1).

The differences between the definitions and methodology used in this study and those of other researchers nevertheless sometimes lead to relatively different conclusions. For example, Speckhard and Akhmedova (2006b) use a slightly different definition of single suicide terrorist event, and therefore their conclusions are quite different from the ones reached in this study: according to them, Chechen female terrorists have been involved in 22 out of 27 suicide attacks (81 percent of the total number) attributed to Chechen rebels (in the period 2000-2005). The data shown here indicate substantially less involvement of women, even in the first 5 years of the female suicide terrorist campaign. However, compared to other regions where female suicide terrorism occurred (especially compared to those in other predominantly Muslim countries), the involvement of women in suicide terrorist missions is still surprisingly high. For example, in Palestinian terrorist organisations women carried out only 5 percent of all suicide bombings (Reuter, 26, 2004).

4.3.3 Efficiency

As for the efficiency of the suicide bombings, the role women play in terrorist organisations could be the result of strategic decision making. Perhaps women can more easily penetrate

security barriers or hide suicide-bombing vests (Cragin and Daly, 18, 2009). In the analysed sample (see Table 1) there are 56 suicide bombings on the Russian territory attributed to North-Caucasian rebels. Out of them,

31 were carried out by male terrorists (267 victims),

21 by females (216 victims),

4 by groups of women (total 6 terrorists, 38 victims),

2 by groups of men (5 terrorists, 9 victims) and

4 by mixed-gender groups (total 54 men, 24 women, more than 596 victims)

Concerning female suicide terrorism, we should ask whether there are any real differences in terms of efficiency between female suicide terrorists and their male counterparts. As diagram 4 shows, single female terrorists are on average more deadly than single males – 10.3 vs. 8.6 victims per attack.

The data in my sample shows that males have a higher probability of failure during their campaigns – there was a 24 percent failure rate⁴³ (5 out of 21) of female suicide terrorists, and 32 percent (10 out of 31) of male suicide terrorists. However, our sample does not include all cases of failed missions and in fact there were many more of them. Therefore, this finding is not entirely reliable.

As for the usual assumptions that female suicide attacks are deadlier, it shows to be true. However, the effectiveness quantified using the number of casualties is probably not a key to

⁴³ By failed suicide attacks this study considers cases when suicide-terrorist failed to detonate (for different reasons) or detonated and killed only him/herself.

understanding the use of female suicide terrorists. As Cragin and Daly (2, 2009) state, *'effectiveness is unlikely to be the full explanation for the presence of women in terrorist groups, and effectiveness also is unlikely to be the full explanation for the different operational roles that women have assumed in terrorist organisations'*. To understand the phenomenon of female suicide terrorism as well as terrorism itself, it is therefore necessary to assess its other possible effects, especially the degree of inflicted horror.

4.3.4 Terrorism as a means of strategic communication

It would be an evidence of misapprehension of the very essence of terrorism if we restricted the evaluation of the effect of terrorism on the mere number of casualties. As has already been mentioned in the introductory chapter, creating the atmosphere of fear and horror is the core aim of terrorism. Although it is extremely difficult to measure the fear in the society, we can say that a suicide terrorist attack inflicts more horror than for example an explosion of a timed bomb. In the same way, a female suicide attack causes more horror than a suicide attack perpetrated by men. This effect is greater in societies where social norms restrict the role of women to the private sphere. As Cragin and Daly point out, *'there is something disturbing about the concept of women as terrorists. Perhaps it has to do with the feminine identity as nurturer—women are mothers, sisters, and wives, but not killers'* (Cragin and Daly, 1, 2009). Moreover, every suicide terrorist attack is a story, a message disseminated to the broad public by all major media.

The effect on the overall population is supported even by the name used (originally by journalists) for the Chechen female suicide bombers – so called Black Widows or Chyornyye Vdovy in Russian. As Cragin and Daly (55, 2009) already noticed, it is an excellent name, evoking both deadliness and some degree of tragedy. Indeed, to some, the only logical

explanation for these women's devotion is that their husbands and lovers must have been killed by Russian security forces. This mystique, however, is somewhat misplaced, because female operatives are motivated by a complex variety of factors, just as their male counterparts.

This brings us to an often-overlooked aspect of terrorism: its communication function. Suicide terrorism is a specific way of communication or form of strategic signalling, whereby terrorist attacks are used to communicate a group's character and goals to the target audience (Moghadam, 95, 2006). In other words, the terrorists' aim is not only to coerce the government to adopt or give up certain policy, but also to raise the awareness of their cause among a broad public as well as to gain new supporters and sympathisers. Schmid and Jongman (22-23, 2005) puts it as follows: 'What the terrorist basically does is to direct attention to the cause in ways which indicate that he is willing to die or to sacrifice himself for the cause. It is a cause that most people, in some sense, have some sympathies with, but find it impossible to deal with until the terrorist forces them to deal with these sympathies'. Although it is much more likely that suicide attacks cause rather harsh rejection of the terrorist group by the broader public, a suicide operation surely draws the attention to a group's cause. In order to gain public attention, Chechen terrorists usually tend to proudly acknowledge their responsibility for even the bloodiest attacks; however, in some cases they rather relativize their guilt. The well-known examples are two hostage-takings – in the Moscow Dubrovka Theatre and in the elementary school in Beslan, North Ossetia⁴⁴.

