HARSH STATE REPRESSION AND SUICIDE BOMBING: THE SECOND PALESTINIAN INTIFADA (UPRISING), 2000-05

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

This dissertation draws attention to the interaction between insurgents and the target state as the appropriate context for explaining the motivations of suicide bombers, the rationales of the organizations that support them, and the popularity in certain societies of suicide bombing. Based mainly on data collected from 88 interviews conducted in 2006 with senior leaders of six Palestinian political organizations and close relatives and friends of a 25 percent representative sample of Palestinian suicide bombers during the second intifada, it demonstrates the following: (1) During the second intifada, changes in the political opportunity structure, especially extreme state repression, were chiefly responsible for growing public support for suicide bombing, the development of organizational rationales justifying suicide bombing, and the crystallization of suicide bombers’ motivation to act. State repression produced a widespread desire for revenge at all levels of Palestinian society. (2) Cultural forces, notably the growing popularity of fundamentalist Islam and its embodiment in the political culture of certain militant organizations,
were of secondary importance in causing the spread of suicide bombing. (3) Strategic calculations ("rational choice") aimed at speeding the liberation of occupied territory were of tertiary importance in motivating suicide bombers but they figured more prominently at the level of organizational rationales. (4) While the literature often invokes creative agency, psychopathology, and material deprivation to explain the rise of suicide bombing, little or no effect was discovered for these variables.
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Chapter 1

The Scope of the Problem
1 Introduction

When I interviewed the mother of Saher Hemdallah Tumam, the first Palestinian suicide bomber, she told me that I was the first researcher or journalist to interview the family despite the fact that her son’s attack was conducted thirteen years earlier and was probably the first suicide bombing in the Islamic world by a Sunni religious organization. Scholars have conducted many studies about Palestinian suicide bombing since Tumam’s attack in 1993. Many generalizations and theoretical claims accompany them. However, as the remark of Tumam’s mother suggests, research about suicide bombers based on primary data is rare.

What is more, no studies have been based on representative samples of Palestinian suicide bombers. These are just two deficiencies of extant studies of suicide bombers. There are more:

- Most studies of suicide bombing are terrorist-centered. That is, they focus on suicide bombers, their organizations, their culture, and the competition among organizations for popular support, ignoring the effect of the target state’s repressive actions on the insurgent organizations’ choice of tactics and the magnitude of their suicide attacks.
- From the point of view of the broader social movements literature, research on suicide bombing is theoretically simplistic. For example, one of the central debates in the study of social movements over the past decade concerns the causal weight that analysts should attribute to structure, culture and agency in shaping strategic action. One hears no echo of this debate in research on suicide bombing.

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1 I define suicide bombing as “the use of explosive against one or more people by one or more attackers. The attackers enjoy organizational support and know in advance and with certainty that their actions will result in their deaths.” By that definition, “merely planning an attack does not qualify as a suicide bombing; the attacker must be en route to his or her target. Nor is death or injury a necessary part of our definition since on occasion a suicide bomber is apprehended and disarmed after an attack has been launched but before detonation” (Brym and Araj, 2006: 1974).
• Existing approaches to studying the motivations of suicide bombers tend to be monocausal. They focus on religious, strategic or other motivations to the exclusion of others. They therefore tend to put suicide-bombing organizations worldwide in a single basket, dismissing the possibility that combined motivational logics and mixed rationales can appear in the same conflict if not in the same insurgent organization.

Let me briefly justify each of these claims, turning first to problems bound up with terrorist-centred approaches that ignore the role of state repression. (In the following paragraphs, I have placed my main findings in italics.) As I document extensively in my literature review below, many analysts explain the actions of suicide bombers by referring to their individual attributes, notably their presumably psychopathological state; their alleged deprivation, either absolute or relative; or their rational calculation of costs and benefits. Other analysts explain the actions of suicide bombers with reference to the cultural matrix in which they are embedded, especially Islam’s alleged promotion of political fanaticism. Of course, all analysts acknowledge that suicide bombing appears in the context of political conflict between at least two parties, but this fact typically lies in the background of terrorist-centred approaches. In contrast, the interaction between conflicting parties is the focus of my analysis in Chapter 2. As I show, moving the interaction between conflicting parties to the analytical foreground helps us explain much about patterns of suicide bombing that terrorist-centred approaches obscure, notably the conditions that lead to the inception of suicide bombing campaigns, the organizational sequencing of involvement in suicide bombing campaigns, and variations over time in the frequency of attacks.

My second claim is that from the point of view of the broader social movements literature, research on suicide bombing is theoretically simplistic insofar as it ignores one of the central debates in the field: whether structure, culture or agency is the principal force driving strategic action. In Chapter 3, I document the centrality of this debate in the social movements literature (see, for example, Jasper and Goodwin, 1999). I also score participants in the debate for tending to argue by theoretical fiat that strategic action is the outcome of structural constraints or cultural influence or creative agency. In contrast, I take an empirical, multivariate approach. I examine the strategic actions taken by major militant Palestinian
organizations during the second *intifada*, including their decision whether to engage in suicide bombing, and I assess how much causal weight to attribute to structural opportunities, political enculturation and human agency in influencing the adoption/rejection of suicide bombing and other strategic decisions. *I find that structural opportunities and political enculturation, singly or in combination, account well for all of the major strategic decisions made by the two main Palestinian insurgent organizations during the second intifada. In contrast, creative agency by itself accounts for little.* This finding does not lead me to reject agentic approaches to strategic decision making in social movement organizations. Instead, I argue that the causal weight of structural, cultural and agentic factors may vary in different historical circumstances.

Finally, consider my assertion that analyses of suicide bombers’ motivations tend to be monocausal. Psychopathologists tend to argue as if deprivation, strategic calculation and culture do not matter; rational choice theorists as if culture and deprivation do not matter; and so on. Even within a single theoretical tradition, analysts typically argue as if only one variable matters to the exclusion of others. Thus, among cultural theorists, religion may be emphasized to the exclusion of non-religious values (Huntington, 1996), while among rational choice theorists, calculations aimed at gaining advantages over competing organizations may be stressed over other strategic considerations (Bloom, 2005). Because of monocausal reasoning, groups that engage in suicide bombing are often characterized as monolithically “religious”, “strategic” or “competitive” organizations. Yet the appearance of suicide bombing in many countries and types of conflict (national, ethnic, inter-civilizational, intra-civilizational, local and global), the adoption of the tactic by diverse organizations (nationalist, Marxist, Islamic, and so on), and variation in the intensity of suicide attacks (episodic attacks versus coordinated campaigns) suggest the need for an approach that is prepared to entertain the possibility that suicide bombers are motivated by multiple causes. That is the approach I take. *The chief finding of Chapter 4 is that the motivations of suicide bombers are typically complex. They draw on the desire for revenge against repressive forces, religious inspiration and strategic calculations in various combinations.*
To make my case, and to overcome the scarcity of primary and representative data on suicide bombers, I interviewed 45 senior leaders of the six main Palestinian political organizations and 43 sets of close relatives and friends of suicide bombers representing about one-quarter of all Palestinian suicide bombers during the second intifada. I also consulted a variety of primary and secondary sources, including Arabic newspapers and organizational histories. Finally, I participated in the construction of a quantitative database of collective violence events during the second intifada. These source materials have enabled me to conduct what I believe to be a unique study that is based on more solid empirical foundations than other studies of suicide bombers and that makes significant theoretical contributions to the field.

In the remainder of this chapter I critically review theories of suicide bombing, describe the methodology I employed in my research, and outline how each of the dissertation’s chapters addresses the issues I have just touched upon.

2 What Causes Suicide Bombing? Existing Answers and their Limitations

Social scientists have sought to explain the growing incidence of suicide bombing since the early 1980s by focusing on the alleged psychopathology of suicide bombers, the deprivations they supposedly experience, the religious milieux from which they presumably originate, and the degree to which suicide bombing serves their strategic interests.

2.1 Psychopathology

In the late 19th century, social scientists first proposed that an irrational or pathological state of mind typically precipitates collective violence (Le Bon 1969 [1895]: 28). The idea spread widely and is certainly evident in suicide bombing research (Reich 1990). Some analysts assumed that suicide bombers are necessarily suicidal or suffer from some other psychological problem, such as a narcissistic personality disorder or an authoritarian personality, to the point that they lack a moral compass (Lester, Yang, and Lindsay, 2004; McCauley, 2007: 14; Post, 1990: 25). Kimhi and Even (2004) provide useful reviews of the
psychopathological approach to suicide bombing. Kennedy (2006: 2) also reviews a group of psychological studies.

After reviewing much of the relevant literature, Brym and Araj (2006: 1970) concluded that individualistic explanations based on psychopathology are of no value in helping us understanding the rising incidence of suicide bombing. Among other works, they cite Pape’s study of all 462 suicide bombers who attacked targets worldwide between 1980 and 2003. Pape found not a single case of psychopathology (depression, psychosis, past suicide attempts, and so on) among them, and only one case of probable mental retardation. They also cite research showing that “recruits who display signs of pathological behaviour are automatically weeded out for reasons of organizational security” (Brym and Araj, 2006: 1970; cf. McCauley, 2007: 15). Other researchers have reached similar conclusions (Kimhi and Even, 2004; McCauly, 2007; Merari, 2007).

As McCauly (2007: 14) put it, “thirty years ago” psychological explanations of suicide terrorism “was taken very seriously, but thirty years of research has found little evidence that terrorists are suffering from psychopathology.”

2.2 Deprivation

A second theory of suicide bombing focuses on the deprivations, absolute or relative, that suicide bombers supposedly suffer. Relative deprivation refers to the growth of an intolerable gap between expectations and rewards. Absolute deprivation refers to longstanding poverty and unemployment. According to Gurr (1970: 17), the “basic frustration-aggression proposition is that the greater the frustration, the greater the quantity of aggression against the source of frustration. This postulate provides the motivational base for an initial proposition about political violence: the greater the intensity of deprivation, the greater the magnitude of violence.” Gurr also maintains that the potential for violence in a collectivity varies jointly with the intensity of discontent, which range from mild dissatisfaction to rage, and the proportion of its members who are intensely discontented.

The deprivation approach has informed much suicide bombing research. Piazza (2008: 35) concludes that scholars are “sharply divided on the relationship between poverty and suicide
terrorism.” However, my reading of the evidence suggests that suicide bombers are not especially deprived. For example, Krueger and Malekova (2003) found that Palestinian suicide attackers tend to come from wealthier families and had relatively high levels of education. Berrebi’s (2007) analysis of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) between the late 1980s and 2002 shows that higher education and higher standard of living are positively associated with participation in Hamas and PIJ and with becoming a suicide bomber. Laqueur (2004: 16) notes that suicide bombers from Egypt and Saudi Arabia have come mainly from middle class or upper-middle-class families. Most of the 19 hijackers who took part in the 9/11 attacks belonged to middle class Saudi Arabian families and many had a higher education (Valino, Buesa, and Baumert, 2010). Pape (2005) collected education and income data on about 30 percent of Arab suicide bombers between 1980 and 2003, and concluded that they were much better educated than the populations from which they were recruited. They were typically from the working and middle classes and were seldom unemployed or poor. Merari (2004) could not find a discernible socioeconomic pattern among Palestinian suicide bombers. More recently, Kruger (2007) found that terrorism is not significantly higher for poorer countries and that education and poverty probably have little to do with terrorism. After reviewing the literature, Valino and his colleagues concluded that there is little chance that reducing poverty or increasing education would help to reduce terrorism (Valino, Buesa, and Baumert, 2010).

Elevating the debate to a higher ecological level, Kristof (2002) shows a strong association between inequality in income distribution and terrorism. Gunaratna (2004) notes that suicide attacks are common in conflicts in underdeveloped political economies. Pedhazur, Perliger, and Weinberg (2003) maintain that Palestinian suicide bombers come disproportionately from especially deprived socioeconomic regions of the West Bank and Gaza. Saleh (2009: 17-18) provides evidence indicating a strong correlation between economic conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the number of Palestinian attacks during the period 1990-2002. However, Moghadam (2006: 96) distinguishes the direct and indirect effects of economic development on suicide attacks. He notes that economic motives have at most indirect effects. For example, poor countries are more likely to serve as safe havens for terrorists. Also, poor countries are more likely to undergo ethnic and religious conflict, which
in turn breeds terrorism. There may be an association between poor regions and suicide bombing, but it is spurious in Moghadam’s view.

In short, while scholars are divided on the relationship between deprivation and suicide bombing, the bulk of the evidence suggests that one ought to look elsewhere for a credible explanation.

2.3 Culture

Merari (2007: 101) maintains that the most common explanation of suicide bombing emphasizes cultural factors, especially Islamic religious fanaticism. From this point of view, Islam has always inclined Muslims to violent hatred of the West, and it continues to do so today. This is the “clash of civilizations” thesis, popularized by Huntington (1996).

Hunter (1998) criticizes Huntington for his ahistoricism. She contends that by paying attention to intra-civilizational conflicts and inter-civilization instances of cooperation, one arrives at a very different picture of Western-Muslim relations – one suggesting that the conflict between some Muslims and Western states is mainly political, not cultural. She writes:

The causes of discord between some Muslim and Western states as well as the sometimes strident anti-Westernism of Islamist elements have been inextricably linked to change within Muslim societies and to massive intrusion of the West into Muslim countries, leading to their loss of independence, a drastic shift of international power in favor of the West by the nineteenth century, and Muslim efforts to redress the unfavourable balance of global power. These factors and specific action by Western states – their support for unpopular governments in the Muslim world – have been the main causes of discord, not any civilizational incompatibility deriving from Islam’s specificity… [D]iscord has grown from the efforts of Muslim governments, including governments that espouse a secular philosophy and agenda [e.g. Syria], to increase their margin of independence, to challenge the supremacy of the West, and to pursue policies contrary to Western interests” (Hunter, 1998: 169).
Hunter emphasizes that one of the more intractable barriers to good relations between Muslims and Western countries is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Supporting Hunter’s claims are public opinion polls showing that Arabs in the Middle East hold strongly favourable attitudes toward American science and technology, freedom and democracy, education, movies and television, and largely favourable attitudes toward the American people. They hold strongly negative attitudes only toward American Middle East policy (Zogby, cited in Brym and Araj, 2006).

One must also bear in mind that suicide attacks have been used in non-Islamic societies such as Japan and Sri Lanka and by non-Islamic (including Marxist) organizations in Muslim-majority countries. According to Pape (2005: 210), among the 83 percent of suicide attackers between 1980 and 2003 for whom data on ideological background is available, only 43 percent were religious.

Finally, I note that suicide attacks are by no means a constant in Islamic history. They have appeared episodically in the Muslim world since the 11th century. Cultural constants can hardly explain such variation over time; changing political circumstances can (Brym and Araj, 2006: 1972). As Ricolfi (2005: 112) notes, “religious beliefs do not mould individuals, forcing them to become martyrs; they are sets of ideas that ‘are there’, as on the shelves of a supermarket, waiting for someone to make them their own. The question we should ask ourselves, then, is under what conditions individuals involved in a political cause discover the symbolic resources that religion, or perhaps certain religions more than others has to offer.”

Despite these objections, I do not think that one can dismiss entirely the effects of culture on suicide bombing, if only because suicide attacks must be legitimized by societal leaders and become an accepted part of the cultural backdrop before they can be undertaken on a wide scale. Although one must be careful not to exaggerate their significance, such cultural resources increase the probability that some groups will engage in suicide attacks.
In sum, despite its popularity, I question the veracity of the broad religious explanation for the motivations of suicide bombers. A more qualified cultural explanation may have merit although it awaits solid evidence.

2.4 Rational Choice

There are two main versions of rational choice theory that attempt to explain suicide bombing – Pape’s strategic choice theory (2003, 2005) and Bloom’s (2005) outbidding thesis.

Pape (2005: 21-40), the leading rational choice theorist in the study of suicide bombing, argues that suicide terrorism is primarily an extreme national liberation strategy used against foreign occupiers with a democratic political system. Every group mounting a suicide campaign over the past two decades has had as a major objective coercing a foreign state that has military forces in what the terrorists see as their homeland to remove those forces. To support this argument, Pape cites leaders of several suicide bombing organizations such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. They stated plainly that their chief aim is to liberate their countries from what they regard as foreign occupation or control. To support his claim that suicide bombing is a rational strategy, Pape notes that suicide attacks occur in clusters as part of a campaign by organized groups to achieve a political goal. Pape found that suicide bombing has a roughly 50 percent success rate and he regards that as high, since, by comparison, international military and economic coercion achieves its goals less than a third of the time. In short, Pape claims that strategic rationality is evident in the timing, objectives and results of suicide bombings campaigns.

To test Pape’s ideas, Brym and Araj (2006) created a database pertaining to the use of insurgent and state violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza from October 2000 to July 2005. It included information on the motives of suicide bombers, the rationales of their organizations and the precipitants of suicide attacks. They found little evidence to support Pape’s contention that suicide attacks are timed to maximize the achievement of strategic or tactical goals; their analysis of precipitants lead them to conclude that most suicide bombings
were revenge or retaliatory attacks. They also found that only 13 percent of the 165 organizational rationales they identified included long-term strategic goals such as ending the Israeli occupation; most rationales (59 percent) involved reactions to specific Israeli actions. Moreover, contrary to Pape’s assertion, they found that the effect of suicide bombing was the opposite of what was intended by insurgents; suicide bombing drove Israeli public opinion to the right, helped hardliner Ariel Sharon win the February 2001 election, and encouraged Israel to reoccupy Palestinian population centres in the West Bank and Gaza. Finally, while Pape highlights the benefits an organization gains by engaging in suicide attacks, he ignores the substantial costs this tactic incurs. These costs include international condemnation, frozen bank accounts, mass arrests, and violent reprisals including the assassination of organizational leaders. Only by ignoring the cost side of the ledger can Pape claim that suicide bombing is necessarily advantageous to the perpetrators.

Bloom (2005: 84) criticized Pape’s theory for glossing over the domestic political and organizational dynamics underlying suicide attacks. She emphasized “outbidding” as a key dynamic in that regard. Specifically, she proposed that suicide attacks are a currency for outbidding rivals in the competition for popular support. From her perspective, terrorist groups use suicide bombing when other tactics fail and when they compete with other groups for popular and financial support.

While some analysts have endorsed Bloom’s outbidding thesis (Ricolfi, 2005; Hoffman; 2004), others have been more critical. Notably, Brym and Araj (2008) reanalyzed Palestinian public opinion poll data to test Bloom’s argument. After correcting transcription errors in her data, they found that the correlation between popular support for suicide bombing and the frequency of suicide bombings in the preceding month fails to reach statistical significance at the .05 level. Increased popular support for Fatah was not preceded by a statistically significant increase in the frequency of suicide bombings by Fatah. Nor was increased popular support for Hamas preceded by a statistically significant increase in the frequency of suicide bombings by Hamas. These findings undermine Bloom’s contention that organizational competition for popular support drives suicide attacks.
2.5 Conclusion

In sum, thirty years of research has found little evidence that suicide bombers suffer from psychopathology. Some scholars still debate whether deprivation or poverty incite suicide bombing, but most seem to agree that suicide bombers are not especially deprived. The evidence does not support purely cultural explanations. Rational choice theory represents an important advance but suffers from several weaknesses that I have outlined. On balance, we still do not have adequate answers to the question, “What are the causes and mechanisms of suicide bombings?”