In the case of Beslan it is possible that terrorists miscalculated the impact of their operation and underestimated the response of the audience to taking small children as hostages. The alternative explanation states that Beslan terrorists wanted to provoke the government's

⁴⁴ See Kavkazcenter (2004), 'School in Beslan to Be Stormed', And Kavkazcenter (2006). 'Dubrovka: Nord-Ost'

response and the escalation of the Russo-Chechen conflict, which subsequently could attract new sympathisers from the affected community. However, such calculations are always chancy and there is a high probability of alienation of the target audience (Pape, 345, 2003).

The response to the Beslan massacre was utterly dissenting even among otherwise sympathetic part of their world-wide audience. But there is also another possible way to explain the Beslan massacre, saying that Chechen rebels took school children as hostages awaiting a similar response of the Russian security forces as they did in Dubrovka, which resulted in bloodshed and wanted to present themselves together with the children as the victims of indiscriminate Russian violence.

The killing of hundreds of children has a double communication effect. At first it draws public attention to the conflict and, at the same time, Chechen rebels could blame Russian security forces for the massacre. We have to admit that they were at least partially successful – a certain part of Russian society, represented by such organisations as Mothers of Beslan, Voice of Beslan, Memorial or the Union of the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia together with several journalists started to disseminate the discontent with the Kremlin's policy in the North Caucasus. By that, they undisputedly contributed to the rising dissent of the Russian society to the government.

Although it is not clear whether the Beslan terrorists really expected harsh assault by Russian troops that would not care about hostages themselves and their plan was to blame Russian forces for the victims' suffering from the very beginning, or they only ex post realised that they crossed the line by putting lives of small children at risk, they justified themselves by placing all responsibilities on the Kremlin. That time the Chechen rebels' leader Shamil Basayev released his explanation of the massacre and his statement was published by almost all of the

worlds' major newspapers. It seems, however, that such spectacular operations like Beslan or Dubrovka hostage-taking were rejected by Chechen terrorists from that time on. There are many possible reasons for the rejection, perhaps its relatively huge logistical difficulty, but also its inefficiency in terms of ability to deliver the right message to the right recipient.

One of the possible ways of analysis is to understand the terrorist attack as a form of message and examine what it actually tells the target audience. As Karber (1971) suggests, a terrorist act '*can be analysed much like other mediums of communication, consisting four basic components: transmitter (terrorist), intended recipient (target), message (bombing, ambush) and feed-back (reaction of target)*'. In this sense, a female suicide terrorist act is a message of a special kind. The fact that the transmitter is a woman emphasises the emotional tension of the communication, telling the story of desperate Chechen widows, who lost their husbands in the bloody war with Russian federal forces. It also transmits the message that the Chechen society is already devastated to such an extent that local insurgents have to send even women on suicide missions. But on the other hand, there is always space for alternative interpretations of the communication, such as saying that those who organised the attack were such cowards that they were not able to fight on their own and sent women instead of fighting themselves. It is evident that media have extremely huge opportunity to interpret the message and use it for different political reasons. To avoid such an unwanted interpretation, Chechen terrorist organisations usually publish a statement explaining what their exact stances are, reasons why they organised the attack and conditions under which they would refrain from continuing the attacks. They usually have their own news channel, typically an affiliated website⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ For this reason, Chechen rebels use the website Kavkazcenter.com

The choice of the recipient (target) is important as well. The target is of two kinds: the immediate victim of the terrorist attack and the target which terrorists want to coerce into changing its policy and behaviour, in our case the Russian government and the general public. The choice of target-victim has a great symbolic value. For instance, the Moscow Dubrovka Theatre was chosen by Basayev most likely for the reason that the musical 'Nord-Ost' played in the theatre had a deep chauvinistic implicit meaning and glorified Russian nationalism. Moreover, relatively expensive tickets indicated that there could be a lot of influential Muscovites in the audience.

The target-victims of other Chechen suicide terrorist attacks had similarly symbolic value. One of two female suicide bombers who committed the terrorist attack in Moscow metro in 2010 detonated herself in Lubyanka station, near the directorate of FSB. The target of the latest suicide terrorist attack perpetrated by Chechens in Moscow at Domodedovo International Airport bears a symbolical value as well. Given the fact that the attack was carried out in the arrival hall of the international airport and therefore there was a high probability of presence of foreigners, the attack was most likely intended to spread the awareness of Chechen issues to other countries.

The message itself - the way how the attack was carried out - further indicates the terrorists' intended aim. For instance, hostage-taking tells the recipient that terrorists most likely want some conditions to be met and they want to negotiate, while suicide bombing tells rather that terrorists are determined to keep on fighting until the very end. Although Chechen rebels have not claimed a responsibility for every terrorist attack attributed to them, apart from Beslan and Dubrovka hostage-crisis they claimed responsibility for a number of suicide bombings. If we define suicide terrorism not only in terms of direct violence but also as a tool of propaganda,

we could understand suicide terrorist acts as an advertisement or ‘teaser’ that draws an attention to the main message – to the terrorists’ statement. Female suicide terrorism could therefore be seen as a means of ‘advertising resistance’ and recruitment of supporters (Standish, 2008). As was already mentioned, women detonating themselves in order to kill innocent civilians are actually the message expressing the utmost desperation of the oppressed society. Moreover, the logic of this kind of extreme violence is that it must be constantly intensified in order to uphold the same horrifying effect and keep the public’s attention in enduring conflict. The role of media is very controversial. The media-attention helps terrorists to get their message across and by doing this encourages further incidents of this kind (Beyler, 12-14, 2003b).