The main approaches to suicide bombing that I have reviewed all suffer from a set of common problems:

- They tend to ignore the effect of the target state’s repressive actions on the insurgent organizations’ choice of tactics and the magnitude of their suicide attacks. Even analysts who note in passing that state repression may influence the motivations of suicide bombers do not regard state repression as among the most important

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2 Less common explanations include those based on the notion that (1) terrorist organizations recruit preferentially among close friends and family connections because of the clandestine nature of their activities and because some suicide bombers are influenced by strong network commitments (Pedahzur and Perliger, 2006: 1987); (2) some terrorist organizations recruit suicide bombers through a process of exploitation (Kimhi and Even, 2004: 825-26); and (3) female suicide bombers are more likely than male suicide bombers to be motivated by personal and feminist concerns (Victor, 2006; Schweitzer, 2008; Dolnik, 2004; Jacques and Taylor, 2008; for a critique of this view, see Speckhard, 2008).
explanatory variables and they have not shown how it operates in conjunction with other factors and at different levels of analysis (micro, meso and macro) (Hassan, 2001; Kimhi and Even, 2004; Figueirido and Weingast, 1998; Hafez, 2006; Margalit, 2003; Moghadam, 2003; Ricolfi: 2005; Saleh, 2009; Silke, 2003; Victor, 2006; Weinberg, Pedahzur, and Canetti-Nisim, 2003).

- Extant approaches to the study of suicide bombing tend to be monocausal, focusing on, say, religion or strategic calculation to the exclusion of other variables. Consequently, characterizations of individual suicide bombers and their organizations tend to be insufficiently nuanced; they fail to recognize the complex motivations that usually prompt suicide bombers to act and the hybrid rationales that inform insurgent organizations.

- The study of suicide bombing has been little informed by the broader field of social movements research, much to its detriment. For example, students of social movements have been investigating how state repression affects insurgents’ tactical and strategic choices for decades (Francisco, 1995; 2005; Khawaja, 1993; Mason and Krane, 1989; Lichbach, 1987; Moore, 1998; Schneider, 1995; Tilly, 2005; White, 1989; Zimmerman 1980). Yet the issue barely surfaces in the suicide bombing literature. Similarly, the structure/culture/agency debate, a central issue in the social movements literature, has gone unnoticed in the study of suicide bombers – this despite the fact paying attention to the relative weight of structure, culture and agency can do much to elucidate the process of strategic decision making in insurgent organizations.

3 An exception is Figueirido and Weingast’s unpublished paper (1998). They argue that Palestinian suicide bombings of the 1990s wave can be traced to Israeli provocations beginning with the Hebron Massacre by Baruch Goldstein in 1994, an Israeli settler who attacked and killed 29 Palestinians while they were praying in a mosque in Hebron, and continued with the targeted assassinations of Palestinian militant leaders such as Yahiyyeh Ayyash in 1996.
Research on suicide bombers based on primary data is rare (Kimhi and Even, 2004; Merari, 2007; Ricolfi, 2005) and no study has been based on a representative sample of Palestinian suicide bombers.

Before outlining, chapter by chapter, how my dissertation seeks to overcome these problems, I explain the methodology I employed in conducting my study.

3 Methodology

When Pape (2005: 58-60) concluded that repression had only a weak effect on Palestinian suicide bombing, he based his argument on data concerning the relationship between the magnitude of the target state’s violence and the frequency of suicide bombing between 2000 and 2003. However, the number of Palestinians killed between 2000 and 2003 is hardly an adequate measure of the effect of military occupation lasting 36 years (as of 2003). Any serious examination of such effects must include other types of harsh repression and must take into account the effects of repression used in earlier periods since “repression may have serious long-term” effects and “may be borne by the state for decades after its apparent end” (Zwerman and Steinhoff, 2005: 102). Moreover, to adequately assess the effects of repression, it is necessary to describe who was killed. According to the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (b’Tselem) (2007), about 800 Palestinian children were killed by Israeli forces during the second intifada and 900 during the first intifada (1987-93). This was a source of particular rage on the part of the Palestinian population. It is also necessary to examine how people were killed. According to b’Tselem, 210 people were assassinated while 339 others, including whole families, died as “collateral damage” during those operations – again, apparently a source of special rage.

To avoid measurement deficiencies such as those that are evident in Pape’s work, I have taken a longer, historical view. Following the suggestion of Tilly and Tarrow (2007: 36), I examine what activists said and wrote and what they did during major episodes of contention. Specifically, I conducted in-depth interviews of militant leaders and families of suicide bombers, and with the assistance of Robert Brym, created a database of collective violence events covering the period 2000-05. I supplemented this information with
newspaper accounts, public opinion polls and secondary sources. In concluding this chapter, I briefly outline my major primary data sources.

*The Brym and Araj database.* Brym and Araj collected data on 128 variables pertaining to the use of insurgent and state violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza from 26 October 2000 (the date of the second *intifada’s* first suicide bombing) to 12 July 2005 (the second *intifada’s* last suicide bombing). Data were collected from the online database of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) in Herzliya, Israel; the website of Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the East Coast evening edition of the *New York Times*; and two authoritative Arabic newspapers – *al-Quds*, published in Jerusalem, and *al-Quds al-Arabi*, published in London (for details, see Brym and Araj, 2006).

*Interviews with organizational leaders.* I interviewed 45 senior leaders of the most influential Palestinian organizations (about seven from each organization), four of which employed suicide bombing (Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Fatah, and PFLP) and two of which did not (DFLP, and PPP-the former Palestinian Communist Party). Of the former, two are religious and two secular. Interviews averaged about 90 minutes each and were conducted in the West Bank and Gaza in the spring and summer of 2006.

The leaders I interviewed do not constitute a representative sample of Palestinian political leaders. I selected them because they are key informants. They are part of the central leadership of their organizations – members of Political Bureaus and Central Committees, and representatives of their organizations in key external positions such as the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Palestinian government and the PLO Executive Committee. Their leadership positions make them especially familiar with the history, vision and decision-making process in their organizations. I interviewed about seven leaders from each organization to accommodate different camps within each organization, especially those favouring and opposing the use of suicide bombing and other violent tactics for achieving political goals. About half the leaders in my sample were selected before my trip to the Palestine, based on reviewing organizational documents, websites and Palestinian newspapers. The rest were nominated by their colleagues, in effect creating a snowball
sample. Finally, I must mention that because some of the leaders I interviewed were wanted by the Israeli authorities, some of the interviews were conducted in “underground” locations and some were conducted under armed guard.

*Interviews with close relatives and friends of suicide bombers.* I also conducted interviews with close relatives and friends of 43 suicide bombers, randomly selected from the pool of 173 Palestinian suicide bombers during the second intifada. Although my sample constitutes about one-fifth of the entire population of Palestinian suicide bombers between 1993 and 2005, it represents about one-quarter of all Palestinian suicide bombers during the period 2000-05. Almost all of the interviews took place in the homes of the suicide bombers, which gave me an opportunity to obtain much additional material, such as videotapes and last letters that suicide bombers left behind as well as hundreds of photographs. These supplementary materials help to assess the accuracy of some answers and provide a deeper understanding of the social, political, and economic background of the bombers. At least four close relatives and friends of each of the 43 cases were interviewed in two different sessions making the number of the people who participated in the interviews more than 170. This technique allowed me to obtain comprehensive and triangulated information about each case. All interviews were conducted in the West Bank and Gaza during the spring and summer of 2006 and they averaged about 90 minutes in duration.

Of the 88 interviews and interview sets (45 leaders and 43 sets of families and friends of suicide bombers), I conducted 68 in the West Bank. A trained and closely supervised assistant conducted 20 interviews and sets of interviews in Gaza. All interviews were digitally recorded. To ensure a high level of confidentiality, each interview was uploaded to a server at the University of Toronto immediately after completion and deleted from the digital recorder the same day. I developed two main questionnaires with Robert Brym (one for the organizational leaders and one for the families and friends of suicide bombers) and the instruments were pre-tested on three Palestinian leaders and four close relatives of suicide bombers.
A final strength of the methodology employed in this dissertation is its multilevel analysis. As Moghadam (2006) noted, suicide attacks are best understood when analysed at the individual, organizational and macro-sociological levels. That is partially because, as Hafez (2006) put it, “an explanation at one level of analysis is dependent on variables at another level of analysis” (cited in Araj, 2008: 289). Most of the existing approaches seem unable to explain suicide bombing at different levels of analysis consistently. For example, even if one were to agree that the psychological approach is relevant to understanding the motivations of individual bombers, that approach cannot be used to account for the motivations of organizations. A similar issue challenges rational-choice approaches – namely the “free rider” problem. That is, the benefits of a successful terrorist campaign would presumably be shared by all individual supporters of the group’s goals, regardless of the extent of their participation. In this case, why should a rational person become a suicide bomber given the high costs associated with violent resistance and the expectation that everyone who supports the cause will benefit, regardless of whether he or she participates? Only by undertaking a multilevel analysis can one overcome such theoretical problems.

4 Chapter Outline

I now outline the chapters of the dissertation to give the reader a foretaste of what I hope to accomplish.

Chapter 2: State Repression and Suicide Bombing at the Macro and Meso Levels

In Chapter 2, I first focus on the “big picture” – the macro level or societal context – by addressing the question of why Palestinian public opinion towards the use of suicide bombing changed in 2000 and how, if at all, the change influenced the frequency of suicide bombings. I analyze the political forces underlying the shift in public opinion and show how it increased the motivation of radical organizations to carry out suicide attacks, made it difficult for moderate leaders and organizations to condemn them, and turned individual bombers into heroes. I argue that the surge in suicide bombing occurred mainly because of harsh measures employed by the Israeli army: firing live ammunition at Palestinian demonstrators, killing and seriously injuring tens of people daily, and using Apache
helicopters, F-15 aircraft, and tanks to attack Palestinian population centres during the first months of the second intifada; and continuing repression thereafter.

Supporting my claim that state repression was the decisive factor leading to a surge in suicide bombing is not an easy task because plausible and alternative explanations derived from rational choice theory are available. According to some analysts, suicide bombing was initiated because it promised strategic dividends. Peace negotiations failed in Camp David in July 2000. Hezbollah attacks (including suicide bombings) had caused Israel to withdraw from Lebanon in May 2000. Thus, suicide bombing arguably made sense as a way of achieving aims not won at Camp David. Other analysts have argued that harsh state repression was a result, not a cause, of suicide bombing.

In Chapter 2 I also examine how Israeli state repression influenced Palestinian organizations’ decisions to use suicide bombing. Basing my analysis mainly on interviews with leaders of militant Palestinian organizations, I question the plausibility of alternative accounts and show how repressive acts shaped internal conflicts between “radicals” and “moderates” in each major organization and influenced insurgent organizations’ tactical choices.

Chapter 3: Influences on the Strategic Action of Fatah and Hamas

In Chapter 3, I examine why the two main Palestinian militant organizations, Fatah and Hamas, took a range of important strategic decisions during the second intifada. Specifically, I examine the bases for deciding whether to (1) engage in suicide bombing and rocket attacks against Israeli targets; (2) declare a long-term ceasefire with Israel, thus ending the suicide bombing campaign; (3) negotiate a peace deal with Israel; and (4) participate in Palestinian presidential and legislative elections.

Analyzing the circumstances underlying these decisions allows me to assess the validity of competing explanations of strategic action in the social movements literature. Structuralists, cultural determinists and, most recently, agentic theorists have each tried to establish the primacy of a different set of causes in explaining strategic decision making in social movements. Each has sought to minimize the significance of competing approaches. I take a
more empirical approach by adopting a methodology that allows me to weigh the causal
significance of each set of factors – a sort of historical/comparative version of multiple
regression analysis. I find that structural and cultural explanations have much to contribute
but that recent attempts to emphasize the role of agency are less successful when applied to
the Palestinian case. I argue for a multivariate approach to studying strategic decision making
in social movements research and criticize the rigidity of my predecessors for mono-causal
reasoning.

Chapter 4: Motivations at the Micro Level
Empirical research on individual suicide bombers is weak, partly because individuals turn
into research subjects only when they die (successful suicide bombers), get arrested (failed
suicide bombers), or became wanted by the authorities (potential suicide bombers). In each
of these cases, obtaining primary data about the motivations of the bombers is often
challenging and sometimes risky.

It is necessary nonetheless because the debate about the motivations of suicide bombers is far
from over, as we saw earlier. While 30 years of research has found little evidence that suicide
bombers suffer from psychopathology, scholars are still divided over the exact nature of the
relationship between economic factors, religion, strategic considerations, and other
independent variables, on the one hand, and suicide bombing, on the other. Moreover, while
scholars have identified many relevant independent variables, it is necessary to assign causal
weights to them on the basis of evidence. Doing so will enable us to arrive at a more
sophisticated understanding of the factors motivating individual suicide bombers than is
currently available. That is the chief aim of Chapter 4.

Chapter 5: Conclusion
Chapter 5 summarizes my findings, outlines the dissertation’s shortcoming, and recommends
paths for future investigators to follow.
Harsh State Repression as a Cause of Suicide Bombing: The Case of the Palestinian–Israeli Conflict

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Although students of social movements have established that state repression strongly affects protesters' choice of tactics, this finding has been ignored by most analysts of suicide bombing. Based on data collected from various sources, including 88 interviews the author conducted in 2006 with senior leaders of six Palestinian political organizations and close relatives and friends of Palestinian suicide bombers, this article argues that harsh state repression is a major cause of suicide bombing. It shows that understanding the effect of state repression is crucial to clarifying many of the unsolved puzzles concerning the rationales of organizations that employ suicide bombing, the motivations of individual suicide bombers, and the reasons why this tactic has become popular in some societies. The article concludes that there are three types of organizational rationales underlying the use of suicide bombing. Suicide bombing may be an extreme reaction to extreme state repression, a combined reactive and strategic action, or a purely strategic action. Different contexts and organizations typify these organizational rationales.

Introduction

On 11 November 1982, a car bomb crashed into Israeli military headquarters in Tyre, southern Lebanon, killing 75 Israeli soldiers and 15 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners. The attack, carried out by the Shi’ite organization Hezbollah a few months after the Israeli military invasion of Lebanon, was the first suicide attack by an Islamic organization against a foreign state in modern history. Since then, an increasing number of countries have experienced this extreme form of collective violence, either by becoming a target, a shelter for its perpetrators, or both.

Not surprisingly, suicide bombing has attracted the attention of many social scientists. Analysts tend to explain it as the result of the individual characteristics of suicide bombers.

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the cultural factors that predispose them to commit such violent acts,\textsuperscript{3} the presumably rational strategizing that leads them to conclude that suicide bombing often pays,\textsuperscript{4} and the competition or “outbidding” of organizations that employ the tactic for popular support.\textsuperscript{5} Most of these explanations are one-sided or “terrorist-centered.” They focus on the suicide bombers, their organizations, their culture, and so on, ignoring the effect of the target state’s repressive actions on the insurgent organizations’ choice of tactics and the magnitude of their suicide attacks. However, suicide bombing often appears in the context of political conflict between at least two parties (an insurgent organization versus a state). Therefore, any theory of suicide bombing that does not focus on the interaction between insurgents and the target state will be limited or misleading.

This article seeks to answer the following questions: Does Israeli repression during the second intifada or uprising (2000–05) significantly affect Palestinian suicide bombing? If so, then how? The article argues that understanding the effect of harsh state repression is crucial to clarifying many unsolved puzzles surrounding Palestinian suicide bombing. For example, the claim that suicide bombing is “a national liberation strategy” cannot fully explain why it is more popular among Palestinians in some periods than in others or why public support continues to be strong despite growing evidence that such tactic often work against strategic Palestinian goals. The same applies to the outbidding thesis, which fails to explain why Palestinian religious organizations employed suicide bombing in periods when the tactic was unpopular and why secular organizations waited more than a year during the second intifada before hopping aboard the suicide “bandwagon.” These and many other questions cannot be answered without recognizing the effects of hash repression on suicide bombing.

The article begins by briefly reviewing major suicide bombing theories, focusing especially on the recent and popular arguments of Robert Pape and Mia Bloom. Because the effect of harsh state repression on suicide bombing has received scant attention in the terrorism literature, the article then turns to the social movements literature to examine what scholars in that field have found regarding the effect of repression on insurgent tactics. After outlining how the data was collected, the article proceeds to examine the effect of harsh Israeli state repression on Palestinian suicide bombing at three connected levels of analysis: macro (insurgent community), meso (organizations), and micro (individual bombers).

### Suicide Bombing Theories

In a recent literature review, Brym and Araj identify four major groups of theories of suicide bombing.\textsuperscript{6}

1. **Theories of psychopathology** regard suicide bombers as irrational or unstable individuals with a death wish. However, research shows that theories of psychopathology are of no value in helping us understand the rising incidence of suicide bombing. In brief, the rate of psychopathology among suicide bombers does not seem to be higher than the corresponding rate in the general population, in part because psychologically abnormal people are weeded out for reasons of organizational security.\textsuperscript{7}

2. **Deprivation theories** regard suicide bombers as motivated by poverty or unemployment. Again, however, research shows that suicide bombers are generally better off—sometimes much better off—than the populations from which they are recruited in terms of income, education, and other resources.\textsuperscript{8} The data collected by the present author on a representative sample of Palestinian suicide bombers does not
support either the psychopathology or deprivation theories. It was found that among the 43 Palestinian suicide bombers studied, only one had suffered from any form of mental illness. It was also discovered that considerable class heterogeneity exists among suicide bombers; they did not tend to be especially poor or disproportionately unemployed.

3. Cultural theories, such as the “clash of civilizations” thesis, hold that Islamic culture promotes violent hatred of all things occidental. Yet public opinion polls show that Arabs in the Middle East hold favorable attitudes toward most aspects of American culture. They are negatively predisposed only toward American Middle East policy. They strongly disagree politically with the United States in some respects, but they are sympathetic to American culture in general. It is also significant that among the 83 percent of suicide attackers between 1980 and 2003 for whom data on ideological background is available, only 43 percent were religious. In short, while some cultural resources likely increase the probability that some groups will engage in suicide attacks, one must be careful not to exaggerate their significance.

4. In comparison with the preceding explanations of suicide bombing, Robert Pape’s recently proposed rational choice theory is a major step forward. Pape argues that suicide terrorism is “primarily an extreme national liberation strategy used against foreign occupiers with a democratic political system.” Arguably, therefore, suicide attacks tend to occur in clusters as part of a campaign by organized groups to achieve a political goal, and they are often successful. However, Brym and Araj’s analysis of the second intifada shows that strategic thinking is often overshadowed by the desire for revenge and retaliation in the planning of suicide attacks. Moreover, suicide bombing caused the Israeli state to reoccupy Palestinian population centers and build a wall that incorporates substantial West Bank territory within Israel: just the opposite of the result predicted by rational choice theory.

A second rational choice approach is Mia Bloom’s outbidding thesis, which proposes that suicide attacks are a currency for outbidding rivals in the competition for popular support. From this perspective, terrorist groups “use suicide bombing under two conditions: when other terrorist or military tactics fail and when they are in competition with other terrorist groups for popular/financial support.” However, subsequent research shows that public opinion data are inconsistent with the outbidding thesis. During the second intifada, suicide attacks by militant organizations were not followed by an increase in popular support for those organizations.

In sum, much of the suicide bombing literature either ignores the effect of harsh state repression or dismisses it. True, Pape notes in passing that “harsh occupation policies” can “drive up the level of suicide terrorism once it occurs.” But he also emphasizes that “there is no strong relationship between the level of harm suffered by the occupied community and the level of suicide terrorism.” To her credit, Bloom notes that harsh state repression may increase public support for suicide bombing. Yet by regarding public opinion as the decisive variable influencing the frequency of suicide attacks, she ignores the effect of repression on insurgent organizations. This is no small matter in an era when an increasing number of suicide attacks are highly unpopular among Muslims because they are directed at Muslims and Islamic governments.
The article now turns to what students of social movements’ have found regarding the effects of harsh state repression on insurgent tactics.

**The Social Movement Literature: The Repression/Protest Nexus**

Suicide bombing is arguably the most extreme form of protest insofar as it requires the death of the protester and aims to inflict maximum damage on the target state or government. Since students of social movements have been investigating the relationship between harsh state repression and protest for three decades, students of suicide bombing can learn much from this body of literature.