Suicide terrorist campaign, as an extreme case of terrorism, also sends a message to other terrorist organisations, expressing their higher prestige and relative superiority over them (Clauzet, 2010). Some researchers also mention the role suicide attacks play inside the terrorist organisations. For instance, Dolnik claims, that it could function as an internal morale-booster, supporting the determination of the members to fight for their shared cause (Dolnik, 846, 2004 in Moghadam, 95, 2006).

4.4 The Black Widows

Prevailing analytic approach to suicide terrorism focuses on the strategic logic of the terrorist organisation. It emphasises the efficiency, cost-benefit ratio, psychological impact on the target audience and others. Ariel Merari (2002 in Kruglanski and Golec, 2-3, 2006) was one of those, who shifted their emphasis in the last decade towards the organisational level of analysis, noting that terrorist suicide is an organisational rather than an individual phenomenon. In all cases, it was an organisation that decided to embark on the suicidal tactic, subsequently recruited candidates for this, chose the target and the time, prepared the candidate for the

mission, and made sure that the mission would be carried out. Indeed, Merari is right at this point, but to paraphrase him, at the same time it is an individual, not an organisation, who carries the suicide belt or drives an explosive-laden truck, pulls the trigger and kills and dies. Therefore, both levels of analysis (organisational and individual) are equally important.

Organisational level of analysis is necessary for us to understand why terrorist organisations use this method, but it tells us nothing about the motivation of individuals or, in different words, why individual suicide bombers agree to sacrifice themselves in order to kill (Hafez, 54-55, 2006). The main aim of this section is to show that motivations of individual female suicide bombers are different from motivations of terrorist organisations or their leaders.

Individual motivation of female suicide terrorists is the most obscure part of the phenomenon. Although there was a significant increase of scholars' interest in individual motivation of suicide bombers since 9/11, our knowledge about their personal lives is still limited to rare findings acquired from interviews with their family members and acquaintances and a small number of unsuccessful terrorists who survived their operation. Therefore, it is highly difficult to answer questions like: Are Chechen suicide bombers religious fanatics? What is the role of psychical trauma? How does the education and poverty influence their motivation? What is the influence of potential material reward? Are women motivated to become suicide bombers by the same factors as men? Last but not least – is their choice to become suicide terrorist ultimately rational or irrational?

There is a popular belief that personal profiles of suicide terrorists characterise them as socially deprived, isolated, unemployed, poorly educated young male religious fanatics. But as can be

seen from different data collections⁴⁶, there are so many exceptions to this idea, showing that a suicide terrorist can be both man or woman, single, married or widowed, uneducated or university graduate, employed or unemployed, poor or even relatively wealthy, young or old. The variety of suicide terrorists' characteristics is immense and we can agree with Lindsay O'Rourke, who says that '*there is no such thing as a typical female suicide attacker*' (O'Rourke, 707, 2009)⁴⁷.

4.4.1 Rationality

A major part of the studies addressing the individual level of suicide terrorism usually tends to focus on the issue of rationality and emphasises the role of indoctrination or religious motives. Although indoctrination is surely one of the possible aspects of a suicide terrorists' motivation, it would be a great mistake to limit our study only to this single fact. The array of possible individual motives includes such things as material rewards, religious indoctrination, escape from unbearable living conditions, psychological disorder, as well as simple coercion. Some of these motivations are rational.

As far as rationality⁴⁸ of an individual suicide bomber is concerned, first we face the obvious question: how can self-destruction be self-interested? There seems to be a logical discrepancy in this case. As Hafez (57, 2006) claims, according to rational choice theory, people would

⁴⁶ The survey of Speckhard and Akhmedova (453, 2006a) says that out of 34 Chechen female suicide terrorists 2 (6 percent) were of high socio-economic status, with the same number of those of poor socio-economic status. Vast majority of the women in the sample were either of middle (59 percent) or good (29 percent) socio-economic status.

⁴⁷ Compare with Merari, 2010

⁴⁸ In this section, this study understands "rationality" in economic terms of rational choice theory, based on methodological individualism. Rational behaviour is when individual acts *as if* balancing costs against benefits and finally decides for the action, that maximises personal advantage. Rational individual acts in his/her self-interest.

incline to free ride rather than participate in collective action in situations where the collective effort produces public goods that are not excludable to those who participate. It does not seem very rational, that people should strive for reward, which they cannot enjoy due to the fact that they are dead. Nonetheless, there is a possibility that those people just trade off their senseless life for a few days of appreciation among other members of the terrorist group and its sympathisers. However, this is possible rather in a society where a so called 'cult of martyrdom' exists; in other situations (as in Chechnya) it is quite unlikely. Moreover, many suicide terrorists come from relatively well-situated families and have above-average social status (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 453, 2006a; Hafez, 60, 2006).