The social movement literature is full of claims and counter-claims about the relationship between protest and repression. Deprivation and relative deprivation theory, rational choice theory, the theory of collective action, and resource mobilization theory make different predictions about the effects of repression on political protest. The results of empirical research have been inconsistent as well. Some studies have found that repression decreases protest whereas others have found a positive effect of repression on protest. After reviewing the research, Davenport recently concluded that when confronted by harsh state repression, dissidents have been found to run away, fight harder, and alternatively run away or fight harder according to political–economic context. Zimmerman noted years ago that “there are theoretical arguments for all conceivable basic relationships between government coercion and group protest and rebellion, except for no relationship.”

Despite the contradictory theoretical predictions and empirical findings, most scholars in this area agree on several issues. One is of central importance to the subject of this article: harsh state repression affects protester’s choice of tactics. Moreover, most of the studies conducted in countries under foreign control or occupation (including three studies about the Palestinians) showed that massacres, excessive use of live ammunition against demonstrations, and so on have a strong radicalizing effect on insurgent tactics. In a study focusing on the cognitive processes that occur as people move from supporting peaceful to violent protest, White found that harsh state repression was the major determinant of IRA violence and that it introduced new grievances. Khawaja found positive relationships between most forms of state repression (including harsh forms such as dispersion by force and shooting) and collective action in his analysis of the West Bank between 1976 and 1985. Instead of deterring protest, Khawaja concludes, repression increased subsequent collective action and reinforced popular resistance. Francisco studied the interaction between Palestinian protest and Israeli state coercion during the first two years of the first intifada (1987–1989). His study also included two other cases with “high levels of coercion and a dissatisfied populace,” the former German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia. One of his findings was that the backlash hypothesis is supported weakly in the GDR and strongly in Palestine. Palestinians “continued to protest even under extremely harsh coercion.” In another study of ten instances of massacres by a state or foreign military occupation representing most of the best-known massacres in the twentieth century, Francisco found that extreme levels of state violence generally provoke a backlash of mobilization. He also maintains that dissidents do not perceive harsh state repression such as massacres as an indication of state strength and thus a deterrent, but as a sign of state weakness and therefore an opportunity. Francisco also noted that foreign military occupation by democratic countries does not necessarily imply democratic governance in colonies. Finally, in a study of the two Palestinian intifadas, Beitler showed how Israeli countermeasures in the West Bank and Gaza affected the Palestinian choice of tactics over
twenty years of occupation. She noted that during the first intifada, Israel’s repression of Palestinians’ relatively ineffective, nonviolent tactics lowered the overall level of conflict activity but increased the violent aspects. This phenomenon, according to Beitler, partly explains why the second intifada turned to higher levels of violence. It also supports Lichbach’s hypothesis: the repression of a group’s less violent tactics will increase the use of more violent tactics over time.\textsuperscript{25}

In sum, while the effect of harsh state repression on suicide bombing has received scant attention in the terrorism literature, most students of social movements agree that it affects protesters’ choice of tactic; and most students of social movements who study protest in countries under foreign control or occupation have found that harsh state repression typically has a strong positive effect on protest. This article bridges the gap between these two literatures by attempting to answer the following questions: (1) Does Israeli repression significantly affect Palestinian Suicide bombing? (2) If so, then how? As will be shown, answers to these questions help clarify why insurgents employ suicide bombing in the first place.

**Methodology**

The total number of Palestinians who were killed during the first 3 years of the second intifada is not an adequate measure of repression if one wants to study a 39-year military occupation (Pape).\textsuperscript{26} Any serious examination of such effects must include other types of harsh repression and must take into account the effects of repression used in earlier periods since “repression may have serious long-term” effects and “may be borne by the state for decades after its apparent end.”\textsuperscript{27} In addition, even if one examines the most recent period, it is necessary to describe who was killed. For example, according to the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (b’Tselem,) the source of Pape’s data regarding the Palestinian case, 803 children were killed by Israeli forces during the second intifada, and this fact seems to be a source of particular rage on the part of the Palestinian population. It is also necessary to examine how people were killed; b’Tselem’s website shows that 210 individuals were assassinated while 339 others died as “collateral damage” during these operations—again, apparently a source of special rage.\textsuperscript{28}

To avoid such measurement deficiencies, this article examines the effect of harsh state repression on Palestinian suicide bombers, their organizations, and their society by employing the historical approach, recommended by many students of state repression.\textsuperscript{29} But how can one “capture the complexity” of large episodes such as those that occurred during the second intifada? As Tilly and Tarrow note, one “can learn a lot from what activists say or later write about their activities” and one can also examine “what activists do during major episodes of contention” through newspaper records, archives, and online press releases.\textsuperscript{30} This article presents data about what activists say (from the author’s in-depth interviews) and what activists do (from a database of collective violence events that Robert Brym and the author created in 2005).\textsuperscript{31} The article also uses other external sources such as newspapers, archives, public opinion polls, and findings of previous studies (including four studies conducted about Palestinian suicide bombers and two other studies by Israeli researchers that examined the involvement of Palestinian organizations in suicide bombing). By comparing what activists say with what they do, the article will better be able to assess the validity of the author’s data.

The author completed 88 interviews averaging more than 90 minutes each in the spring and summer of 2006. They include 45 interviews with senior leaders of the most influential
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and active Palestinian political organizations (about seven from each organization), four of which (Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Fatah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) have actually employed suicide bombing. Of these four, the first two are religious and the last two are secular. Other insurgent organizations (the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the former communist party, the Palestinian People’s Party) did not use that tactic.

The author also conducted 43 interviews with close relatives and friends of suicide bombers, randomly selected from the pool of 173 Palestinian suicide bombers during the second intifada and representing about one-quarter of all Palestinian suicide bombers during the period 2000–05. Almost all of the interviews took place in the homes of the suicide bombers, which gave the author an opportunity to obtain much additional material, such as dozens of videotapes and last letters that suicide bombers left behind as well as more than 600 photographs. These supplementary materials help to assess the accuracy of some answers and provide a deeper understanding of the social, political, and economic background of the bombers. At least 4 close relatives and friends of each of the 43 cases were interviewed in 2 different sessions. This technique allowed the author to obtain comprehensive and triangulated information about each case.

The author conducted 68 interviews in the West Bank. A trained, experienced, and closely supervised assistant conducted 20 in Gaza. All interviews were digitally recorded. To ensure a high level of confidentiality; each interview was uploaded to a server at the University of Toronto immediately after completion and deleted from the digital recorder the same day. The author developed the questionnaires with Robert Brym and the instruments were pre-tested on three Palestinian leaders and on four close relatives of suicide bombers.

Three Levels of Analysis

The effect of harsh state repression on Palestinian suicide bombing can be best understood when analyzed on the macro, meso, and micro levels because “an explanation at one level of analysis is dependent on variables at another level of analysis.” The article turns first to the macro level.

The Macro Level: Insurgent Society

The second intifada, triggered by the visit of Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount or Haram al-Sharif on 28 September 2000, took Palestinian leaders by surprise. During the first weeks of the second intifada, Palestinian protest was mainly similar to that used during the first intifada, involving demonstrations, marches, stone-throwing, and so on. During the first few months of the second intifada there were no successful suicide attacks and only four failed attacks against military targets that did not lead to any Israeli deaths. The “first ‘real’ suicide attack did not occur until 4 March 2001, when a bus in Netanya inside Israel was attacked (three people were killed and fifty wounded).” Despite that, the Israeli army fired on Palestinian demonstrators with live ammunition, killing and seriously injuring tens of people daily. According to Palestinian medical estimates, “approximately 48 percent of Palestinians killed were shot in the head or neck.” This was interpreted by many Palestinians as indicating that “Israeli soldiers were shooting to kill.” Moreover, the Israelis started using Apache helicopters, F-15 aircraft, and tanks to attack Palestinian population centers. Finally, on 9 November 2000, Israel started its assassination campaign. In the words one of analyst: “As the Israelis themselves admit . . . the first months of the
intifada were characterized by the harshness of the Israeli retaliation and by the weakness of the Palestinian response. While in the entire al-Aqṣa intifada the ratio of Palestinian victims to Israelis was around three to one, in the first three months (up to December 2000) the ratio was ten to one."

Israel employed such a harsh policy from the very beginning for three reasons. First, from the Israeli perspective, the Palestinians started the intifada two months after the failure of a serious attempt to find a solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. At Camp David, the Israeli government was willing to make the biggest concessions ever, so the intifada presumably showed “bad faith on the part of the Palestinians and determination to gain advantage through violence.” Therefore, “a commensurate response was necessary to defend Israel.”

Second, the leaders of the Israeli army who were not happy with the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon on 22 May 2000 wanted to show that the army was not weak and was still able to deter enemies. Third, the first months of the intifada were election months in Israel, and election battles in Israel “are periods of security escalation.” Prime Minister Barak wanted to show the Israeli public that his policies toward the Palestinians were no softer than those of his rival, Sharon.

Harsh Israeli repression during the first three months of the second intifada had a significant impact on Palestinian public support for suicide bombing. As Figure 1 shows, in March 1999, the last poll taken by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center before the uprising began, 26.1 percent of Palestinians supported suicide bombing against Israel. By December 2000, three months after the outbreak of the intifada, the figure jumped to 66 percent.

Pape and others might argue that the significant change in Palestinian public opinion in the fall of 2000 was due to two strategic factors: the failure of peace negotiations in Camp David in July 2000 and the successful example of Hizballah attacks, which caused Israel to withdraw from Lebanon in May of that year. Although these two factors are relevant, they cannot on their own explain the significant change in Palestinian public support in such a short period.

First, Hizballah’s main tactic in the mid to late 1990s was not suicide bombing. It was the guerrilla attack. Moreover, Hizballah’s guerrilla attacks did not target Israeli civilians. They targeted only Israeli military forces. Second, although it is reasonable to assume that the failure of the peace process and the success of the Hizballah resistance sent the signal that resistance can be more effective than negotiations, resistance for Palestinians did not necessarily mean suicide bombing. Non-suicide guerrilla attacks had been the favored tactic for many years, and relatively nonviolent tactics such as those used during the first intifada (1987–93) had led to the peace process and Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian areas in 1994. The quick rise in Palestinian support for suicide bombing is thus a mystery from the point of view of rational choice theory.

Palestinian support for suicide bombing surged in 2000 mainly because of the severity of Israeli repression, which had an enormous impact on many average Palestinians. Simply put, angry Palestinian urged insurgents to attack Israeli civilians in the third month of the intifada mainly because most of the casualties of Israeli repression were Palestinian civilians. In the following years, Israeli harsh polices continued and intensified, especially after Sharon took office in March 2001, and after the attacks of 11 September 2001, when the White House gave Sharon carte blanche. Harsh state repression was a major factor behind the significant increase in Palestinian public support for suicide bombing in the first few months of the intifada, and ongoing repression under Sharon’s government (2001–05) played a major role in keeping support high (never below 50 percent). It was also one factor, among others, behind Hamas’s sweeping victory in the Palestinian elections in...
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January 2006. It became abundantly clear to the Palestinians that suicide bombing had a radicalizing effect on Israeli public opinion, but support for suicide bombing nonetheless continued. This shows that the central mechanism suggested by Pape (terrorists target the civilians of a democratic state to mobilize them to put pressure on their government to withdraw its forces) is working—but in the opposite direction, meaning that suicide bombing could be seen by its supporters and has been used by its perpetrator not only as a way of pushing the other society but also punishing it.

Public support increased the motivations of radical organizations to carry out suicide attacks, made it difficult for moderate leaders and organizations to strongly condemn such tactic, turned bombers into heroes, and thus encouraged more people to volunteer for suicide missions. However, the effect of harsh state repression on the organizational and individual levels was not only indirect (through its effect on the larger public). As the next sections demonstrate, it has direct effects too.

The Meso Level: Insurgent Organizations

The effect of harsh state repression at the meso level can be observed in Palestinian insurgent organizations’ choice of tactics and the internal conflict between “radicals” and “moderates” within each organization. Each of these two issues will be discussed in turn.

**Choice of Tactics.** Leaders were asked about the factors that affect their organization’s choice of tactics. Thirty of the 36 respondents who answered the question said that the most important factor was Israeli repressive policies and actions against the Palestinians. The six other leaders perceived Israeli repression as the second, third, or fourth most important factor.

The strong perceived effect of harsh state repression does not mean that all organizations reacted to it in the same way. In particular, one may distinguish the reactions of religious organizations from those of secular organizations.

**Religious Organizations.** Palestinian suicide bombings have occurred in two main waves: 1993–97 and 2000–2005. Suicide bombings during first wave were carried out only by religious organizations: Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. All fifteen religious leaders (seven from Hamas and eight from Palestinian Islamic Jihad) in the present sample responded to the question, “Why did your organization adopt suicide bombing for the first time in 1993?” Their replies fell into one of three categories:

1. Seven leaders said that the main reason their organization first engaged in suicide bombing was because of the harsh way in which Israeli authorities dealt with the first intifada.
2. Six leaders listed strategic factors as first in order of importance. For example, it became clear to some leaders that other violent methods were neither possible nor effective. Others said that their organizations adopted suicide bombing because the method proved successful in Lebanon during the 1980s and early 1990s. Palestinian Islamic Jihad leaders tended to emphasize strategic reasons more than Hamas leaders did.
3. The two remaining leaders mentioned specific opportunities and threats as the most important factor that led their organizations to adopt suicide bombing as a tactic. Such opportunities and threats included the deportation of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad activists to Lebanon in 1992, which allowed them to learn suicide bombing techniques in Hizballah training camps; and the fear that the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority would succeed and thus undermine “Palestinians’ historic rights.”

In short, out of the 15 leaders from Hamas and Islamic Jihad, 7 maintained that harsh state repression was the main factor behind the adoption of suicide bombing, 6 held that strategic factors were most important, and 2 mentioned specific opportunities and threats as the most important factor.

Other questions were asked about organizational rationales for suicide bombing to examine the consistency of replies. For example, at the end of the interview, respondents were asked about whether their organizations perceive suicide bombing as a strategy or a tactic, and about its specific and main aims (to “liberate Palestine” or the West Bank and Gaza Strip, stop Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians and/or the respondent’s organization, and so on). Answers to these questions revealed not only significant differences between religious and secular organizations, but also that both logics (reactive and strategic) co-existed within each religious organization and that suicide bombing is more strategic for Palestinian Islamic Jihad than Hamas. Thus, among the six leaders from Hamas who answered this question, only one leader chose the “strategic” option, one said that it is both strategic and reactive, and three leaders chose the “reactive” option alone. In contrast, five of the eight Palestinian Islamic Jihad leaders viewed suicide bombing as a strategic means to “liberate Palestine or the West Bank and Gaza Strip.” The remaining three Palestinian Islamic Jihad leaders viewed suicide bombing as a tactic that aims mainly
to stop Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians and their organization. Consider the following responses of two of the most influential leaders of Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the West Bank and Gaza:

Through military and martyrdom operations, we jeopardize the security theory which is vital to the Zionist entity; we make them [Israelis] feel unsafe on our land and that they have to leave; also we send a clear message to the Jews who are thinking about immigrating to the Zionist entity: you will never feel safe on the land of Palestine. (Abdullah al-Shami)45

Martyrdom operations for the Islamic Jihad Movement are not a constant policy but came in response to the crimes and massacres committed by Israel against Palestinian civilians and leaders. We expressed our readiness more than once to cease our martyrdom operations against Israeli civilians if the Israelis stop targeting our civilians in return; for example in 2004 we accepted a truce that was suggested by Abu Mazen [then Palestinian Prime Minister]. We also requested that civilians be excluded on both sides. We also accepted the truce in 2005 that was discussed in Cairo on one condition; that it would be mutual. However, Israel carried on its operations and assassinations such as the assassination of Lo’ai al-Sa’di [an Islamic Jihad leader in the West Bank] in Jenin. (Khaled al-Batsh)

Thus, even in the Palestinian organization with the strongest strategic logic underlying the use of suicide bombing, one leader (al-Shami) sees suicide bombing as a strategy that may lead, in one way or another, to the liberation of “historical Palestine” whereas for the other leader (al-Batsh) it is a reaction to harsh state repression. Al-Batsh’s answer is similar to those of Hamas leaders, who tend to perceive suicide bombing as reaction, not a strategy and who also maintained that their organization declared many times its readiness to stop suicide attacks if the Israelis stop targeting Palestinian civilians.46

Secular Organizations. None of the sixteen leaders from the two secular organizations that used suicide bombing (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Fatah) perceived it as “a strategy to liberate Palestine or the West Bank and Gaza Strip.” All seven leaders from the Popular Front and eight of the nine Fatah leaders said that their organizations used suicide bombing only as a reaction to Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians and/or against their organization. In the words of Abu Husam, a senior leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine: “The Popular Front did not believe in this method: this method is still not part of our ideology, this is an immediate reaction to what we were subjected to, and came as a response to being directly targeted by the Israelis.” Eight of the nine Fatah leaders in my sample and two of the leaders of the Popular Front said that they strongly oppose suicide bombing. Even the leaders who supported suicide bombing (four of the respondents from the Popular Front) said that their organization would stop suicide bombing if Israel stops its attacks against Palestinian civilians and their organization. Are these leaders telling the truth?

The best way to answer this question is by examining what actually happened. According to Brym and Araj’s database of collective violence events, 82 percent of the 106 precipitants of suicide bombing they identified during the second intifada (the specific preceding events that affected the timing of the suicide bombings conducted by Palestinian organizations) were reactive. They were preceded by specific Israeli actions that elicited Palestinian reactions in the form of suicide attacks.47 Thirty-four precipitants involved the assassination of organizational leaders and members, and 30 involved the killing of
Table 1
Suicide bombers by organization (in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian Islamic Jihad</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Palestinians other than organizational members. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, for example, never used suicide bombing before the assassination of its first leader. In October 2001, two months after the assassination of its Secretary-General, the Popular Front conducted its first suicide bombing and assassinated an Israeli cabinet minister. The latter action made most Popular Front leaders and activists wanted men as far as the Israeli army was concerned. That, in turn, encouraged them to become more involved in the violence of the second intifada. In total, the Popular Front conducted fewer than ten attacks. Most of them took place soon after an Israeli assassination of a leader or activist from the organization and were justified as such by the organization.

The same applies to Fatah, the leading secular Palestinian organization, which was responsible for almost 32 percent of all Palestinian suicide bombers during the second intifada (see Table 1). Fatah as a whole did not plan to resort to suicide bombing. Instead, the tactic was undertaken “from below” by Fatah’s local leaders as a reaction to Israel’s harsh actions against Palestinian civilians and the assassinations of some of Fatah’s activists, especially the January 2002 assassination of Fatah leader Raed Karmi. According to University of Tel Aviv political scientist Amal Jamal, one of the primary factors behind Fatah’s involvement in suicide bombing was that “Israel did not respect the red lines of not harming the civilian population and not targeting political leaders.”48 Another Israeli researcher concluded that Fatah activists “did not employ terrorism” from the outset of the intifada, instead they limited their actions to “a combination of mobilizing the population to a popular struggle through initiating massive demonstrations and confrontations, mainly employing cold weapons such as stones and Molotov Cocktails.” It was “the interactive violence between Israel and Tanzim activists that pushed the Tanzim along the slippery slope toward terrorism.”49 My interviews with Fatah leaders support Jamal and Alimi’s conclusions. Eight of the nine Fatah leaders maintained that Fatah’s decision to use suicide bombing at the beginning of 2002 was not developed by the central leadership of Fatah but by Fatah’s “field and local leaders and activists” as a reaction to Israeli army violence. Moreover, they said that suicide bombing does not represent official Fatah policy. This issue is explained in depth in the following discussion.

Internal Conflict. The effect of harsh state repression on organizational structure can be observed by analyzing conflicts between different camps in the relatively moderate Palestinian organizations: Fatah, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Palestinian People’s Party.

Fatah. If suicide bombing were adopted by an organization mainly to achieve strategic goals (e.g., the liberation of what insurgents believe is their homeland) or to increase the popularity and the prestige of their organization, one would expect that the central leadership of that organization would be the body to initiate and support the decision. That is because
the central leadership of an organization is usually more strategically inclined than the rank and file, and it is the first to benefit from an increase in organizational popularity and prestige. However, that does not apply to suicide bombing undertaken by Fatah. The vast majority of Fatah’s suicide bombings were conducted by Fatah’s military wing, the Tanzim or al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, a group of relatively young activists that emerged in the occupied territories. The bombings were condemned, often strongly and publicly, by the older, central leadership of Fatah, which emerged when they were exiled in Tunisia. Although much debate still exists about Fatah’s first leader, Arafat, regarding his stance on suicide bombing (discussed later), there is no doubt that most of Fatah’s central leadership and Central Committee members opposed the tactic:

The decision to use martyrdom operations was spontaneous. . . . Abu Mazen [the leader of the moderate camp in Fatah and the current Palestinian president] and I as well as many of Fatah’s leaders were opposed to martyrdom operations from the beginning. Our views have been declared and we were in favor of the non-militarization of the intifada and the avoidance of using of such means, as this would result in a lot of damage to our cause. The world is not ready to study the motivations behind martyrdom operations, the world will only see that such operations took place at restaurants and buses. (Nabil Amr)

These words by one of Fatah’s well-known leaders, a former cabinet minister and at present a senior advisor to the Palestinian president, represent the position that typifies the great majority of Fatah’s central leaders toward the organization’s suicide bombings.

Why were the Tanzim “more sensitive” to Israeli repression than the central leadership? First, Israeli repression did not target Fatah’s central leadership. Repression was directed mainly against the younger camp from the first months of the second intifada, when Israel assassinated some of its leading members. Almost all of Fatah’s members who were assassinated by Israel were from this camp: 69 activists until July 2005, including 25 who were targeted before Fatah’s adoption of suicide bombing. In contrast, 18 percent of Hamas activists who were assassinated during the same period were high-ranking leaders. The thousands of detainees and wanted and injured persons were also mainly from the younger camp. The second reason why the Tanzim were more sensitive to Israeli repression was that Fatah’s local activists did not read about Israeli repression against the Palestinian public from the news, as did most of the central leadership. They experienced it firsthand and on a daily basis in their refugee camps, villages, and cities and through their interactions with their family members, neighbors, and friends. In short, young Fatah activists were exposed to Israeli repression more than older, moderate Fatah leaders. Therefore, the reaction to that repression in the form of suicide bombing was also developed “on the ground,” as it were.

Arafat’s position regarding the use of violence during the second intifada was somewhere between Fatah’s moderate and radical camps, and depended on political circumstances. As noted earlier, many researchers who have studied the second intifada have concluded that it did not start by a decision from Arafat or any other Palestinian leader. However, it seems that after Camp David, Arafat was looking for an opportunity (e.g., limited violence) to promote better conditions for future negotiations with Israel and put pressure on the Barak government. These political circumstances and the severity of the Israeli actions against the Palestinian public may have motivated Arafat to give a “green light” to Fatah activists to attack Israeli soldiers and settlers during the intifada’s first year. Thus, Israeli accusations regarding Arafat’s involvement in violent activities against the Israelis could have been accurate during this period.
However, political circumstances after the 11 September 2001 attacks made it difficult for Arafat to support military operations, especially suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. All Fatah’s suicide bombing was conducted after 11 September 11 2001; therefore, it is unlikely that Arafat supported the suicide bombing carried out by Fatah’s local activists. This conclusion is supported by the author’s interviews with people who were close to Arafat in that period: by Arafat’s repeated condemnation of Fatah-sponsored suicide bombings publicly; and by his eagerness to meet with Shimon Peres two weeks after 11 September. That meeting led to the declaration of a cease-fire. It lasted until the January 2002 assassination of Fatah local leader Raed Karmi, which triggered Fatah’s first suicide bombing. Even after that, on 11 February 2002, Arafat decided to dismantle the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. However, the group issued a statement challenging Arafat’s decision. In the end, Arafat’s inability to control his own organization and the suicide bombings it conducted was the major justification used by Sharon to declare Arafat as “irrelevant” and a “terrorist,” and to keep him hostage in his compound until his death on 11 November 2004. In short, Arafat’s position toward Fatah’s suicide bombing seems to be similar to the position of the central leadership of Fatah.

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Palestinian People’s Party. These secular organizations did not use suicide bombing, but they witnessed internal disputes similar to those that took place in Fatah, albeit to a lesser degree and with a different outcome. All seven Palestinian People’s Party leaders and six of seven Democratic Front leaders described how Israeli repression during the second intifada increased internal pressure on the leaderships of these organizations to adopt extreme forms of harsh protest, including suicide bombing. Many of those leaders said that radical voices varied over time and place. When and where harsh state repression was intense and deadly (e.g., almost always in the Gaza and the Nablus areas, and almost everywhere in 2002), such voices became louder and their influence became more pronounced. Even so, opposition to suicide bombing in the Palestinian People’s Party and the Democratic Front was much stronger than support. As a result, some members of these organizations resigned and joined other, more radical organizations. The author was provided with a list of names of such activists and discovered that some of them were involved in suicide bombing operations. Although the central leaderships of these two organizations opposed suicide bombing against Israeli civilians, they did not condemn such attacks in public statements. When asked about the reasons behind this weak opposition, many leaders, such as the Secretary-General of the Palestinian People’s Party, Bussam al-Salhee, referred to Israel’s harsh actions against Palestinian civilians:

I admit that there was a lack of courage in expressing our positions appropriately and strongly. . . . The scale of Israeli crimes was massive, which didn’t leave any space to condemn such operations. Not only was it hard, but embarrassing, for any Palestinian faction to condemn the killing of Israeli civilians while Palestinian civilians were murdered on a daily basis.

In conclusion, analysis shows that harsh occupation policies not only “drive up the level of suicide terrorism once it occurs,” as Pape argues, but is also a major factor behind the organizational decision to adopt the tactic in the first place. Suicide bombing is an extreme reaction by secular organizations to extreme and increasing repression by the target state, whereas for religious organization it is both a reaction and a strategy. The two logics, the strategic and the retaliatory are not always consistent, hence the many “complaints” the author heard from Palestinian leaders about absence of a “unified policy.” But it is
clear that Palestinian organizations are much more sensitive to the external enemy than to the domestic competition; as shown, the Islamic organizations used suicide bombing even when Palestinian public support was very low (the 1990s wave), while secular organizations such as Fatah waited more than 16 months during the second intifada before engaging in suicide bombing—despite the presence of all of the major factors identified by Bloom’s theory from the first months of the intifada (strong public support and organizational competition). Moreover, Fatah and the Popular Front did not need to engage in suicide bombing against Israeli civilians to increase their popularity because public support for old tactics was higher; Palestinian public support for suicide bombing against Israeli civilians was around 60 percent and support for guerrilla attacks against soldiers and settlers was more than 90 percent.52

**The Micro Level**

Unlike the organizational level, the strong effect of Israeli repression on the motivations of individual Palestinian suicide bombers has been acknowledged, in one way or another, by previous researchers.53 In the words of Avishai Margalit: “Having talked to many Israelis and Palestinians who know something about the bombers, and having read and watched many of the bombers’ statements, my distinct impression is that the main motive of many of the suicide bombers is revenge for acts committed by Israelis, a revenge that will be known and celebrated in the Islamic world.”54 The present author’s findings regarding the motivations of the 43 suicide bombers studied in the summer of 2006 led to a similar conclusion. Moreover, little support was found for the notion that the individual bombers were “manipulated” by their organizations, as is sometimes said.

In the last part of the interviews with the relatives of the bombers, and after many questions about the background of the bomber and his or her family, the author asked respondents a general question about the motivation of the bomber to carry out the suicide attack. Respondents were also asked to rank each of the factors they mentioned in order of importance and to support their answers by quoting or paraphrasing the bomber. After the interviews the author compared their answers with each other and with the materials that the bomber left behind (videotapes, last will and testaments made before their operations, etc.). The author was able to rank the first and second motivations of 40 cases with a high level of confidence. In 39 cases, taking revenge because of Israeli action against the bomber, somebody she or he knew, or against the Palestinians in general, was either the first or the second factor (the first factor for 28 cases and the second factor for eleven).55 The following words from the suicide note of Jamal Nasser, a 22 year old from Nablus, who blew himself up on 29 April 2001, are typical:

Who does not feel outrage and is not eager for revenge when participating in funerals for fallen martyrs, especially collective funerals in Nablus . . . and when watching the mourning mothers and wives and children of martyrs on television? . . . And who does not empathize with people whose homes were demolished, and stores destroyed? . . . And who does not feel anger when children are murdered and trees ripped up, and cities shelled, who . . . who . . . who? I marched in their funerals, chanted with the angry crowds, deeply eager for revenge but didn’t know how.
Most of the bombers approached the organizations rather than being approached by them. Families of bombers often have many details about the events surrounding recruitment. They typically enjoyed strong personal ties with the bomber, and after the attack they were highly motivated to collect information from different sources, including the cell that helped the bomber carry out his or her attack. These circumstances explain the high response rate to the question of “whether the bomber took the initiative and was looking for an organization to recruit him/her for a suicide mission or was approached and encouraged by the organization.” In 32 of 43 cases the author was told that the bomber “took the initiative.” In three cases “he was approached and convinced by the organization,” and in eight cases the respondent did not know. This striking finding is supported by other findings. For example, among the 32 cases were 14 cases of bombers who joined the organization that took responsibility for the attack mainly because that organization was “ready” to provide him or her with the required means and information to carry out a suicide attack. These 14 individuals were either “independents” (that is, they never belonged to any militant organization) or members of organizations that did not use suicide bombing or were not prepared to provide the bomber with the needed means at the time he or she was ready to carry a suicide attack. For instance, Hamas member Inad Shokairat blew himself up on 22 March 2002, in an operation organized by the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade after being told by Hamas activists that there is a “long waiting list.” Similarly, Rami Ghanim was active in the Marxist Popular Front but conducted his suicide attack on 30 March 2003, under the auspices of Islamic Jihad.

In at least two cases, the organization tried to convince volunteers that they “should not” or “must not” go on a suicide mission. Consider the following case. According to b’Tselem, on 3 January 2004, the Israeli army killed a Palestinian child named Amjad Bilal Nabil al-Masri, a 15-year-old resident of Nablus, during an incursion into the city to arrest wanted persons. Amjad was the younger brother of 17-year-old suicide bomber Iyad al-Masri. Iyad was with his younger brother when he was shot. The author interviewed Iyad’s father and the following is part of what he had to say:

The next morning, during Amjad’s funeral, Iyad’s first cousin Muhammad (14 years old) was also killed by an Israeli sniper who was located on the Jersim Mountain near the cemetery. Iyad was very sad and angry and wanted to take revenge. . . . His Mother noticed and told me . . . [so] I sealed the window of his room and asked him to stay home. Iyad sneaked out of the house while everybody was busy accepting condolences . . . and left the house looking for al-Buhtee [a local leader of Iyad’s organization, Palestinian Islamic Jihad]. . . . Our neighbor (.), who was with Iyad, told me a month later that Iyad requested an explosive belt from al-Buhtee but the latter denied his request, telling him that he ‘should not do that’ since the family has just lost one of its members. . . . Iyad turned to Naief Abu-Sharekh [a local leader of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade]. The latter also refused his request. Iyad was stubborn and kept insisting. . . . He also threatened Abu-Sharekh that he would attack an Israeli military checkpoint using a knife.

In the end, Fatah’s local leader provided Iyad with an explosive belt, which he used to blow himself up on 12 January 2004, nine days after the death of his brother and his first cousin.

Some of the aforementioned findings may explain why Hamas leader Abdul Aziz al-Rantisi was able to claim on Al-Jazeera TV in 2002 that people are knocking on Hamas
leaders’ doors asking for suicide belts and that the number of volunteers is much higher than the organization’s ability to produce suicide belts. That does not mean the role of the organization in suicide bombing is minor. It is crucial. But it is also different from what many people think. Merari, the first scholar to study Lebanese and Palestinians suicide bombers, correctly noted that “no organization can create a person’s basic readiness to die. The task of recruiters is not to produce but rather to identify this predisposition in candidates and reinforce it.”57

In short, most of the Palestinian bombers of the second intifada were not brainwashed by leaders of their organizations, or by some sheikh sitting in a corner of a mosque. Rather, they were brainwashed on a daily basis by a more powerful machine: harsh state repression.

Conclusion

Scholars who study suicide bombing often argue that this weapon is used in the advanced stage of a conflict and that “it often appears as a weapon of last resort.”58 However, this generalization seems also to apply to harsh state repression by an occupying force: when an occupying state feels that it is losing all legitimacy in the eyes of the people it governs, as has been the case with Israel since the beginning of the first intifada in 1987 (five years before the appearance of Palestinian suicide bombing), and when it feels that it might lose the territories it occupies, it becomes very aggressive, more prepared to cross previous red lines and less careful in dealing with the insurgents and the occupied community. This aggressiveness is also more likely to become more severe when the territories under dispute are of extreme significance to the foreign power, and when the occupiers and the occupied community belong to different cultures or religions. Thus, harsh state repression in conflicts where suicide bombing has been used should not be perceived only as a reaction to suicide bombing; it often precedes and is a major cause of suicide attacks. Also, the fact that insurgents or occupied communities usually have strategic goals should not lead one to assume that the appearance of extreme tactics such as suicide bombing in an advanced stage of a conflict necessarily means that insurgents have adopted a new national liberation strategy. This is only one of three possibilities. The other two are (1) suicide bombing is an extreme reaction by insurgents to extreme and increasing repression by the target state (a way to deter the state from continuing its severe actions or what many Palestinian leaders call the achievement of a “a balance of horror” rather than “a balance of power”) and (2) suicide bombing is sometimes combined with strategic considerations. As shown herein, combined motivational logics and mixed rationales appear in the same conflict and within the same insurgent organization. Therefore, putting most suicide bombing around the world in a single basket labeled “strategic” oversimplifies a complex reality and, incidentally, makes victory in the “war on terror” seem almost impossible.

In the Palestinian case, suicide bombing is an extreme reaction by secular organizations to extreme and increasing repression by the target state, whereas for the religious organizations it is both a reaction and a strategy. Deterring the target state from using certain types of harsh repression such as assassinations and the killing of civilians is an end in itself, at least, for some organizations, and is one goal for others. In their decision whether to adopt suicide bombing or not, and increase or decrease the frequency of its use, Palestinian organizations are more sensitive to the actions of the external enemy than to the domestic competition. Harsh state repression does not only provide insurgent organizations with “religious and moral legitimacy.” It also provides them with popular legitimacy; during the 1990s, when Israel repression was relatively moderate, Palestinian
public support for suicide bombing was also low. However, while harsh state repression under Barak’s government was a major factor behind the significant increase in Palestinian public support for suicide bombing in the first few months of the second intifada, repression under Sharon’s government played a major role in keeping support high. Strategic goals, which varied little over time, cannot on their own explain why Palestinian society changed its position from opposing the killing of civilians of another society to supporting or even demanding such acts in a period of a few months. The effect of harsh repression at the micro level is even stronger and much harder to ignore. As this article has shown, taking revenge because of Israeli action against the bomber, somebody she or he knew, or against the Palestinians in general was the main motivation for the majority of the bombers in the second intifada. In addition, public support turned individual bombers into heroes and thus encouraged more volunteers. Without individuals, organizations cannot conduct their suicide attacks, and without enough volunteers suicide “campaigns” are not possible.

The findings stress the need to examine whether state violence has similar effects on insurgents who employ suicide bombings in other conflicts. The indicators of such effects are enough to stimulate the curiosity of researchers trying to make sense of suicide bombing. Consider only the effects of the severe 1983 attacks on Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka, the destruction of Kurdish villages by the Turkish state, the total Russian air bombing of population centers in Chechnya, and the atrocities of the Ministry of Interior and security services in Iraq.

This article also raises questions that are crucial for developing more general explanations of suicide bombing. For example, while harsh state repression may be a factor underlying the adoption of suicide bombing in some conflicts, many more conflicts have witnessed harsh repression without giving rise to suicide bombing. Clearly, there is a need to know the conditions under which harsh state repression has different effects. Most scholars who study suicide bombing seem to agree that suicide bombing is often a weapon of the weaker party in a conflict, and it is perceived by its perpetrators as more effective than alternatives. In addition, it may be that suicide bombing tends to be used by especially highly integrated or solidary groups. As Émile Durkheim noted, members of such groups are especially prone to committing “altruistic suicide,” or taking their lives in the service of collective goals. Comparative analysis can determine whether level of solidarity and other factors account for the different effects of harsh state repression.

Finally, the policy implications of the aforementioned findings are straightforward. It is difficult for the target state to make strategic concessions but it is much easier to make tactical changes in the way it deals with insurgency. Avoiding targeting civilians should be on the top of the list. Also, arresting organizational leaders would be much more affective than assassinating them. Such changes in Israeli policy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip may lead to the pullout of organizations such as Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine from the world of suicide bombing, make the leaders who support suicide bombing a minority in Hamas, and isolate the leaders who advocate suicide bombing in Palestinian Islamic Jihad. It might also lead to a significant reduction in the number of suicide bombing volunteers and the return of Palestinian public support for suicide bombing to more moderate levels. This seems the most effective way to protect the lives of innocent Israeli civilians. It seems that the target state is able to stop suicide bombing, but the continuation of harsh repression plays a major role in motivating insurgents to create ways to adjust to the new reality. Fourteen years of Palestinian suicide bombing support this argument.
Notes


8. Walter Laqueur, No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century (New York: Continuum, 2003); Pape, Dying to Win.


12. Ibid., p. 58.


42. Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, p. 27.


44. Although Hezbollah’s effect on the second wave of Palestinian suicide bombing (2000s) was limited its effect on the first wave (1990s) was strong and even direct.

45. All the interviews were translated by the author.

46. Hamas leaders referred to an interview with Hamas first leader Ahmed Yassin with the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* published 25 November 2000. They also referred to similar positions expressed by Hamas representatives in the Palestinian internal dialogue in Cairo, February–March 2006.


55. For those eleven cases, the first factor was “love for jihad and martyrdom” and “to fulfill one’s duty to liberate the homeland,” whereas one case seemed to be motivated by a personal crisis.
58. Pape, Dying to Win, p. 30; Bloom, Dying to Kill, p. 192.
Opportunity, Culture and Agency

Influences on Fatah and Hamas Strategic Action during the Second Intifada

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abstract: Students of social movements dispute the causal weight they should accord political opportunities, political enculturation and human agency in influencing strategic action. They have made little progress advancing the debate on empirical grounds. The authors of this article reviewed English and Arabic newspaper accounts, read organizational histories and documents and interviewed key informants to explain variation in strategic action by the two main Palestinian militant organizations, Fatah and Hamas, during the second intifada or uprising against the Israeli state and people (2000–5). The authors show how perceived political opportunities and political enculturation influenced the strategic action of Fatah and Hamas leaders but find little independent effect of agency leading them to question whether recent claims about the supposed primacy of human agency in social movement strategic action may be exaggerated.

keywords: communal violence ♦ political sociology ♦ social movements

Three Influences on Strategy

Students of contentious politics are increasingly mindful of the roles played by opportunities, culture and agency in explaining strategic action (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007) but disagree over the causal weight they should accord each factor. A spirited debate on this issue took place a decade ago, when Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper indicted the notion of political opportunity as ‘tautological, trivial, inadequate or just plain wrong’, depending on how it is understood (Goodwin and Jasper, 1999: 28). They noted that political opportunities have ambiguous effects. New political opportunities sometimes facilitate the emergence of social movements
and sometimes coopt them. The closing of political opportunities sometimes dampens protest and sometimes incites it. Goodwin and Jasper applauded political opportunity theorists for recently admitting culture and agency into their arguments but criticized them for understanding these variables too narrowly and structurally, minimizing their significance and independent effects. Goodwin and Jasper even questioned whether political opportunities exist outside the way people’s cultural filters interpret them.