One of the possible ways out for rationalist explanations of suicide bombing lies in the incorporation of non-material values in costs and benefits evaluations. Indeed, values such as posthumous rewards offer possible explanation for a suicide terrorist's behaviour. However, the argument that suicide terrorists calculate their costs and benefits and their decision is based on rational reasoning is problematic, since both their ends (rewards in the afterlife) and means (martyrdom in the path of God) are contingent on a terrorist's deep religious faith, which is fundamentally irrational. In other words, the rationality of self-sacrifice is possible not only because of the instrumentality of human reasons but also because of the transcendent belief system which links death with heavenly rewards (Hafez, 59, 2006).

Some researchers also point out the role of one's identity. For instance, as Harrison writes, *'The logic that drives voluntary self-destruction is therefore as follows. Each person who chooses the death of the self does so because at the given moment death will maintain her most valuable asset, the identity that she has selected and invested in through her life but living on will*

damage it irreparably. The moment is such that by choosing life she must abandon this identity'
(Harrison, 4, 2006).

4.4.2 Psychopathology and trauma

Recent surveys tend to show that most of the Chechen female suicide terrorists probably suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 66, 2006b) however in other aspects they didn't suffer any other psychological illness and there is a growing consensus among psychologists and psychiatrists that suicide terrorists, while clearly highly alienated from society, are sane and relatively normal, that is, they do not exhibit signs of suffering from a salient psychopathology (Moghadam, 90-91, 2006).

While it seems that mental illness does not play any significant role in the case of Chechen female suicide terrorism, some psychiatrists argue that trauma and subsequent post-traumatic stress disorder belongs to important factors of individual behaviour. Speckhard and Akhmedova (66, 2006b) found that all individuals in their sample had experienced a deep personal trauma and showed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Nearly all of them lost close family members during the conflict with Russian forces⁴⁹ and many of them personally witnessed their death. In addition, all subjects in Speckhard's and Akhmedova's sample had experienced multiple societal traumas including having survived bombings, destruction of their homes and witnessing death or torture of others⁵⁰. These experiences had a deep psychological impact and caused serious personal changes of future-terrorists.

⁴⁹ Speckhard and Akhmedova, 455, 2006a. Dronzina and Astashin found out similar information – in their sample of twenty-nine, twenty-three lost some family member (Dronzina and Astashin, 35, 2007).

⁵⁰ For detailed data see Speckhard and Akhmedova, 455, 2006a

Speckhard and Akhmedova (66-67, 2006b) made the following conclusion: *‘According to the reports of family members and close associates, the following changes were observed in the female suicide bombers following their traumatic experiences: depression in 73 percent (19/26); social alienation and isolation in 92 percent (24/26); aggression in 23 percent (6/26); and repetitive talking about a strong desire for revenge in 31 percent (8/26). In the majority of cases (73 percent – 19/26), those who ultimately became bombers, sought a connection to Wahhabist groups soon after the trauma and in direct reaction to it; in a minority of cases (27 percent – 7/26) they were already affiliated with the Wahhabist groups by marriage or family ties but began to become more deeply invested in seeking the terror-promoting aspects of these groups’.*

4.4.3 Material rewards and revenge

There is evidence showing that Chechen terrorist organisations in some cases promised a material reward for the suicide mission which would be given to the suicide terrorist’s family. No matter whether the reward was eventually paid out, it is important that the would-be terrorist calculated with it (Beyler, 11, 2003b).

The issue of material reward for a suicide mission is closely connected to the issue of debts and extortion, to which the Chechen widows are especially vulnerable. There is a well-known case of a 23-year-old Ingush woman Zarema Muzhakhoyeva, who was supposed to blow herself up in a Moscow café, but surrendered to the police. Later investigations showed that, at the age of fifteen, she had been married to a Chechen man, who was not long afterwards killed by Russian troops. According to Chechen tradition, she and her baby daughter then ‘belonged’ to her husband's family, who treated her as a household slave. Unable to bear the situation any longer she escaped, without her baby as she knew that the family would never grant her custody of

her child. Surviving by stealing and borrowing money the debts eventually got so big that there was nowhere to borrow from. At this stage a group of men from whom she had taken a loan told her she had no choice but to pay them back with her life. However, if she would complete a suicide mission, her debts would be repaid, and her family would also receive money (Groskop, 2004).

Among other motivations which could be perceived as rational is the seeking for revenge, even if it requires the avenger's death. In the Chechen society with its strong tradition of blood feud and duty of retribution and given the fact that almost everybody in Chechnya lost a family member during the war, it is hardly surprising that revenge was an important motivation for many suicide bombers. However, the revenge was in many cases not aimed at the actual perpetrator, but at the Russian society as whole. One of relatively rare exceptions was the case of Aisa Gazuyeva, who blew herself up in the office of her husband's murderer, Russian officer Geidar Gadzhiev (Moghadam, 24, 2006; Tsvetkova, 2002). But unfortunately, the development of the ethnic conflict in Chechnya with the growing level of traumatisation and bereavement in the society, revenge became increasingly generalised in the minds of many. Generalised revenge, although formerly unacceptable, started to be accepted in the radical discourse.