Participants in the ensuing debate made useful conceptual clarifications (Jasper and Goodwin, 1999; Koopmans, 1999; Meyer, 1999; Poletta, 1999; Tarrow, 1999; Tilly, 1999). However, as Ruud Koopmans emphasized, the controversy cannot be decided by theoretical fiat; it is largely a matter for empirical investigation (Koopmans, 1999: 97, 100). We agree, and are surprised that we have been unable to find research that rises to Koopmans’ challenge.

Accordingly, we set ourselves the task of investigating the degree to which political opportunities, culture and agency account for variation in the strategic action of Fatah and Hamas, the two main organizations of the Palestinian national movement, during the second intifada, or uprising, of Palestinians against Israel between 2000 and 2005.¹ We show that perceived political opportunities and political enculturation influenced the strategic action of Fatah and Hamas leaders but find little independent effect of agency. This finding leads us to suggest that recent claims about the supposed primacy of human agency in social movement strategic action may be exaggerated.

Before beginning our analysis, we offer a background sketch for those unfamiliar with the cases at hand.

**Fatah and Hamas before the Second Intifada²**

In the late 1950s, Palestinian university students led by Yasser Arafat and Khalil Wazir founded Fatah, which aimed to liberate Palestine from Jewish rule by means of armed struggle. In 1969, Fatah took control of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which an Arab summit had created in 1964.

Leading the PLO required much political skill because it harboured ideologically diverse factions. Tensions turned on the PLO’s relationship with conservative Arab regimes vs popular revolutionary forces in the Arab world; the degree to which the organization should rely on violence; whether all Palestinians displaced by wars with Israel should have the right to repatriation; and whether a future Palestinian state should be founded in historical Palestine or the West Bank and Gaza alone. By 1988, the PLO had demonstrated pragmatism by moving a considerable distance from the principles it had articulated two decades earlier. Arafat
accepted three American conditions for opening dialogue with the PLO. He rejected the use of terrorism, recognized Israel’s right to exist and accepted Security Council resolution 242 calling for Israel’s withdrawal to the pre-1967 war borders. He also expressed willingness to accept a Palestinian state ruling the West Bank and Gaza. His consistency and sincerity were often questioned by observers in Israel and the US, but the direction of his movement was clear.

In 1991, the PLO’s main sources of support vanished. In January, a coalition of countries invaded Iraq following its occupation of Kuwait. The PLO sided with Saddam Hussein. Consequently, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states cut financial assistance and political support. In December, the Soviet Union – another important source of political and economic sustenance – was officially dissolved. Meanwhile, Israel felt a mounting need to resolve the Palestinian problem because a relatively non-violent but politically and economically damaging popular uprising (the first intifada) had begun in 1987 and showed no sign of abating. In 1992, Israelis elected a new government headed by Yitzkhak Rabin with a mandate to sue for peace.

The stars had aligned perfectly for a left-leaning Israeli government and a relatively pragmatic PLO to endorse the historic 1993 Oslo Accords. The Accords involved four main principles: (1) recognition of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and of Israel’s right to exist; (2) the renunciation by the PLO of terrorism and violence; (3) the agreement by Israel to withdraw in stages from the West Bank and Gaza; and (4) the concomitant creation of a Palestinian Authority (PA) to govern those areas. Outstanding matters – the question of Jerusalem, the refugee problem, the fate of Israeli settlements in Palestinian-controlled areas, security considerations and final international borders – were to be settled over the next five years.

A large majority of Palestinians initially endorsed Oslo but some expressed outrage from the outset – none more than Hamas and its followers. Until the 1980s, Muslim fundamentalists in the West Bank and Gaza were affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood but were little involved in direct confrontation with Israel. They believed that the creation of a more devout generation must precede national liberation. However, the 1979 Iranian revolution demonstrated that radical Muslims could be mobilized to overthrow a powerful, US-backed regime. The first intifada gave young Palestinian activists an opportunity to become politically involved and revolt against the reform-minded older generation. The Israeli government misperceived Islamism as a conservative counterweight to the more radical, nationalist ambitions of Fatah and the PLO, so it permitted the founding of Hamas in 1987 and the funnelling of money from Saudi Arabia to the new organization. It allowed Hamas activists to speak publicly, organize, publish and demonstrate while punishing the PLO for similar actions.
Oslo was the catalyst that helped to crystallize Hamas and give it its current form. In 1993, Hamas initiated a suicide bombing campaign aimed partly at derailing the peace process and reviving the dream of an Islamic state encompassing historical Palestine. Negotiations between Israel and the PA became bogged down. Israel allowed its existing settlements in the West Bank and Gaza to grow rapidly, thus violating the spirit of Oslo. To push Israel towards a final settlement, the PA imported arms and expanded its police force far beyond the limits specified by Oslo. From Israel’s perspective, it did little to crack down on Hamas and other violent organizations.

Within a few years, the Palestinian public lost faith in Oslo. Bitterly disappointed and angry, they now saw violence as their only recourse. Support for Hamas and suicide bombing soared. The 26 percent of the Palestinian population who supported suicide bombing in 1999 ballooned to 66 percent a year later (Brym and Araj, 2008). Talks between Israel and the PA effectively broke down, and the second intifada erupted. Negotiations took place sporadically into 2001, but by then most Palestinians saw them as meaningless.

During the next five years, the political opportunities facing Fatah and Hamas, their organizational cultures and the creative efforts of their leaders led to a re-evaluation of their strategic principles. Sorting out the degree to which each of these factors influenced strategic priorities is the task to which we now turn.

Variables

Our dependent variable is strategic action. Our three independent variables are political opportunities, political enculturation and human agency.

A strategy is a plan of action for achieving broad policy objectives by gaining advantages over, and minimizing losses to, opponents. We systematically reviewed newspaper accounts in The New York Times and al-Quds al-Arabi [‘Arab Jerusalem’], conducted 16 approximately 90-minute semi-structured interviews with key informants – seven senior leaders from Hamas, nine from Fatah – in the West Bank and Gaza in 2006 and reviewed organizational documents. These sources allowed us to identify four strategic dimensions that informed the actions of both organizations during the second intifada, and examine how, if at all, they changed over time. Organizational leaders asked whether they should (1) engage in suicide bombing and rocket attacks against Israeli targets, (2) declare a long-term ceasefire (tahdi’ah; plural, tahdi’at) with Israel, (3) negotiate a final peace deal and (4) participate in Palestinian presidential and legislative elections.

Leaders’ answers were influenced partly by the political opportunities they faced. Political opportunities are aspects of states and organizations that are perceived to affect the cost of politically contentious action. In Sidney
Tarrow’s (1994: 85) definition, they are ‘consistent – but not formal or necessarily permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure’. Some people may view changes in political opportunities as an opening, others as a blockage, but in either case they represent a political opportunity shift. However, because ideological rivals see the world differently and use different vocabularies to describe such circumstances, we consulted two ideologically divergent sources to identify them: *The New York Times*, widely considered a newspaper of record in the US and much of the western world, and *al-Quds al-Arabi*, a popular, radical, independent Arabic daily published in London.4

We identified four potentially influential types of change in political opportunities during the second intifada. A shift took place when the Israeli security apparatus substantially increased or decreased the number of (1) assassinations of Palestinian militants and (2) violent deaths of Palestinians by other means (during riot control or Palestinian attacks), and when the governments of (3) the US and (4) Arab countries offered substantial inducements and/or made substantial threats that aimed to alter Palestinian strategy. Counts of these events are our measures of change in political opportunities. The authors coded political opportunities and strategic positions independently and resolved the few differences of interpretation that emerged on first coding by reviewing and discussing sources.

Aside from political opportunities, relatively enduring aspects of culture independently influenced leaders’ strategic choices. Cultural understandings may be consciously chosen (Swidler, 1986; Tilly, 1995) or unconsciously imbibed as part of the ‘natural’ order of things (Bourdieu, 1977; Foucault, 1970). In either case, they influence the crystallization of ultimate goals, the tendency to favour certain means of achieving those goals, the demarcation of friends from enemies, the perception of a given political opportunity as an opening or a threat and so on. We refer to the learning of relatively persistent moral, cognitive and emotional outlooks as political enculturation. Such learning often takes place within political organizations. Cultures change, but generally more slowly than political opportunities do (Ogburn, 1966 [1922]). Big cultural differences exist between Fatah and Hamas but within these organizations we detected no significant change in moral, cognitive and emotional outlooks over the five years of the second intifada. Therefore, in the following analysis, organizational membership is used as a proxy for political enculturation.

The third independent influence on strategic choice is agency – the process of making plans in anticipation of future contingencies, and regulating and correcting them in light of their current and past effects. Such planning precedes social action. When a given course of social action achieves desired aims, it becomes habitual. When it fails, innovation becomes necessary:
people exercise creative agency (Bandura, 1989; Cohen, 2000: 76, 85; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Note the difference between agency and strategic action, our dependent variable. Agency involves planning. Strategic action is what people do to maximize gains and minimize losses.

While we discerned political opportunities from newspaper accounts of international, regional and local events, and actors’ perceptions of them, we consulted organizational histories and conducted interviews with key informants for information about their political enculturation, the difficult strategic choices they had to make and the actions they took.

Equipped with the foregoing definitions, we first assess how Fatah and Hamas responded to changes in political opportunities during the second intifada. We find that they sometimes responded similarly, sometimes differently. On still other occasions, neither organization changed its strategic action. We also find that changing political opportunities explain more of Fatah’s than Hamas’s strategic change. These findings lead us to argue that organizational culture exercised a substantial independent effect only on some types of strategic change and only under certain circumstances.

In contrast, we find that, by itself, agency contributed little to major strategic actions. We strongly agree with the chorus of theorists who have recently emphasized that ‘as long as there are choices, there will be agency’ (Jasper, 2006: xiii). The following analysis supports the view that much action taken by social movement leaders is intentional, anticipatory, self-reflective and self-reactive. However, Fatah and Hamas leaders did not seek to further the aims of their organizations by stepping outside the constraints of structure and culture with respect to major strategic issues. This finding leads us to conclude that the recent social movements literature may exaggerate the independent effects of agency on strategic action.

**Political Opportunity Shifts**

We identified six major shifts in political opportunities, each defined by a substantial increase or decrease in the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces and/or substantial new inducements or threats made by the governments of the US or the Arab countries. Each row in Table 1 corresponds to one such shift. We now present our analysis of how, if at all, these six opportunity shifts affected the strategic outlook of Fatah and Hamas along our four strategic dimensions. Table 1 summarizes our argument. With six opportunity shifts and two organizations, 12 possibilities existed for change or continuity in strategic action. In the following discussion, we find that three of these possibilities are adequately explained by opportunity shifts (designated by OS in Table 1), three by opportunity shifts and political enculturation (designated by OS/PE) and six by political enculturation alone (designated by PE).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic issue/period</th>
<th>Fatah</th>
<th>Hamas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel–Palestine peace treaty/summer 2000</td>
<td>Fatah leaders fail to bend to Israeli and American pressure and reject Barak’s peace offers because of norms crystallized before intifada [PE]</td>
<td>Hamas categorically rejects Israeli and American offers because of norms crystallized before intifada [PE]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide bombing and rocket attacks/autumn 2000</td>
<td>Fatah central leadership condemns suicide bombing and rocket attacks because of norms crystallized before intifada [PE]</td>
<td>Hamas decides to employ suicide bombing and develop and launch rockets (drawing on repertoire dating back to 1993) [OS/PE]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential &amp; legislative elections/first half 2000</td>
<td>Under increasing international pressure, Arafat announces presidential and legislative elections (consistent with principles declared and acted upon in 1996) [OS/PE]</td>
<td>Hamas rejects participation in elections because of norms crystallized before intifada [PE]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential &amp; legislative elections/second half 2000</td>
<td>Fatah postpones legislative and presidential election [OS]</td>
<td>Hamas continues to reject participation in elections [PE]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential &amp; legislative elections/November 2004</td>
<td>Fatah decides to hold presidential election (consistent with principles declared and acted upon in 1996) [OS/PE]</td>
<td>Hamas declines to participate in the presidential election [PE]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term ceasefire February 2003–February 2005</td>
<td>Moderate Fatah leaders take control after Arafat’s death and benefit from American–Israeli campaign against Hamas and Fatah’s military wing, convincing them to declare a long-term ceasefire [OS]</td>
<td>Campaign against Hamas causes it to accept long-term ceasefire (and agree to participate in legislative elections) [OS]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1** Opportunity, Enculturation and Strategic Response
The Failure of Peace Negotiations

Summer 2000 witnessed what many observers regarded as enormous change in the international political opportunities facing Palestinians. The end of the Clinton presidency and the deadline stipulated by the 1993 Oslo Accords for reaching a final agreement on the Palestinian–Israeli conflict were fast approaching. Consequently, Arafat sought to push the Israeli government to fulfil the agreed-upon terms for force redeployment by announcing on 4 July that the Palestinians would declare independence unilaterally. American, Arab and other governments immediately pressed Arafat to postpone the declaration and continue working towards a negotiated peace by indicating that they would not recognize such a state (Mujaideh, 2000). Israel, headed by Prime Minister Ehud Barak, threatened to declare sovereignty over Palestinian territory still under its control – almost 60 percent of the West Bank. Barak also called for a summit to reach a peace agreement before September 2000. President Clinton adopted the idea and invited Arafat and Barak to Camp David on 11 July.

Fatah had decided to participate in the peace process and negotiate with the Israelis in the early 1990s, so Arafat’s agreement to postpone the declaration of a Palestinian state and accept the invitation to go to Camp David represented no more than a tactical change on his part. However, the carrots offered by Israel and the international community were insufficiently enticing, and the sticks insufficiently threatening, to cause strategic change involving the acceptance of a peace deal. After two weeks of negotiations at Camp David, Clinton declared failure.

For its part, Hamas categorically rejected American and Israeli threats and enticements. During the summit, Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin urged Palestinian negotiators to go home and choose the path of jihad: ‘Hamas rejects any agreement that does not give the Palestinian people its right to return, the return of Jerusalem and Palestine, all of Palestine’ (quoted in ‘Al-Shaykh Yassin. . .’, 2000).

If Fatah and Hamas refused to seize what the Americans and Israelis portrayed as a ‘historical opportunity’ and a ‘generous offer’ two months before the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000, they had little reason to change their position once the intifada erupted. Contacts between Palestinian and Israeli officials aimed at ending the violence and saving the peace process continued until February 2001, when Ariel Sharon became Israel’s prime minister. Sharon ardently opposed Oslo. His election (and re-election in January 2003) prevented the resumption of meaningful talks. Israel and the US boycotted political contacts with Arafat from mid-2002 until his death in November 2004 (Rubenberg, 2003, 343).
In short, changes in political opportunities in the months before the outbreak of the second \textit{intifada} and during the uprising itself failed to convince Fatah and Hamas to accept a peace deal. As we shall see, the Israeli and American proposals were turned down because they did not meet the minimum demands that the political cultures of the two organizations prescribed (Table 1, row 1).

\textbf{Suicide Bombings and Rocket Attacks}

Many of the Palestinians who regarded the July Camp David meetings as an opportunity saw Israel’s aggressive response to the rioting that broke out in September 2000 as a threat. Irrespective of perceptions, however, substantial changes in political opportunities took place on both occasions. In response to the opportunities of July, neither Hamas nor Fatah shifted strategy. In response to the threats of September and the months that followed, Hamas resumed suicide attacks (its first suicide bombing campaign took place between 1993 and 1997). After Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield in March–April 2002 – reoccupying most of the West Bank, systematically dismantling the infrastructure that supported suicide missions and imprisoning or killing many of the militants who organized them – the number of suicide attacks fell. Some militants then started launching rockets and mortars against Israeli targets. Between the outbreak of the second \textit{intifada} and the long-term ceasefire declared in March 2005, Hamas was responsible for 44 percent of the 138 suicide attacks directed against Israel (Araj, 2008). The annual number of rocket and mortar attacks rose to 1475 in 2004 (Intelligence and Information Centre, 2006, 24; Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007). Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad were responsible for the overwhelming majority of them.

The outbreak of the \textit{intifada} raised new questions for all militant Palestinian organizations. Should they see the \textit{intifada} as an alternative to the peace process or a continuation of negotiations by other means? In either case, how might they increase the uprising’s effectiveness? Numerous factors affected the way they answered these questions. One of the most important was the severity of Israeli repression.

During the first weeks of the \textit{intifada}, the repertoire of Palestinian protest involved only demonstrations, marches, stone throwing and so on. However, as Israeli authorities themselves admitted, the harshness of their response was out of proportion to the intensity of Palestinian protest (Ricolfi, 2005: 94). From Israel’s point of view, the Palestinians started the \textit{intifada} after the Israeli government expressed willingness to make its biggest concessions ever, so the \textit{intifada} showed bad faith and determination to gain advantage through violence. The Israelis therefore felt that a strong response
was necessary (Hafez, 2006). In addition, the *intifada* erupted just four months after Israel withdrew from Lebanon due to Hezbollah attacks. Israel wanted to prove that it was not weak and remained able to deter its enemies. Accordingly, it revised its 1996 plan for toppling Arafat and attacking areas under PA control (Reinhart, 2002). Finally, an Israeli election campaign coincided with the *intifada’s* first months. Barak wanted to show that his policies towards the Palestinians were no softer than Sharon’s were (Araj, 2008). Hence the severity of Israel’s response.

Harsh Israeli repression motivated a surge in popular support for suicide bombing on the part of the Palestinians. Especially after Sharon first took office, and even more after the attacks of 11 September 2001, when the Bush administration gave Sharon *carte blanche*, repression intensified. As a result, Palestinian public support for suicide bombing remained high. Interviews with senior Hamas leaders in the West Bank and Gaza during the summer of 2006 suggest they believed the most effective way to stop the harsh repression was to make it unbearably costly for Israel (Araj, 2008; Bloom, 2005: 19–44; Brym and Araj, 2006, 2008). Accordingly, Hamas launched its first suicide attack of the second *intifada* in December 2000.

The assassination of more than two dozen Fatah militants and the killing of more than 1000 Palestinian civilians between September 2001 and January 2002 eventually led some local Fatah activists to launch their first suicide mission in February 2002 and their first rocket attack a month later (Table 2). In all, through the Tanzim or al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, local Fatah activists were responsible for 32 percent of suicide attacks during the second *intifada*. Significantly, however, these activists were young – mainly in their twenties, thirties and forties. Having grown up in the occupied territories, they were attuned to realities on the ground. They believed that Israel would not ease off and the *intifada* could not succeed unless they exercised extreme violence. In contrast, Fatah’s top leaders were considerably older – mainly in their fifties, sixties and seventies. They had lived most of their lives in exile and were less in touch with the urgent demands of the Palestinian people for retribution against Israel. Perhaps most importantly, the central leadership had denounced terrorism, made agreements with Israel, received international financial support and feared that the use of extreme violence would give Sharon an excuse to destroy the PA. They had a political and bureaucratic stake in moderation, so they condemned the actions of the young activists, often strongly and publicly.

Our 2006 interviews with nine senior Fatah leaders support this assessment. The leaders unanimously denied that the organization’s central leadership initiated the use of suicide bombing. Five said the initiative came exclusively ‘from below’ and three said it came from the middle and
lower ranks of Fatah. Seven of the nine leaders reported that suicide bombing did not represent the official policy of Fatah and only one said that it sometimes represented official policy (Table 3, questions 1 and 2). The evidence seems incontrovertible that Arafat gave the green light to violence in the intifada’s first year or so. However, his repeated condemnation of suicide bombings, his willingness to meet with Israeli officials and declare a ceasefire, his attempt to dismantle the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in 2002 and interviews with people who were close to him in the period under study suggest that he was a relative moderate (Alimi, 2007; Araj, 2008: 295–6; Jamal, 2005).