In spite of the fact that we do not have enough similarly clear evidence that revenge was the main motivation in other cases, statistical data indicates that it probably plays at least the role of secondary motivation, as most of female suicide terrorists lost a proximate family member in the conflict.

4.4.4 Gender related motives

Trauma caused by loss of husband or other family member played a significant role in most of the cases however as Dronzina and Astashin (35, 2007) found out, almost half of Chechen female suicide terrorists in their sample also suffered another trauma closely connected to their gender status. Among these traumas belong: humiliation (on the basis of gender roles), limitation of various rights and particularly social ostracism caused by 'sins', or social stigmas acquired by transcending the strict gender roles. The most common 'sin' in their sample was extramarital sexual relationship, incest and infertility. Other sources confirm the same argument (Dronzina, 2008) - Rayman Kurbanova who participated in the Dubrovka hostage crisis, got divorced from her husband because of not being able to have children; Aset Gishlurkaeva, another hostage-taker from Dubrovka, also got divorced probably for the same reason, and Marem Sharipova, who blew herself up in the rock concert in Tushino near Moscow, had an abortion. Zulikhan Elihadjieva, Sharipova's accomplice from Tushino, maintained sexual relationship with one of her relatives, the same as Hava Barayeva, the first Chechen female suicide terrorist⁵¹. Other female suicide terrorists also became stigmatised for their 'sins', like 13-year-old Zarema Inarkaeva, who was raped by her school-mate, or Luiza Asmaeva, who was sexually abused in the terrorist training camp.

4.4.5 Rape

The mechanism of coercion and blackmailing is best illustrated by the story of Mareta Dudayeva. On December 19th 2000, a seventeen-year-old girl from a small Chechen village tried to ram a truck stuffed with explosives into the police station in Chechnya's second largest

⁵¹ These personal data are taken from different sources, mainly: Speckhard and Akhmedova (2006a), Dronzina, (2005), Dronzina and Astashin (2007), Dronzina, T. (2008)

city of Argun. She failed to detonate the explosives and survived the mission. The investigations revealed very interesting information about her background and motivation. It turned out that she was not a fanatic Muslim at all - she had never read Quran and did not attend services in a mosque. Her motivations were much more prosaic. A forensic expert discovered that she started her sexual life at the age of 12. In fact, this behaviour is very shameful for a Chechen girl; if the neighbours (public) knew the whole of her clan would have been held up for shame (Bosirov, 2003). Dudayeva was blackmailed by the terrorist group's recruiters and was eventually forced to drive the explosives-loaded truck. 'It is not ruled out that the terrorists filmed the raping of the girl' (Bosirov, 2003), in order to crush the girl's young psyche. Dudayeva was completely sane and she behaved rationally, although even under extreme conditions.

In Chechen society where a high value is placed upon the marital fidelity and women's maternal role⁵², women who realise they have deviated (intentionally or unintentionally) from these gender norms may feel strong pressure to reaffirm their commitment to the society (O'Rourke, 711, 2009). It is not very difficult for a terrorist group to persuade such a woman (especially if she suffers from serious trauma) that the only way of the reaffirmation is a suicide mission for 'the cause'.

⁵² Divorce is a relatively big social stigma for Chechen women, suggesting that she is unable to fulfil the expected gender norms.

4.4.6 Fighting for equality?

There is another alternative explanation of the individual motives of female suicide terrorists, stating that females participating in suicide missions attempt to resent social norms, in other words they fight for gender equality. One of the proponents of such an approach is Barbara Victor (2003), who applies it to the Palestinian female suicide terrorists. Although it is possible that this explanation is valid especially in some Palestinian left-wing terrorist organisations or the LTTE, it is hardly possible in the case of Chechen female suicide terrorists. On the contrary, Chechen female suicide terrorists by their behaviour rather reject than embrace any feminist values. According to different sources, Chechen female suicide terrorists are much less active during their mission than their male counterparts. In mixed terrorist groups, women are always subordinate to men – the most obvious cases were the hostage crisis in Dubrovka Theatre and Beslan School. Women were actually just holding the explosives and decision-making was limited only for men. Also, the traditional Arab dresses which female hostage-takers wore indicate that they do not perceive their activity as a fight for gender equality.

Part V

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This study outlined several societal factors which could have played a role in the emergence of female suicide terrorism in Chechnya. The focus was placed on the following: the Russian occupation of Chechnya and increasingly brutalised wars, the impact of an imported form of radical Islamism, traditional customary law, social impacts of the first and (especially) the second Chechen war and last but not least the increased violence against women.

The impact of the Russian occupation of Chechnya and the increased brutality of the second Chechen war seems to be one of the most important factors, given the fact that suicide terrorist attacks were unknown in the region during the first Chechen war, as well as during the inter-war period. The first Chechen suicide terrorist attack took place only in 2000. Therefore, it is argued in this study that the difference between the second Chechen war and the previous period is crucial for the emergence of female suicide terrorism.