We conclude that, in response to Israeli repression, Hamas resumed the practice of suicide bombing, which it first used seven years before the second intifada began. It intensified rocket attacks when it became extremely difficult to stage suicide missions. In contrast, Fatah’s central leadership did not endorse such tactics. Indeed, some local Fatah activists undertook suicide and rocket attacks precisely because they believed that their organization failed to respond appropriately to changes in political opportunities in the form of increasing Israeli repression (Table 1, row 2).

Presidential and Legislative Elections
In mid-2002, Fatah declared its willingness to hold presidential and legislative elections. Hamas showed no interest in participating. As we
Table 3  Responses of Fatah and Hamas Informants to Selected Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hamas (N = 7)</th>
<th>Fatah (N = 9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fatah’s decision to use suicide bombing at the beginning of 2002 was developed: (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From above (by the central leadership as a whole)</td>
<td>– 0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the middle (by leaders in the West Bank and Gaza)</td>
<td>– 0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From below (by field activists and local leaders)</td>
<td>– 62.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the middle and from below</td>
<td>– 37.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Regardless of how the decision of using suicide bombing was taken, what is your opinion of Fatah’s suicide bombing campaign? (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It does not represent the official policy of the whole organization</td>
<td>– 87.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It does represent the official policy of the whole organization</td>
<td>– 0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time it represents the official policy of the whole organization</td>
<td>– 0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes it represents the official policy of the whole organization</td>
<td>– 12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Below I list some factors that might affect your organization’s choice of tactics at a given time. Please review the list, add other factors that I may have omitted, and rank the list, placing ‘1’ beside the most important factor, ‘2’ beside the second most important factor, and so on. (mean on 5-point scale; high = less important)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israeli policies and actions against the Palestinians in general</td>
<td>1.2 1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israeli policies and actions against your organization</td>
<td>2.5 3.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mood and readiness of the Palestinian public for specific actions</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5 2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International conditions</td>
<td>3.0 1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions in the Arab and Muslim world</td>
<td>4.0 4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition with other Palestinian organizations</td>
<td>5.0 5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In comparison with other tactics used by your organization, how costly has suicide bombing been to your organization (the Palestinian people as a whole) in terms of the human and material resources used, damage, etc.? (mean on 5-point scale; high = more costly)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost to organization</td>
<td>3.8 4.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost to Palestinians</td>
<td>3.7 4.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Some people say that if the Palestinians had restricted their suicide bombing operations to Israeli military targets in the occupied territories, they would have gained more benefits and paid fewer costs. What is your opinion on this matter? (mean on 5-point scale; high = disagree)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrict suicide bombing to military targets in territories</td>
<td>4.3 1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is your organization willing to recognize Israel under any conditions? (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes or under certain conditions</td>
<td>0.0 66.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100.0 33.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
shall now see, changing political opportunities influenced Fatah’s 2002 declarations but had little or no bearing on Hamas’s position until 2005.

Fatah supported elections partly because of Arafat’s weakening position. Following the 11 September 2001 attacks, the Bush administration gave Sharon a nearly free hand to deal with the intifada. In early 2002, Israel released information indicating that Arafat was directly involved in attempting to smuggle a shipload of weapons from Iran to Gaza and that he had financially supported the military wing of Fatah and military attacks by the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. The US then placed the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades on its list of terrorist organizations, and President Bush told reporters that he supported the idea of getting rid of Arafat (‘Bush yw’yd . . .’, 2002). To isolate him further, Israel placed Arafat under siege in his headquarters. In response, Arafat announced on 27 June 2002 that the PA would hold presidential and legislative elections in one year, Fatah would participate in the elections and he would be a presidential candidate.

Six months later, Arafat postponed the elections until Israel withdrew from the Palestinian cities it had reoccupied in Operation Defensive Shield. In doing so, he took advantage of two new opportunities. First, public opinion polls showed a substantial increase in his popularity among the Palestinians because of the actions taken against him by Israel and the US. The two countries lost interest in an immediate Palestinian election because it could not be expected to achieve their objective of replacing Arafat. Second, the Americans reduced pressure on Arafat because they sought support from the Islamic world in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq. Consequently, other means had to be found to minimize Arafat’s power. Israel and the US hit on the idea of getting him to create the post of prime minister, giving the post real power and appointing a moderate to it. In February 2003, Arafat bowed to international pressure and appointed Mahmoud Abbas prime minister. This explains why Palestinian presidential and legislative elections were held only after Arafat’s death in November 2004.

Hamas, which had boycotted the first Palestinian presidential and legislative elections in 1996 and refused any form of participation in the PA because it was created by the Oslo Accords, showed no interest in participating in the elections. Hamas also decided in December 2004 not to participate in the January 2005 presidential election. However, in March 2005, Hamas leadership decided to participate in the January 2006 legislative election, which it won handily.

Three new political opportunities led to Hamas’s change of heart. First, the joint Israeli–American campaign to destroy Hamas weakened the organization militarily, financially and diplomatically but increased its popularity. A growing number of Palestinians gave Hamas credit for leading the resistance. They regarded Hamas’s slain leaders as heroes, its suicide
bombers as martyrs. Second, as evidence of deep corruption in Fatah and the PA accumulated, Hamas endeared itself to the Palestinians by providing them with sorely needed social services and the appearance of incorruptibility. By March 2004, Hamas’s popularity exceeded Fatah’s for the first time, 31 to 28 percent (‘hrk-a Hamas . . .’, 2004). Its popularity was evident during the first stage of local elections (January 2005), when Hamas won a substantial percentage of the vote. These developments convinced many Hamas leaders that the organization would do well if it participated in the legislative election. Third, the assassination of some of Hamas’s most radical leaders, such as Abdel Aziz Rantissi, empowered more pragmatic men, like Ismail Haniya. To the latter, ‘harvesting’ the organization’s political gains began to make sense, the more so when they realized that winning an election might enable Hamas to stick to its principles while obliging the international community to deal with it directly, thus undermining America’s anti-Hamas campaign (Tamimi, 2007a: 215). With the US pushing publicly for a democratic Middle East, how could it ignore an elected Hamas government, even one that refused to recognize Israel, renounce violence and adhere to agreements struck by the PA? This was the backdrop for the decision taken by Hamas’s leaders to participate in the 2006 legislative election.

In sum, changing political opportunities weakened both Fatah and Hamas throughout the second intifada. Both organizations came to favour elections when it became clear that going to the polls could shore up their organizations. However, while Fatah decided to support elections early in the intifada, partly in response to international pressure, Hamas support came late and largely in response to brutal facts on the ground (Table 1, rows 3, 4 and 5).

**Long-Term Ceasefire**

Fatah and Hamas declared five ceasefires (tahdi’at) during the period under investigation. The first four were brief, lasting from a day to less than two months. They were tactical manoeuvres intended to avoid immediate losses – specifically, to prevent international isolation and Israeli retaliation for suicide bombings. Their proximate cause was temporary pressure by Arafat and the PA on the military wings of Fatah and Hamas: putting Hamas’s leaders under house arrest, imprisoning militants who might disrupt the ceasefires, threatening the use of live fire and so on. They ended abruptly when Palestinian militants decided to retaliate against Israeli actions. As such, the first four tahdi’at do not constitute strategic shifts in our view.

The fifth tahdi’ah, declared in March 2005, was different. It lasted more than a year. With few exceptions, two of its most important principles, the cessation of Palestinian suicide bombing and the assassination of Palestinian
political leaders in the West Bank and Gaza, still hold as of this writing (November 2009). As we see below, in initiating the 2005 tahdi‘ah, both Fatah and Hamas responded strategically to important changes in political opportunities – in particular, the unprecedented Israeli and American campaign to break the back of Palestinian militancy between 2002 and 2004.

The campaign’s first stage involved the reoccupation of most of the West Bank in March–April 2002. Defence Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer clarified the purpose of the operation on 29 March: ‘The security forces decided to initiate extensive operational activity aimed at conducting an all-out war against terrorism . . . whose aim is to crush all forms and all elements of the terrorist infrastructure’ (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002). Then, a few weeks after Sharon’s sweeping victory in the 2003 general election, Israel declared a comprehensive military, political, financial and diplomatic war against Hamas. Between January 2002 and December 2004, Israeli forces killed 271 Palestinians in assassination attempts and another 2412 Palestinians in other forms of armed conflict (Table 2). Intensive American efforts to crack down on Hamas internationally accompanied the Israeli campaign.

In response, Hamas proposed a tahdi‘ah in November 2003. Israel rejected it out of hand, stressing that short-term tahdi‘at only give militants a chance to prepare new attacks. However, Hamas’s offer sent a clear message to the Israelis and the Americans: their campaign against the Islamic organization was paying off. The declaration in 2004 of Sharon’s plan to remove Israeli settlers and forces from Gaza gave Israel additional incentive to strike hard. Israel wanted to cripple Hamas before withdrawing and argue credibly that its departure was not a sign of weakness.

Changes in political opportunities at the regional level made the situation even more difficult for Hamas and other Palestinian organizations. After the fall of Baghdad in 2003 and the American declaration of its intention to create a new order in the Middle East, most Arab regimes fell quickly into line. In summer 2004, Egypt declared an initiative to end the intifada and agreed to increase security measures preventing weapon smuggling from Egypt to Gaza after Israel’s withdrawal. Jordan’s King Abdullah II implied that Arafat should resign. According to Hamas, Jordan cooperated with Israeli intelligence in the assassination of Hamas leaders abroad. By curtailing their activities and threatening to expel them, Syria put pressure on militant Palestinians in Damascus to support the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and accept a long-term tahdi‘ah.

In the midst of these efforts, Arafat died. The Palestinians elected Abbas president in January 2005, following which he met representatives of almost all Palestinian factions to work out details for a long-term tahdi‘ah. On 17 March 2005, Fatah, Hamas and other organizations finally agreed on a respite. Hamas never admitted that its willingness to accept the tahdi‘ah
was mainly the result of the Israeli, American and Arab campaign against its leaders, finances and military infrastructure. Instead, it justified its acquiescence by referring to the need for ‘national unity’ (Tamimi, 2007a: 2007b). Plainly, however, Palestinian militants in both Fatah and Hamas changed their strategy in response to threats posed by massive shifts in political opportunities caused by increased repression (Table 1, row 6).

**Summary: The Effects of Shifting Political Opportunities**

Our analysis suggests that Fatah was more responsive than Hamas to relatively ‘soft’ shifts in political opportunities, while it required harsh facts on the ground to move Hamas. Fatah’s willingness to change strategy in response to international pressure – in the form of moral suasion, economic enticements and offers of support for its political ambitions – was most evident with respect to holding presidential and legislative elections.

Hamas did alter its strategy during the second intifada, but only in response to coercion and extreme violence. Harsh Israeli repression in the early months of the second intifada prompted Hamas’s central leadership to encourage and organize suicide bombings and rocket attacks against civilians. Although Fatah’s central leadership equivocated during the intifada’s first year, it remained largely opposed to suicide bombings and rocket attacks against civilians. Similarly, only when Israel substantially degraded the Hamas military infrastructure through assassinations, armed incursions and the like, and American political and diplomatic efforts substantially restricted Hamas’s access to financial resources, did it agree to a long-term ceasefire and participation in legislative elections.

Six of the 12 possibilities for strategic change in Table 1 are thus explained wholly or partly by changing political opportunities. We now examine the effects of political enculturation on organizational strategy.

**Political Enculturation**

Fatah and Hamas leaders rarely interpreted and reacted to changing political opportunities in the same way because they each wore a set of cultural lenses that were ground in dissimilar circumstances and focused perceptions differently. True, recruits expressed varying levels of commitment to their organizations, and over time some of them switched allegiance. However, they enlisted partly because they found the organizations’ ideologies meaningful and appealing. Joining an organization implied willingness to see the world filtered through the organization’s cultural lenses, to become politically enculturated in an organizationally specific manner. In turn, the cultural lenses of each organization influenced strategic action in different ways.
Explaining both organizations' decision to accept the 2005 long-term ceasefire does not require the introduction of a cultural variable. As we saw, changes in political opportunities adequately explain the actions of both Fatah and Hamas on this front. However, cultural influences were decisive in other strategic choices. We illustrate this point by returning to the decisions on whether to engage in suicide bombings and rocket attacks, and to accept a peace deal with Israel.

**Suicide Bombings and Rocket Attacks**

During the second *intifada*, Hamas leaders decided to mount suicide bombing and rocket campaigns against Israel while the central leadership of Fatah demurred – largely, we contend, because leaders of the two organizations were culturally predisposed by events preceding the second *intifada* to react in different ways to Israeli repression and American diplomatic and financial pressure. Said differently, major strategic decisions taken by the PLO since the 1960s and Hamas since the 1980s became part of the two organizations’ political cultures, and their political cultures in turn influenced strategic decision-making between 2000 and 2005.

In the late 1950s, Arafat and his associates began grinding the PLO's first cultural lens. For a decade, the Arab countries had been promoting pan-Arabism, a key element of which involved the creation of a unified military force to defeat Israel and liberate Palestine. However, the founders of Fatah now proclaimed it was time for Palestinians to take their cause into their own hands – a position that gained trenchancy after the defeat of the Arab armies in the 1967 war. Inspired by left-wing national liberation movements in Algeria, Vietnam and Cuba, which used guerrilla tactics to overcome colonial rule, they challenged the notion that Israel could succumb to a swift military operation by a united Arab front and argued instead for a war of attrition by irregular Palestinian forces (Kurz, 2005: 32).

The trouble was that Israeli security measures proved highly effective against Fatah, partly because of the quality of Israeli intelligence, planning and military technology, partly because the geography of the West Bank and Gaza gave Fatah guerrillas little sanctuary. These circumstances forced Fatah to concentrate on building up its military capabilities in neighbouring countries. Therein lay the source of additional strategic change and, eventually, the grinding of a new cultural lens. In Jordan and Lebanon, Fatah squandered its energy and opened itself to external influence by becoming embroiled in various local confrontations and civil wars. Finally ejected from Jordan in 1970 and Lebanon in 1982, Fatah’s central leadership was forced to operate from Tunisia, three countries and 2500 km west of Israel, until 1993. When in the late 1980s Fatah rejected the use of terrorism, recognized Israel’s right to exist, engaged in talks
with the US and declared that it would accept a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, it was responding to the straitened circumstances in which it found itself. In short, on the eve of the second intifada, Fatah’s political culture was that of a secular organization with a tradition of pragmatism, susceptibility to external influence and detachment from the people it purported to represent.

When the second intifada erupted, these cultural tendencies predisposed Fatah’s central leadership to heed the insistence of the US for moderation and resist the growing demand of the Palestinian people for suicide attacks, especially those launched against civilians in Israel proper (outside the occupied territories). In our interviews, we asked senior Fatah leaders to rank factors that affected their organization’s strategic action at a given time. They ranked ‘international conditions’ as the second most important of six influences. By comparison, Hamas leaders ranked international conditions the fourth most important of six influences. Moreover, while the Hamas leaders all said their chief aim was to defend the resistance and escalate the intifada, most Fatah leaders stressed that they wanted to keep the intifada popular and relatively non-violent. Typically, Qadoura Faris, one of Fatah’s most popular leaders in the West Bank and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), said:

> We and the Israelis do not live on an isolated island. . . . There is an international community and international public opinion. . . . We wanted the intifada to be popular and non-violent. . . . Just look at the developments of the first months of the intifada and you will clearly see that Israel is the one who decided to change the rules of the game by flooding the intifada with blood. . . . The Israelis succeeded in dragging us to their most convenient position: military confrontation. . . . It was easier for Israel, the stronger party, to confront Palestinian militants rather than unarmed masses facing military occupation with their bare hands.

Moreover, Fatah leaders saw suicide attacks as costly and unproductive. When asked to compare the costs to Fatah of suicide bombing vs other tactics, six of the Fatah respondents said they were ‘much more costly’ and one said they were ‘somewhat more costly’. According to Hussein al-Sheikh, a senior Fatah leader in the West Bank:

> [Suicide attacks,] particularly those conducted by some Fatah activists, led the Americans and the Europeans to put part of the organization, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, on their terrorism list, which caused a lot of damage to Fatah’s international image. . . . Also, Israeli reactions to martyrdom operations, such as assassinations and arrests, led [Fatah] to lose a large number of its best field activists.

When asked to compare the costs to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian resistance of suicide bombing vs other tactics, the responses were identical.
Abdullah Abdullah, a Fatah representative in the PLC and chairman of its political committee, outlined the costs as follows:

Martyrdom operations almost silenced the moderate voices in Israeli society, gave Sharon and his government a free hand to do whatever they wanted in the occupied territories and made Palestinians look like terrorists in the eyes of large sectors of the international community. . . . Those operations were not consistent with our values, religion, or traditions, or with international law and legitimacy.

We also asked our informants whether they agreed that suicide bombings ought to be restricted to Israeli military targets in the occupied territories. Six Fatah leaders strongly agreed with that statement, one agreed and only one disagreed (Table 3, questions 3, 4 and 5). According to Hussein al-Sheikh: ‘Fatah policy in this regard is very clear since 1988. The “geography of the resistance” is limited to the territories that have been occupied in 1967 and the targets should be only Israeli soldiers or armed settlers.’

Utterly different strategic predispositions were embedded in the organizational culture of Hamas. Its first cultural lens was ground in the late 1980s as a result of deepening scepticism that Fatah could ever achieve the Palestinian national movement’s objectives. Islamism, inspired by the 1979 Iranian revolution, now began to overshadow Fatah nationalism (Abu-Amr, 1994: 13). The revolution introduced a new version of political Islam that blamed western powers and the secular regimes of Muslim countries for the failings of the Islamic world, and adopted new forms of violence to do away with these perceived impediments to change.

Significantly, Hamas took shape not in Cairo, Amman, Beirut and Tunis, but in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially Gaza. Before the 1950s, Gaza boasted no significant urban agglomeration like the relatively cosmopolitan and secular city of Ramallah in the West Bank. Densely settled by religiously conservative villagers who fled the 1948–9 war with Israel, Gaza’s population was deeply impoverished and embittered: an ideal environment for the growth of Islamism (Abu-Amr, 1994: 20–1).

Most of Hamas’s leaders and military activists were born, raised and radicalized in the occupied territories, with three important consequences for later strategic developments. First, spending their entire lives under Israeli military occupation made Hamas members more sensitive to the deprivations and demands of the Palestinian people than Fatah’s central leadership was (Abu-Amr, 1994: 79; Araj, 2008). Hamas enjoyed especially strong ties to refugees and their descendants, who comprised the more radical half of the Palestinian population. Tellingly, six of the seven men who took part in the meeting that led to the establishment of Hamas were themselves refugees (Jamal, 2005: 107). Second, tight Israeli security measures often prevented Hamas activists from employing the methods of attack and types of weaponry that were the stock-in-trade of guerrillas.
elsewhere. Their inability to stage typical guerrilla raids stimulated innovative thinking about unconventional methods and weapons. According to Khalil abu Laila, a senior Hamas leader in Gaza:

When Hamas started using suicide bombing in 1993, the Palestinians did not have any other [military] weapons. . . . We had to create our own weapons from the limited materials we had. Yahya Ayash [Hamas’s first famous bomb maker] was able to transform any material in the house into bombs. I mean he used to turn sugar and washing detergent such as Tide into bombs. He also taught others how to do so.

Third, operating inside the occupied territories made Hamas better able to avoid side battles with Arab forces, like those that weakened Fatah, and less susceptible to outside influence than Fatah was (Tamimi, 2007b: 268).

Susceptibility to outside influence hinged partly on perceptions of Israel–US relations. Already in the 1980s, Fatah leaders came to believe that ‘only Washington counted’ and that Israel’s decisions were ‘made in Washington and not in Tel Aviv’ (Rubin, 1997: 153). As a result, Fatah remained relatively responsive to American demands throughout the second intifada. In contrast, Hamas leaders held that Israel and the Jewish lobby in the US controlled American Middle East policy, leading them to conclude that ‘we must depend on the nation’s options of jihad and resistance rather than American or other mediations’. It followed that diplomacy was ‘a waste of time and an exercise in futility’, and that ‘whatever was taken by force would be regained only by force’ (Hamas communiqué, quoted in Alexander, 2002: 107, 192). When we asked our Hamas informants to rank various influences on Hamas decision-making, the top three influences concerned conditions on the domestic front. The mean scores for perceptions of the influence of domestic conditions were all higher for Hamas than for Fatah leaders (Table 3, question 3). To support their analysis, Hamas leaders often referred to the failure of the Oslo peace process and the success of Hezbollah in forcing Israel to withdraw from Lebanon in May 2000 without preconditions (Alexander, 2002: 256; Tamimi, 2007b: 197).