The role of radical Islamism is very ambiguous. As mentioned in Chapters 6.2 and 7.2.1 radical Islamism rather dissuades women from the participation in armed resistance, not to mention suicide terrorism. However, the influence of the Wahhabist ‘missionaries’ had a certain indirect effect: by sponsoring the local militant organisations, Wahhabists contributed to their increasing power and these organisations subsequently opened the space for a more violent means of confrontation as well as for the suicide terrorist campaigns. As female suicide terrorism emerged also in the regions, where there was no widespread popularity of Wahhabism or in non-Muslim (Sri Lanka) and the secular environment (PKK in Turkey – as

was also analysed in this study), Wahhabism is most likely not the necessary condition of female suicide terrorism.

The other factor which played a certain role is the Chechen customary law, specifically the concept of honour and duty for revenge. These social rules apparently led at least some Chechen women to join terrorist organisations and perpetrate suicide attacks. On the other hand, some social mechanisms, known from other regions where female suicide terrorism also emerged (for example Palestine), are absent in Chechnya. Especially, the ‘cult of martyrdom’ is largely missing and therefore should be excluded from the list of possible factors supporting female suicide terrorism in Chechnya.

Poverty and other social problems were important, nevertheless rather on a social than on an individual level. Although most of the female suicide terrorists were probably unemployed, given the immense level of unemployment, they did not protrude from the rest of the society. In addition, only a few of them came from the lowest social class. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the frustration of Chechen female suicide terrorists came rather from overall social misery than from their own economic situation.

Probably the key element for the Chechen female suicide terrorism are the gender-related issues. The boom of violence against women, the emergence of the use of rape as a weapon of war and the declining position of women in both society and family are definitely the most important factors. In addition, this factor was even multiplied by the traditional norms of Chechen society, concerning for example a woman’s dependency on her husband’s family and the restriction of the role of female to the means of reproduction of the nation. The hypothesis of the existence of a link between gender-related violence and emergence of female suicide

terrorism is supported by the fact that it emerged in Chechnya only after the dramatic decline of the level of women's security, during the Second war. Until then, rape and violence against women remained relatively rare.

As for the incentives for the terrorist organisations to adopt female suicide terrorism this study maintained that this tactic was adopted as a part of an organisation's strategic logic. This logic substantially differs from the motives of an individual suicide terrorist. A terrorist organisation is motivated primarily by its reproduction (and possibly inter-group competition). As diagram 4 shows, female suicide terrorism attacks are more effective in terms of the average number of casualties per attack than male suicide attacks. But the essence of suicide terrorism is in the inflicted horror.

5.2 Three level analysis

Because female suicide terrorism is a complex phenomenon, this study analysed it on three different levels – on the societal, organisational and individual level. On each of these three levels this study found some necessary conditions for the emergence of female suicide terrorism. On the societal level these are, above all, the high brutality of armed conflict, the occupation by a foreign army, a connection between locally-tied rebels and an international terrorist network, and some features of local customary law. While all of these aforementioned conditions generally relate to suicide terrorism, there are also some gender-related conditions which have a special effect on the emergence of female suicide terrorism. Among those conditions is above all the widespread violence against women and high level of sexual violence in the Chechen society during the Second war.

On the other hand, some factors proved not to be necessary preconditions, as they are absent in other regions where female suicide terrorism occurred. Among these factors belongs mainly the ideology of Wahhabism. However, the impact of Wahhabism is indirect as it only contributed to the emergence of female suicide terrorism by connecting local Chechen fighters with global terrorist networks.

Since almost every Chechen female suicide terrorist attack was organised by a terrorist organisation, not by an individual, it is necessary to analyse the organisational level as well. There are several terrorist organisations acting in the territory of Chechnya or more precisely of North Caucasus. However, besides their names, they are not very different from one another. These organisations usually combine Islamic and national-liberation rhetoric and they are based on loyalties to respected warlords rather than being strictly organised.

On the organisational level, we followed the argument of organisational strategic logic, which states that the organisational shift towards female suicide terrorism is given by the logic of efficiency and cost-benefit calculation. While we confirmed earlier findings of different authors that female suicide terrorism is more effective than suicide attacks committed by men, we outlined that the main difference between male suicide terrorists and female suicide terrorists resides in the psychological effect on the target audience. In this section, we focused mainly on the communication function of the female suicide terrorism. We argued that female suicide terrorism serves as a message directed to several recipients. The most important is the target audience, both the victims, as well as the government and security forces. The aim of the message is to spread fear among the population and coerce the government to certain concessions. Nonetheless, female suicide terrorism as a message is directed at the members of

the organisation as well as at other terrorist organisations. Its function is to boost the morale of the members or manifest the superiority or higher prestige to competing organisations.

The individual level of analysis is the most obscure. Given the lack of information about individual terrorists' motivation, it is difficult to get to a reasonable conclusion. Therefore, this study focused only on the formulation of several possible motivational factors, which are as follows: post-traumatic psychological disorder, religious and material motivations, and revenge. In addition to these, we found evidence showing that the impact of gender-related violence is especially important since a great number of female suicide terrorists had some experience with rape or were punished for breaking the strict social and gender rules. Such 'sins' are usually extra-marital relations, the inability to bear children, or incest. On the other hand, some factors suggested by other authors, e.g. Victor (2003), such as a possible fight for gender equality, proved to be irrelevant in the Chechen case. Similarly, the religious aspect is often over-emphasised by some authors and media.