Clearly, Hamas members were culturally predisposed to become the first Palestinian organization to launch a suicide attack against Israel in 1993, deploy suicide bombers during the second intifada and launch rockets after counterterrorist measures made suicide bombing more difficult. They reiterated their faith in violence during our interviews. When asked to compare the costs to their organization and to the Palestinian people of suicide bombing vs other tactics used by their organization, the seven Hamas leaders we interviewed saw them as less costly than Fatah leaders did, and some of them, such as Khalil abu Laila, enthusiastically listed their benefits:
Martyrdom operations enabled us to get rid of the unjust Oslo Accords, put the Palestinian cause back on the right path, mobilize the Palestinians around the choice of resistance and attract Arabic and Islamic attention and support. . . . They also put an end to the Zionist dream of expanding Israel to include the area between the Nile River [Egypt] and the Furat River [Iraq]. Instead, and for the first time, martyrdom operations forced the Israelis to separate themselves from the West Bank by building a wall and hiding behind it.

Another Hamas leader, Abd al-Fattah Dukhan, focused on the retaliatory nature of suicide bombing:

They [the Israelis] target our civilians all the time, [so] martyrdom operations treat them the same way . . . Our first suicide attacks came to avenge the killing of 29 Palestinians in the al-Harem al-Ibrahim [in 1993] as well the massacre that took place earlier in the al-Aqsa Mosque [in 1991].

Unlike Fatah leaders, Hamas leaders strongly disagreed with the view that suicide bombings should be restricted to Israeli military and settler targets in the occupied territories (Table 3, questions 4 and 5). Mushier al-Mussri, Hamas spokesperson in Gaza, defended Hamas’s position as follows: ‘They attack our cities, so we have the right to attack theirs. . . . In addition, [suicide attacks inside Israel proper] are more effective because they inflict more damage.’ Moreover, while the central leadership of Fatah condemned Hamas’s suicide bombings – as well as the later and less numerous attacks by young Fatah activists – there was never any conflict between the central leadership of Hamas and its military wing. Hamas’s political leaders personally gave the go-ahead for numerous suicide and rocket operations (Gunning, 2007: 115). Some of our Hamas informants commented on this issue by referring to the religious ideology of the organization:

Islam is very clear. If one foot of an Islamic land has been occupied, then jihad and resistance become religious duty [fard]. . . . The al-Qassam Brigades [Hamas’s military wing] do not do anything that contradicts the general lines determined by the political leadership. . . . Any [Hamas] leader who condemns an act of jihad will be sent home right away [i.e. will have to resign]. (Fathi Hammad, a senior Hamas leader in Gaza).

In sum, it seems that cultural predispositions formed for the most part before the beginning of the second intifada, not structural circumstances during the second intifada itself, largely account for the eagerness of Hamas leaders to engage in suicide missions and rocket attacks, and the reluctance of the Fatah central leadership to follow suit (Table 1, row 2).

**The Failure of Peace Negotiations**

Cultural factors also help to explain why both Fatah and Hamas rejected the Israeli–American peace proposals offered at Camp David in 2000 and failed to revive peace discussions during the second intifada.
Hamas’s political vision was strongly influenced by its Islamic ideology (Gunning, 2007: 198). Regarding Israel as ‘a colonial entity planted in the heart of the Muslim world whose effect is to obstruct the revival of the ummah, the global Muslim community, and to perpetuate Western hegemony in the region’, Hamas always refused to recognize the country’s legitimacy (Tamimi, 2007a: 157). The fact that Muslims originally faced Jerusalem’s al-Aqsa mosque while praying and that al-Aqsa is the third holiest site in the Muslim world made their antipathy to Israel all the greater and made it seem sensible that the chief goal of the organization should be to liberate all of Palestine and replace it with an Islamic state. No mere change in political opportunities could efface Hamas’s view that peace negotiations were a waste of time and a potential threat to Palestinians’ historical right to all of Palestine. None of the Hamas informants we interviewed expressed willingness to recognize the state of Israel under any circumstance (Table 3, question 6). They were willing to offer Israel only a long-term truce if it agreed to withdraw fully from the West Bank and Gaza, release all Palestinian prisoners, stop all hostilities and allow the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza with East Jerusalem as its capital.

For Fatah, the situation was more complicated, but in the end the organization’s political culture also predisposed its members to reject the peace terms that Israel was prepared to offer: although Fatah was prepared to concede much, it could not cross a red line that had been established before the outbreak of the second intifada and that the changing political opportunity structure between 2000 and 2005 did nothing to alter. Specifically, Fatah was willing to give up 78 percent of the territory of historical Palestine in exchange for the creation of a viable, independent state in the West Bank and Gaza based on the international borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. When we asked our informants if they were willing to accept the existence of the state of Israel, at least under certain conditions, two-thirds of the Fatah informants who answered the question said ‘yes’.

At Camp David, Israel sought to retain sovereignty over Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem and offered only ‘shared sovereignty’ over al-Aqsa mosque. It wanted to annex the Jewish settlements that ring Jerusalem and jut deep into the West Bank, effectively ensuring that the Palestinian state would consist of three non-contiguous regions (the northern West Bank, the southern West Bank and Gaza). Questions concerning control over natural resources and the refugee issue also remained unresolved. Before the breakdown of the Camp David talks, Fatah seemed on the verge of making concessions regarding the right of return in exchange for control over all of the West Bank and Gaza (Lesch, 2008: 120). However, without guaranteed control, Arafat could compromise no further. Cultural barriers prevented it. Ingrained in Fatah ideology – and in the worldview
of the Palestinian population – were certain minimum demands that could not be abandoned. At Camp David, Clinton tried to convince Arafat to accept partial Israeli sovereignty over the Temple Mount. He offered financial inducements and a presidential compound inside the Muslim Quarter of the old city of Jerusalem, and threatened to cut off foreign aid and wash his hands of the peace process if Arafat refused. Arafat’s reply: ‘I will not betray my people or the trust they have placed in me. . . . Do you want to come to my funeral? I would rather die than agree to Israeli sovereignty of Haram al-Sharif’ (quoted in Swisher, 2004: 327, 304).

**Conclusion: The Problem of Agency**

People do not usually have to strategize much when they play out their daily routines. They rely on roles embedded in social structures and traditions embedded in cultures to solve habitual problems. They become more creatively agentic only when routines break down. As expectations founder, they begin to make tough choices and new plans. When they act on those plans, they may change social structure and culture (Jasper, 2004: 7). However, even agency does not create the world anew. That is because people draw on existing repertoires to fashion strategies. We believe that if it were possible to place strategies on a range of innovativeness, most would be clustered at the ‘less innovative’ end. It is an open question whether truly creative breakthroughs are rarer in science or political life.

That, in any event, is one conclusion we draw from our analysis of Fatah and Hamas strategizing during the second intifada. Our analysis revealed an abundance of agency. Throughout the second intifada, Fatah and Hamas leaders were intentional, anticipatory, self-reflective and self-reactive, making plans in anticipation of future contingencies and regulating and correcting their actions in light of their current and past effects. On the other hand, their actions reveal few truly creative breakthroughs. During a five-year period when Israel crushed Palestinian hopes and expectations many times over, neither Fatah nor Hamas modified their minimum demands for a peace settlement. Fatah’s central leadership never changed its position on suicide bombing. Although Hamas launched suicide attacks from the very start of the second intifada, in doing so it drew on a strategic repertoire that had been in place since 1993. Fatah’s flexibility on the question of elections and a long-term ceasefire was similarly rooted in organizational tradition. Hamas had to be ground into submission before relenting on the latter fronts and replacing suicide missions with comparatively ineffective rocket attacks.

Stating the matter differently, the strategic actions we identified were largely a response to shifting political opportunities and cultural desiderata, not human agency. On the advice of Charles Kurzman, we approached
our historical/comparative study using the same logic that quantitative sociologists deploy in multiple regression analysis (Kurzman, 2004: 118). Agreeing with James Jasper that agency is a causal mechanism (Jasper, 2004: 1), and with Stephan Fuchs that agency may explain the variance that social structure and culture cannot account for (Fuchs, 2001: 34), we set out to assess the degree to which changing political opportunities, differences in political enculturation and agency explain variation in strategic action. We found that some major actions were responsive to shifting political opportunities (indicated by the designation OS in the last two columns of Table 1), others were responsive to differences in political enculturation (indicated by PE) and still others were responsive to both (indicated by OS/PE). However, after taking opportunities and culture into account, we found little variation remained to be explained by agency.

Given that agency by itself can explain none of the main strategic actions taken by two leading political organizations during an especially turbulent and consequential period of Middle East and world history, analysts might consider moderating bold claims about agency’s supposedly universal causal primacy over political opportunities and culture. A more productive approach would seem to involve a programme of empirical research that seeks to identify the social conditions under which agency, culture and opportunity exercise independent and historically variable causal effects on action.

Notes

1. For clarity, we transliterate Arabic phonetically in the body of this article. For precision, we transliterate Arabic references according to the standards of the Middle East Studies Association.
2. This section is based mainly on Jamal (2005), Kimmerling and Migdal (2003), Mishal and Sela (2000), Robinson (2004) and Sayigh (1997).
3. See Araj (2008) for details concerning the interviews.
4. We consulted al-Quds al-Arabi rather than local Palestinian newspapers partly out of convenience (only al-Quds al-Arabi has an online archive covering the second intifada), but mainly because it is more independent and, uniquely, maintains an editorial position that overlaps Fatah and Hamas (stauchly secular, it nonetheless rejects Oslo).
5. Even the young dissidents of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade did not launch suicide attacks until the 16th month of the second intifada, long after Hamas had repeatedly done so, and only in response to the assassination of Raed al-Karmi, a folk hero and leader of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade militia in Tulkarem.

References


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Chapter 4

Suicide Bombers’ Motivations
1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I established that (1) empirical research about individual bombers based on primary data is rare; (2) no extant study examines the motivations of Palestinian suicide bombers based on a representative sample; and (3) the debate about the motivations of suicide bombers has not been resolved. This chapter seeks to overcome these deficiencies by analyzing the motivations of suicide bombers during the second Palestinian *intifada*.

My main data source is a series of interviews with close relatives and friends of a random sample of 43 suicide bombers representing about one-quarter of all Palestinian suicide bombers during the period September 2000 to July 2005. Forty-two of the interviews were usable.¹ All interviews were conducted in the spring and summer of 2006 and took place in the homes of the families of the bombers.

In the course of my analysis, I address the five theoretical issues raised in Chapter 1:

1. To what degree did psychopathology (or, less dramatically, personal crisis) play a role in motivating suicide bombers?
2. To what degree were suicide bombers motivated to act by economic need (deprivation) and/or financial inducements?
3. To what degree did the cultural background of suicide bombers – in particular, their strict adherence to Islam – incite them to attack?
4. To what degree was the decision to engage in suicide bombing a rational, strategic choice based on the desire for national liberation?
5. To what degree did Israeli state repression create an emotional basis for revenge in the form of suicide bombing?

In brief, I found little evidence that Palestinian suicide bombers suffered from psychopathology during the second *intifada*, although a small but significant minority did

¹ I eliminated one case because it turned out that the bomber conducted his attack before the second *intifada*.
suffer from a personal crisis of one sort or another in the period immediately preceding their attack. Similarly, deprivation and financial incentives played no discernible role in motivating their actions.

Religion, the desire for national liberation, and state repression motivated most of the bombers. In fact, individual bombers were often motivated by all three factors simultaneously. Based on my interviews and other sources, I counted the frequency with which relatives and close friends mentioned these motives. I also distinguished the salience of these motives, classifying them as being of primary, secondary or tertiary importance in the actions of each bomber. This procedure allowed me to provide a rough ranking in terms of causal weight of the factors that motivated suicide bombers. My main finding is that the harsh repressive measures of the Israeli regime caused a strong desire for revenge that became the primary motivation for 67 percent of the bombers. Religious inspiration was the main motivation for 25 percent of them. The desire to liberate the homeland (a strategic calculation) was never a primary motivator, but it did figure as a secondary or tertiary motivation in the actions of about half of the bombers.

2 Methodology

The Brym and Araj (2006) database of collective violence events during the second intifada contains the names of all suicide bombers and the dates of their attacks, among other data. I drew a random sample of 25 percent of all 173 suicide bombers from that source. Thirty-four were from the West Bank, nine from Gaza. I conducted the West Bank interviews and a trained and closely supervised assistant conducted the Gaza interviews. All interviews were recorded and each was approximately 90 minutes in duration.

Knowing the names of the bombers and the dates of their attacks allowed me to collect background information about each case from newspapers and other sources. I was thus able to prepare case-specific questions in addition to the general questions contained in my questionnaire (for which, see Appendix B). Because the database also contains information on the residence of each suicide bomber, I was able to track down the families of each bomber for my interviews. Not a single family refused to be interviewed.
Typically, my research assistant and I would visit each family twice – once to see if they were willing to participate in the study and to make an appointment for the interview, the second time to conduct the interview. It was not difficult to convince members of the overwhelming majority of these families to be interviewed and speak frankly. In those few cases where we felt the family might not be entirely open (for example, when the motivation of the bomber involved redemption from a sin or grave misdeed), we interviewed other people (close friends and occasionally neighbours) who might provide us with more valid answers. Undoubtedly, the ideal way to study the motivations of suicide bomber would be to ask the bombers themselves about their motivations, backgrounds and lives before they attack or after they have failed in their attempt. However, it is not possible to identify potential bombers or interview failed suicide bombers sitting in Israeli prisons. The method I chose for collecting data about the bombers is the best possible under the circumstances.

Towards the end of my questionnaire, after good rapport had been established with the respondents, they were asked about the motivations of the bomber to carry out the suicide attack. They were also asked to rank each of the motives they mentioned in order of importance and to support their answers by quoting or paraphrasing the bomber. Interviews were conducted with at last two family members of each suicide bomber. In respect of religious norms, I interviewed male relatives in one room of the suicide bomber’s home and a female research assistant interviewed female relatives in another room. This procedure allowed me to compare answers independently given by different respondents from the same family. I also compared answers with media reports if available and with materials that the bomber left behind, including videotapes, Wills, and letters.

In the infrequent case where there was a contradiction between sources, I consulted additional sources until I could distinguish a consensus viewpoint. If it was not possible to establish a consensus viewpoint, I classified the datum as unknown. In the overwhelming majority of cases, however, data collected from different sources were consistent. In short, the motivations of the bombers were identified and ranked by (1) analyzing pre-attack oral and written statements made by the bomber, (2) interviewing members of the bomber’s
family and his or her close friends, who recalled the bomber’s words and actions and on that basis claimed to know his or her motivations, (3) comparing information from diverse sources and arriving at a consensus view or, rarely, classifying a datum as unknown.

3 Results and Discussion

As Table 1 shows, I was able to identify the motivations of 40 of the 42 bombers. In 31 cases, respondents mentioned a second motivation and in 21 cases a third motivation. Following is my analysis of these motivations.

3.1 Psychological Forces and Personal Crises

To examine the degree to which bombers were influenced by personal crises or psychopathology, respondents were asked whether the suicide bomber was physically and mentally healthy and whether he or she suffered any social, emotional or other type of personal crisis in the year before the bombing that might have affected the decision to participate in the attack.

Forty of the 42 bombers were physically and mentally healthy. Several of the families stressed that the bomber was athletic and participated in competitive sports. Only one bomber had a physical disability prior to the bombing. Only one had a mental disability. The Israeli internal security service recruited him to collect information on a local leader from Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). However, the leader discovered the mole, and then gave him the opportunity to redeem himself by becoming a suicide bomber or face the consequences. When he blew himself up, several Israeli intelligence officers and soldiers were seriously injured.

In six cases, bombers suffered social, emotional or financial crises in the year preceding their attack that contributed to the decision to participate in a suicide bombing. When asked for details, it turned out that Israeli actions were responsible for four of the six cases. The first case was that of the double agent just mentioned. The discovery of his ties to the Israeli intelligence service created a severe psychological dilemma. The second case involved a man
who decided to blow himself up to clear his family’s name and to avenge the assassination of his cousin, a Hamas leader, by the Israelis. A Palestinian internal investigation after the assassination revealed that the suicide bomber’s brother was a collaborator and that he played a vital role in the assassination of this own cousin. This was a shameful situation that the bomber could not tolerate. Case #3 involved Abedalbasit Awdeh, the perpetrator of the second intifada’s deadliest suicide bombing in Netanya in March 2002. According to his brother, the Israeli decision to ban his travel caused him deep emotional pain because it prevented him from marrying the woman he loved. She lived in Iraq, and Israeli military regulations prevented her from moving to Palestine. His brother stressed, however, that that was not a main motivation for the involvement of his brother in suicide attacks. Fourth is the case of Ibraheem Naji who, according to his parents, felt lonely and depressed after the assassination of two of his close friends and the arrest of others by the Israelis. Eventually, he blew himself up to avenge the killing of his friends and in reaction to the humiliation of his father during an Israeli incursion into the refugee camp.

In the two remaining cases, personal crises were influential. One, Abdalfatah Rashhid, was a police officer. He accidentally killed a Palestinian prisoner during an interrogation regarding the theft of a car. Rasshid was jailed but then escaped. Now wanted by the Palestinian Authority and fearful that the family of his victim might pursue him, it was relatively easy for a militant from PIJ whom he had met in prison to convince him to carry out a suicide attack. To support the argument that his plan to become a suicide
<table>
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<th>State repression</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Liberation of the homeland</th>
<th>Economic factors</th>
<th>Social factors</th>
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<td>1 (1)</td>
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<td>94 (99)*</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Does not equal 100 because of rounding.
bomber was precipitous, his brother told me that Rasshid had proposed marriage shortly before the incident in the police station. In the final case, the mother of one of the bombers mentioned the chronic financial crisis of the family as a supporting factor that might have encouraged her son to blow himself up.

In addition to the six cases just discussed, social and economic factors were mentioned three times as minor or supporting motivations. In three of these cases, the social and economic difficulties the bomber faced were moderate and did not reach the level of a crisis.

Finally, I must mention Reem Riashee, Hamas’s first female suicide bomber and the first Palestinian mother to blow herself up (she had two children). Unfortunately, I was unable to confirm whether her bombing was due to pressure from her husband, a Hamas’ supporter who, according to media reports, forced his wife to conduct the attack as atonement for adultery. When he was interviewed by my research assistant in Gaza, he rejected such reports, saying that “Reem died and her secret [motivation] died with her.”

In conclusion, 95 percent of Palestinian bombers during the second intifada were physically and mentally healthy. Fourteen percent of them suffered from a personal crisis, two-thirds of those triggered by Israeli actions. However, Palestinian organizations apparently avoided recruiting individuals suffering from psychopathology; only one bomber can be classified as mentally disturbed. In addition, only one bomber can be classified with certainty as having been exploited by a militant organization (the case of the police officer who accidentally killed the prisoner). If we accept media reports regarding Hamas’s first female suicide bomber, the number of cases that were exploited by insurgents rises to two.

Let us now examine the effect of economic and financial factors on the motivations of Palestinian suicide bombers.
3.2 Economic and Financial Factors

Ninety-five percent of the respondents ruled out any effect of economic and financial factors on bombers’ motivations. In only two cases, family members said that the difficult economic situation of the family contributed to the decision to engage in a suicide attack. Even in these two cases, economic factors were not the main motivation.