5.3 Conclusion

As explored through the Chechnya case, suicide terrorism is a manifestation of personal, social, and political motivations reliant on human social and political contexts. It is not conducted by some sort of insane, or perhaps even psychologically disturbed women. It is clear that while most of the available literature on suicide terrorism does include both men and women suicide bombers, it nonetheless remains rather ignorant of the gender-based insights of feminist theory.

Unfortunately, traditional International Relations theory tends to ignore individual agency, and so there is tension between this and the fact that terrorists are individuals, with individual experiences. It also fails to recognise that characteristic socially associated with masculinity,

for instance rationality and objectivity, still dominate the international arena and our explanations of it over subordinate characteristic associated with what is feminine - such as emotion and experience.

More research is needed on other countries whilst using the three-level analysis. This will provide valuable comparison. For instance, the PKK could form a good case study. Furthermore, comparative studies focusing on different regions / states and social contexts should prove analytically productive in uncovering the various impacts of violent conflicts on women.

Additionally, the future study of female suicide terrorism should focus on a specific form of communication between the terrorist organisation and the target audience (or state government). The horror caused by female suicide terrorists helps the organisation to send the message about their goals to the target audience, shows the inability of government to provide security for its citizens, helps to gain support (both material and ideological) from global terrorist networks, solidifies the intra-group cohesion and in some cases even gains new supporters and volunteers willing to sacrifice themselves for the cause.

Therefore, the analysis of suicide terrorism (with focus on women) as a form of strategic communication is the most fruitful direction of study at the moment. Similarly, a comprehensive analysis of the role of media in the conflict dynamics is the key to understanding suicide terrorist logic. As such, more research needs to be done on the Western media's understanding of Kurdish women fighters – the media put too much focus on the physical appearance of the fighters which in turn undermines the importance of their fight. This

sensualisation of those women then distracts from the real issues – fight from oppression, patriarchy, the struggle for liberation.

Part VI

6. Bibliography

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List of Tables

Table 1⁵³ – List of all Chechen suicide attacks

No.	Date	Place	M	F	Dead / Injured	Organisation
1	7 June 2000	Alkhan-Yurt	0	2	3/5	Unknown
2	11 June 2000	Khankala base, near Grozny	1	0	5/1	Commander Movladi Udugov
3	12 June 2000	Grozny	1	0	7/0	Commander Movladi Udugov
4	14 June 2000	Grozny	1	0	0/0	Commander Shamil Basayev
5	2 July 2000	Argun, Chechnya	1	0	50/81	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
6	2 July 2000	Gudermes, Chechnya	1	0	6/0	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
7	2 July 2000	Gudermes, Chechnya	1	0	9/0	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
8	2 July 2000	Urus-Martan, Chechnya	1	0	2/0	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
9	2 July 2000	Novogrozny, Chechnya	1	0	4/20	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
10	8 Dec 2000	Gudermes, Chechnya	2	0	3/12	Unknown
11	19 Dec 2000	Grozny, Chechnya	0	1	0/0	Black Widow
12	July 2001	Unknown	0	1	0/1	Unknown
13	17 Sep 2001	Argun, Chechnya	1	0	1/0	Unknown
14	29 Nov 2001	Urus-Martan, Chechnya	0	1	4/1	Black Widows
15	15 Feb 2002	Grozny, Chechnya	0	1	0/1	Unknown
16	31 May 2002	Grozny, Chechnya	1	0	5/Unknown	Unknown
17	23-26 Oct 2002	Moscow	21	19	170+/700+	SPIR, R-S, IIPB
18	27 Dec 2002	Grozny, Chechnya	2	1	57/121	Black Widows
19	10 Jan 2003	Urus-Martan, Chechnya	1	0	1/0	Unknown
20	12 May 2003	Znamenskoe, Chechnya	2	1	59/197	Commander Shamil Basayev
21	14 May 2003	Iliskhan-Yurt	0	2	19/78	Commander Shamil Basayev
22	21 May 2003	Checkpoint, Ingushetia	1	0	1/0	Unknown
23	5 June 2003	Mozdok, North Ossetia	0	1	20/11	Commander Abu al-Walid
24	5 July 2003	Tushino airfield (rock fest), Moscow	0	2	16/60	Black Widows
25	27 July 2003	Grozny	0	1	Unknown	Unknown

⁵³ Table 6 is based on data from Global Terrorism Database (GTD), made by The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) on University of Maryland. www.start.umd.edu and Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, run by The National Counterterrorism Centre, www.nctc.gov.

26	1 Aug 2003	Mozdok, North Ossetia	1	0	39/76	Unknown
27	9 Dec 2003	Red Square, Moscow	0	1	5/14	Black Widows
28	6 Feb 2004	Metro (Avtozavodskaya st.), Moscow	1	0	40/120	Unknown
29	6 Apr 2004	Nazran	1	0	0/8	Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs
30	24 Aug 2004	Airplane (Tula)	0	1	42/0	Islambouli Brigades of al-Qa'ida, Black Widows
31	24 Aug 2004	Airplanes (Rostov)	0	1	42/0	Islambouli Brigades of al-Qa'ida, Black Widows
32	31 Aug 2004	Metro (Rishshkaya station), Moscow	0	1	10/50	Islambouli Brigades of al-Qa'ida, Black Widows
33	1 Sep 2004	Beslan, N. Ossetia	29	3	380+/ Unknown	Unknown
34	21 Sep 2004	Urus-Martan, Chechnya	0	1	Unknown	Unknown
35	17 May 2006	Nazran	1	0	6/Unknown	Unknown
36	7 July 2006	Nazran	1	0	0/0	Commander Doku Umarov
37	5 Nov 2008	Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia	0	1	11/40	Unknown
38	23 June 2009	Nazran	0	1	2/5	R-S
39	26 July 2009	Grozny, Chechnya	1	0	7/10	NVF
40	23 Oct 2009	Grozny, Chechnya	1	0	0/0	Unknown
41	17 Dec 2009	Nazran	1	0	1/18	Unknown
42	6 Jan 2010	Makhachkala, Dagestan	1	0	4/10	Unknown
43	29 Mar 2010	Metro (Lubyanka station), Moscow	0	1	25/Unknown	Dagestan Front of Caucasus Emirate
44	29 Mar 2010	Metro (Park Kultury st.), Moscow	0	1	13/Unknown	Dagestan Front of Caucasus Emirate
45	31 Mar 2010	Kizlyar, Dagestan	1	0	6/Unknown	Unknown
46	31 Mar 2010	Kizlyar, Dagestan	1	0	6/Unknown	Unknown
47	3 Apr 2010	Kizlyar, Dagestan	1	0	3/5	Dagestan Front of Caucasus Emirate
48	5 Apr 2010	Karabulak, Ingushetia	1	0	3 / 4	Dagestan Front of Caucasus Emirate
49	30 Jun 2010	Grozny, Chechnya	1	0	1/5	Unknown
50	17 Aug 2010	Prigorodny district, North Ossetia	1	0	2/3	Karabulak Gang
51	9 Sep 2010	Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia	1	0	18/173	R-S
52	19 Oct 2010	Grozny, Chechnya	3	0	6/17	Unknown
53	31 Dec 2010	Moscow	0	2	0/1	Unknown

54	24 Jan 2011	Domodedovo airport, Moscow	1	0	37/173	Unknown
55	3 May 2012	Makhachkala, Dagestan	0	1	Unknown	Unknown
56	27 Aug 2012	Chirkei, Dagestan	0	1	Unknown	Unknown

Table 2 - Traditional Terrorism – Gregg (37, 2014)⁵⁴

X	Defining Goals	Examples
Left	<p>Anarchist – destroy the government</p> <p>Marxist – foment workers’ revolution</p> <p>Socialist – economic restructuring</p>	<p>Argentinian Montoneros/ERP</p> <p>Red Brigades, German/Japanese Red Armies</p> <p>Palestinian PFLP</p> <p>Colombian ELM</p>
Right	<p>Racist – racial supremacy</p> <p>Fascist – state sponsored, militant racism/nationalism</p> <p>Nationalistic</p>	<p>Ku Klux Klan</p> <p>Rumanian Iron Guard</p> <p>Neo-Nazis</p>
Ethnic-Separatist	<p>Dispel foreign occupying force</p> <p>Create ethnically independent state</p>	<p>Irgun</p> <p>PLO</p> <p>IRA</p> <p>Basque ETA</p>

⁵⁴ Table 7 - Gregg, H. S. (p.37), ‘Defining and Distinguishing Secular and Religious Terrorism’, Perspectives on Terrorism, 8, 2, 2014, 36-51

Table 3 - Religious Terrorism – Gregg (43, 2014)⁵⁵

X	Defining Goals	Examples
Apocalyptic	Cataclysmic destruction to people, property, environment Hasten arrival of a ‘new world’	Aum Shnrikyo Elements of JDL/Kach Some strains of Christian Identity
Create Religious Government	Abolish secular state Create a state governed by religious law and doctrine Create trans-state religious government	Lebanese Hizbollah Christian Identity Hamas Elements of JDL/Kach
Create Religiously Pure State	Remove groups from other religions Remove groups within same religion with different interpretations of faith	Elements of JDL/Kach LeT Shiv Sena/RSS

Table 4 - Religious Terrorism’s Targets – Gregg (46, 2014)⁵⁶

X	Specific Targets	Abstract Targets
Domestic	Workings of the state – assassinate leaders, attacks on infrastructure, undermine authority of state	Attacks on secular art and other cultural institutions Attacks on secular intellectuals Attacks on historic, other religious sites / artefacts
International	States that support regimes Foreign government presence / militaries International tourists	‘Secular’ or ‘Western’ culture Globalisation

⁵⁵ Table taken from Gregg, H. S. (p.43), ‘Defining and Distinguishing Secular and Religious Terrorism’, Perspectives on Terrorism, 8, 2, 2014, 36-51

⁵⁶ Table taken from Gregg, H. S. (p.46), ‘Defining and Distinguishing Secular and Religious Terrorism’, Perspectives on Terrorism, 8, 2, 2014, 36-51

Map

Map of Chechnya⁵⁷



⁵⁷ World Atlas, <https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/chechnya.htm> - accessed on 08/04/2018