Several factors support the respondents’ views on the relative insignificance of economic and financial factors. The suicide bombers were class-heterogeneous, and the proportion of them who were poor or unemployed was not much different from the corresponding proportion in the population. Based on the occupations of family members, their assets and their annual income, I asked respondents to classify their family economically before the suicide attack. Thirty-seven sets of respondents answered this question. They were given five options (corresponding percentages in parentheses): poor (8 percent), a little below average (24 percent), average (30 percent), a little above average (19 percent), and well-to-do (19 percent). With 32 percent of families seeing themselves as below average and 38 percent as above average, we must regard the economic profile of suicide bombers’ families as quite similar to that of the entire Palestinian population. I also asked respondents about the occupations of the bombers before their death. As Table 2 shows, their occupations were diverse. Only 5 percent were unemployed, compared to a Palestinian unemployment rate of 26 percent during the period 2003-05 (The Palestinian Strategic Report; 2005: 213).

Forty-six percent of suicide bombers came from cities, 34 percent from villages and 20 percent from refugee camps. Palestinians consider refugees to be a low status group, but the percentage of suicide bombers from refugee camps as well those who are refugees but moved to live outside the camp (31 percent) was lower among the suicide bombers than the corresponding percentage in the population, which exceeds 40 percent (The Palestinian Strategic Report; 2008: 328). On average, West Bank residents enjoy better economic and social conditions than Gaza residents do, but only 22 percent of the suicide bombers came from Gaza, fewer in percentage terms than the number of Gaza residents in the Palestinian population (about 30 percent).
Suicide bombers’ families received financial compensation after the suicide attack. The suicide bombers’ organizations usually gave some money, with the amount varying by organization and the family’s financial need. Various Islamic and Palestinian charities helped too. From 2000 to 2003, Saddam Hussein contributed a lump sum to the family of each suicide bomber – initially, US $10,000, rising to US $25,000 in February 2002. However, these sums did not come close to covering the families’ losses, including in many cases its main provider, its home (typically destroyed by the Israeli army), and so on.

To see whether financial compensation had any effect on the motivations of the bombers, family members were first asked whether the bomber was completely or partly financially dependent on his or her family or whether he or she was a provider. In 56 percent of cases, the bomber was either the main provider or one of the providers for his or her family. Moreover, in some cases, the bomber provided not only for his nuclear family but also for his or her extended family. In 38 percent of cases, the bomber was completely or partly dependent on his or her family financially. In two cases, the bomber was neither dependent nor a provider. However, if we take into account that 40 percent of the bombers were students, and the great majority of them were men, we see that the actual and potential percentage of providers was very high indeed. I conclude that suicide bombers caused their families considerable financial hardship, even after receiving a lump sum payment or a pension after the attack.

Another way of examining whether the family benefited financially from the suicide attack is by comparing home ownership before the suicide attack with home ownership at the time of the interview. To deter suicide bombers, Israel tried to “lessen the [financial] incentive effects by inflicting heavy costs posthumously on the martyrs’ families, and from July 2002 they began to systematically destroy houses of martyrs’ families [immediately after the suicide attack]” (Ricolfi, 2005: 113). Significantly, before the suicide attacks, 82 percent of the families of suicide bombers that I interviewed owned their house or apartment. That figure dropped to 56 percent when asked about their current residence. Thus, about a quarter of the families in the sample did not have enough
Table 2 Characteristics of Suicide Bombers in the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age at death</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Political affiliation</th>
<th>Date of attack</th>
<th>Location of attack</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Israelis killed</th>
<th>Israelis wounded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ahmed al-Khaeeb</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Balata Refugee Camp</td>
<td>Fatah &amp; PFLP</td>
<td>24/04/03</td>
<td>Kfar Saba</td>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>Single</td>
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<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ibraheem Naji</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Balata Refugee Camp</td>
<td>PIJ</td>
<td>17/07/02</td>
<td>Tel-Aviv</td>
<td>Manual worker</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sa’er Huninee</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Beit Foureek</td>
<td>PFLP</td>
<td>26/12/03</td>
<td>Petah Tiqva</td>
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<tr>
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<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Nablus</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>29/04/01</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Tubas</td>
<td>PIJ</td>
<td>07/10/01</td>
<td>Bisan</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hebah Duragmeh</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Tubas</td>
<td>PIJ</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Afula</td>
<td>University Student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>several</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Iss al-Dien al-Mussri</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Aqaba</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>09/08/01</td>
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<td>Umer Zyadeh</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Madama</td>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Herzliya</td>
<td>Owner of two grocery stores</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>Nablus</td>
<td>Fatah &amp; PIJ</td>
<td>12/01/04</td>
<td>Near Nablus checkpoint</td>
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<tr>
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<td>M</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Deir al-Ghosoun</td>
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<td>Tel-Aviv</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Deir al-</td>
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<td>Status</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Hebron</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>Teacher &amp; graduate student</td>
<td>Married, three children</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Tens of people</td>
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<td>Hamas</td>
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<td>Single</td>
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<td>al-Shuja’</td>
<td>PIJ</td>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
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<td>al-Zaytoun</td>
<td>PFLP</td>
<td>Police officer</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Several soldiers</td>
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<td>al-Atatra</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>Erez checkpoint</td>
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<td>Jabalia Camp</td>
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<td>University Student</td>
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<td>Rufeeq Hummad</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Qalqilya</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>Manual worker</td>
<td>Married, four children</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Fadee Amer</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Qalqilya</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>Israeli settlement near Qalqilya</td>
<td>A university Student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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79
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<th>Group</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Children Type</th>
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<td>M</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Nablus</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>02/12/01</td>
<td>Haifa Air conditioner technician</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Mohamed Nussir</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Qubatia</td>
<td>PIJ</td>
<td>12/08/01</td>
<td>Haifa Member, PA intelligence apparatus</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Humdee Inso</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Al-Shatee Refugee Camp</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>07/11/00</td>
<td>Israeli boat in the Mediterranean Guard, Islamic University, Gaza</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>Shadie Al-Nubaheen</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Al-Burj Refugee Camp</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>19/05/2003</td>
<td>Israeli settlement, Gaza Strip Unemployed</td>
<td>Single</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Reem al-Riasheen</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Gaza City</td>
<td>Hamas &amp; Fatah</td>
<td>14/01/04</td>
<td>Erez checkpoint Homemaker</td>
<td>Married, two children</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nablus</td>
<td>PIJ</td>
<td>17/07/02</td>
<td>Tel Aviv Mechanic</td>
<td>Single</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>al-Ain Refugee Camp</td>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td>22/03/02</td>
<td>Near Israel-West Bank border Manual worker</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Anabta</td>
<td>PIJ</td>
<td>30/01/02</td>
<td>al-Tybeh Manual worker</td>
<td>Single</td>
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</table>

Note: The average age of the bombers was 22.5 years and their age range was 17-32 years. Two-thirds of the bombers were between 18 and 24 years old and one-third was between 25 and 32. Only two of the bombers were unemployed. Forty percent were students and about thirty percent were manual workers. The rest were distributed across diverse occupations. Just 12 percent of the bombers were married. About 230 Israelis were killed and more than 900 were injured by the suicide bombers in my sample. Thus, each suicide bomber in the sample killed on average 5 Israelis and injured more than 20.
financial resources to rebuild their homes after the Israeli army destroyed them. Moreover, even in cases where families rebuilt their homes, financial compensation for the suicide bombing was typically insufficient for reconstruction. The cost of building a house in Palestine is typically between US $20,000 and US $50,000. Not unusually, therefore, the father of suicide bomber Ibraheem Naji had to sell a plot of land to cover his expenses.

I must also note that 62 percent of the bodies of the suicide bombers in my sample were interred in special military cemeteries inside Israel. For a family to obtain the body for burial in Palestine, it had to hire a lawyer and pay between US $5,000 and US $20,000 to the lawyer and the Israeli government. Many of the bombers’ bodies are in fact still in the hand of the Israelis because their families cannot afford to recover them. Most of the families I interviewed incurred still more costs. Immediately after a suicide attack, the Israeli army typically surrounded the family’s house, gave it short notice to leave, sometimes before having a chance to remove personal belongings, arrested the bomber’s male relatives (to take DNA samples, collect information about the bomber, and make sure that family members did not help the bomber), and imposed a curfew on the whole village or town. Finally, in several cases family members lost their jobs permanently. For example, the Israelis revoked the permit of the father of suicide bomber Mohammed Atallah, which allowed him to drive a taxi from Nablus to Ramallah. The family’s main source of income thus disappeared overnight.

In sum, the evidence does not support the argument that financial incentives motivated suicide bombers. More convincing interpretations of the motivations of suicide bombers are based on religion, strategic considerations, and retaliation for state repression.

3.3 State Repression

As Table 1 shows, taking revenge because of an Israeli action – against the bomber, somebody he or she knew, or the Palestinians in general – was the principal motivation for 67 percent of suicide bombers, the secondary motivation for 29 percent, and the tertiary motivation for 10 percent. Only one suicide bomber in my sample was not
motivated at all by Israeli state repression. Even that bomber (the police officer to whom I referred earlier) had a long history with Israeli repression. He spent eight years in Israeli prison due to involvement in the first *intifada* and was twice injured by Israeli bullets.

The case of Iyad al-Masri was typical. He was a 17-year-old suicide bomber from Nablus who blew himself up to avenge the death of his 15-year-old brother and his 14-year-old first cousin. Iyad was with his brother when the latter was shot by an Israeli soldier and was eager for revenge. He blew himself up just nine days after his brother’s death.

Another example is Hebah Duragmeh, a 19-year-old university student majoring in English literature, who blew herself up in an Israeli shopping mall in Afula, killing four people. Hebah was strongly affected by what had happened to her 23-year-old brother, Bakir, and the rest of her family. According to her mother, Bakir “was not only Heba’s brother but also her best friend.” He was first seriously injured during a demonstration against the Israeli occupation. As a result, he had to spend almost a year in hospital, including 40 days in a coma. He lost part of his liver. After he was released from hospital, Bakir became more aggressive and was involved in military activities against the Israelis. Eventually, he was arrested and sentenced to 99 years in prison. The Israeli military court also decided that the family’s house would be destroyed. According to Hebah’s mother, her daughter blow herself up as a reaction to what the Israeli soldiers did to the family. “Hebah used to wonder how her brother, Bakir, lives in the prison; what he eats, what he wears, and how he feels about spending the rest of his life there…I remember one day after visiting Bakir in his prison, she became very angry after hearing how he was tortured by the Israelis. Hebah was also strongly affected by what the [Israeli] soldiers did when they came to destroy our house. It was so big…530 square metres… They threw our clothes on the floor and then poured olive oil on them and on the couches….They destroyed Hebah’s school notebooks days before her final exams….. Hebah, who was the best student in her class, worked hard to achieve an average that would enable her to win a scholarship…. All that affected her average significantly as well as her chances of getting a scholarship. They also attached dynamite to the roots of the trees in our back yard and destroyed the trees she took care of…. Among the things
that hurt her the most was seeing me sitting on the ground crying near the rubble of our house, not knowing where to go.”

Several suicide bombers were influenced by Israeli actions not against them or immediate family members but against other Palestinians whom they knew. For example, Sa’r Hunanee, a member of the Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), blew himself up to avenge two other PFLP members whom he knew and were assassinated by Israeli forces. According to his mother, Sa’r “was also affected by what happened to Samer al-Wahdan. Samer was injured during clashes [stone throwing] with the Israelis….Due to his injury, Samer was lying on the street when an Israeli jeep drove over his legs and body several times….Sa’r, who saw what happened, could not sleep for days….He used to wake up during the night calling Samer’s name and telling him that he will save him.”

In other cases, the bomber did not personally know the Palestinians whom he avenged. Such was the case of Inad Shokeirat. This suicide bomber was by chance among the first to see the body parts of five Palestinian activists assassinated by the Israeli army in an apartment in Nablus. He told his brother “it was obvious that these men were tortured before they were executed. Also there were signs of dog bites on their bodies.” Other bombers were influenced by what they saw on TV. After watching the news about the massacre in Jenin Refugee Camp, where more than 50 Palestinians were killed, Abdalalkaereem Thaine asked his mother: “How can I sleep, mother, while they kill and murder our people?”

Finally, several cases of suicide bombers were affected, at least partly, by Israeli repression in earlier periods, confirming Zwerman’s and Steinhoff’s (2005:102) view that “repression may have serious long-term” effects and “may be borne by the state for decades after its apparent end.” For example, Hashim al-Najar, an MA student and Hamas’s first suicide bomber in the West Bank during the second intifada, had witnessed the massacre of 29 Palestinian by Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein in a Hebron mosque in 1993 (an event Palestinians often link to the their first suicide bombing campaign, which
preceded the second *intifada*). According to Hashim’s sister, her brother, who was 17 when the massacre took place, helped transfer the wounded to nearby hospitals. He also lost one of his best friends in the massacre. Since that event, he “always felt that he will eventually be killed by the Israelis. He wanted to make his death so costly.” Another bomber, Muhmoud al-Qwasmi, who blew himself up on 5 March 2003, killing fifteen Israelis in Haifa, witnessed the Hebron mosque massacre at the age of 10.

Similarly, Raed Misk, who killed 23 Israeli civilians, hated the Israelis deeply because of what happened to his mother when he was fifteen years old. Misk was in an Israeli prison when his mother died the morning of her biweekly visit. Although she died from natural causes, Misk held the Israelis responsible for separating him from his mother when he was a teenager, worsening her condition. According to his brother and sister-in-law, his mother’s death changed him forever. Misk, by the way, and some other bombers from Hebron such as Mujahed al-Ju’bery, were also affected by the brutal killing of a Palestinian child by Israeli forces. According to Raed’s brother, Israeli soldiers approached four Palestinian children and forced them to draw lots. On each piece of paper an instruction was written – “break my hand,” “shoot my legs,” “throw me from a jeep,” and the like. “The unlucky child, the brother of Raed’s student, chose ‘throw me from a jeep.’” Ejected face down from the speeding military vehicle, the child died immediately.

The strong effect of harsh Israeli repression on Palestinian suicide bombers is also evident from the fact that most of the bombers experienced Israeli repression firsthand. For example, I found that 74 percent of the bombers in my sample had been arrested or injured by Israeli forces, lost close relatives or their home because of Israeli action, or were eyewitnesses to a massacre or an assassination instigated by Israel.

Finally, respondents were asked to describe the level of involvement of their family, clan (*hamuleh*), settlement (city, village, or refugee camp), and district in the struggle against the Israeli occupation in comparison with other families, clans, settlements, and districts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Most of the respondents considered that involvement
relatively high or above average. This is also an indicator that suicide bombers tended to come from social settings that experienced an unusually high level of repression.

We now turn to an examination of the effects of religion, the second most important motivator for suicide attacks.

3.4 Religion

Religion was the main motivation for 24 percent of bombers in my sample, a secondary motivation for 48 percent, and a tertiary motivation for 5 percent. Religion played some role in motivating two-thirds of the suicide bombers in my sample. The case of Na’el Abu-Hleal is typical example. Na’el, according to his father, “cared about the afterlife more than this life… He was known for his love of martyrdom…. [For example,] during the first intifada, Na’el planned to stab an Israeli soldier…. He changed his mind at the last minute to avoid hurting a [Palestinian] mother and her daughter who were passing by when he was about to approach the soldier.” When he was asked, days before his death, about his plans to get married, he replied: “I do not want to marry a woman from this life but women from the afterlife [the 72 virgins promised to martyrs in the Koran].” Na’el was strictly religious most of his life, which he lived modestly. He used to lead people in prayer (a task usually undertaken by sheikhs) and memorized the whole Qur’an. Na’el, who only shaved his beard on the day of the attack to avoid being noticed by the Israelis (since wearing a beard is a sign of religiosity), was seen praying in a mosque just hours before he executed his suicide attack. Another example of this religious type of suicide bomber was Fadee Amer. Fadee was devout since childhood and earned several certificates in reading Qur’an. According to his sister, he was the “most religious person on our street… he used to go with al-Da’wa men [religious activists who travel from town to town to spread Islam and remind Muslims to practice their religion] to urge people to become more religious.” Before becoming a Hamas member, Fadee was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. His sister and mother heard him many times saying that a martyr can help 72 of his relatives in the afterlife and in heaven he will marry the women who are waiting for him.
Not surprisingly, religious belief figured much more prominently in the motivation of suicide bombers attached to Islamicist organizations (Hamas and PIJ) than in the motivation of suicide bombers attached to secular organizations (Fatah and PFLP) (see Table 3).

3.5 Strategic Motivations

“Liberating the homeland” was mentioned as a motivation in just over half the cases in my sample. However, none of the bombers’ families said that liberating Palestine was the bomber’s main motive. It was the secondary motivation in five cases, and the tertiary motivation in sixteen cases. For example, Maher Hubiehseh blew himself up in Haifa, killing eighteen Israeli civilians. He devoted part of his last Will to urging Palestinians to stop negotiating with the Israelis and adopt the way of resistance and *jihad* because it is the “only way” to “liberate Palestine and Jerusalem.” Maher’s principal motivation, however, was to avenge the assassination of Hamas’s West Bank leaders Jamal Munsour and Jamal Sleem. Maher, who had an appointment with the two leaders, was taken to the hospital because he was in shock after seeing their bodies as well as the bodies of three other people killed as “collateral damage” during the Israeli operation. Similarly, Nubeel al-Ur’eer, the second *intifada’s* first suicide bomber, urged the Palestinians in his last Will to continue the path of *intifada*, suicide bombing, and *jihad* until they “recover their right and land.” He also reminded his people that, “as you have seen, this peace [the peace process with the Israelis] brought nothing to us. We have not achieved any of our demands….Continue the *intifada* until we defeat the enemy and force it to leave our land.”

4 Conclusion

The motivations of Palestinian suicide bombers were typically complex. They drew mainly on the desire for revenge against the harsh repressive measures of Israeli forces and, secondarily, on religious inspiration. The effects of harsh Israeli state repression were very strong, figurating at least partly in 95 percent of my sample. Religious motivations varied by organization, with bombers recruited by Islamicist organizations
tending to be more strongly influenced by religious factors than were bombers recruited by secular organizations. Strategic calculation – the assessment that suicide bombing would hasten the liberation of the homeland – was not the principal motivation for any of the bombers in my sample but was a secondary or tertiary motivation for about half of them. Material incentives, economic necessity, exploitation of individual by unscrupulous organizations, and psychopathology were largely irrelevant as motivators.

My analysis has important theoretical implications for the study of suicide bombers. As noted in Chapter 1, most researchers in the field argue for the importance of strategic calculation, religious fanaticism or, less frequently, some other single factor as the cause of suicide bombing. I dispute such monocausal reasoning on three grounds. First, it tends to reduce social actors to dull calculating machines or robots strictly programmed by cultural demands – what Brym and Hamlin (2009) call “rational fools” or “cultural dopes.” The actors I examined were neither. They struggled to navigate the political opportunities they confronted, make sense of the culture in which they were embedded, and map out the course of action that made the most sense to them under the circumstances they had to deal with. The second problem with monocausal reasoning is that it ignores that Palestinian suicide bombers were typically prompted to act by multiple social forces. Paying attention to only one of them robs them of their complexity as social actors. Finally, monocausal thinkers have focused so tightly on religion and strategic calculation that they have almost completely ignored what I have found to be the single most important factor motivating Palestinian suicide bombers: harsh state repression, which creates a widespread desire for violent revenge. This desire that may be held in abeyance for a time, but it seems always capable of percolating to the surface as long as harsh state repression persists.

The foregoing considerations suggest the need for nothing less than a reorientation of the study of suicide bombers – a reorientation that recognizes the fundamental humanity of the people who commit these horrific acts, the complexity of the forces that drive them, and the importance of the interaction between them and their enemies in the patterning of their behaviour.
Table 3  Principal Motivation of Suicide Bombers by Organizational Affiliation (in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Avenge repression</th>
<th>Religious belief</th>
<th>Liberation of homeland</th>
<th>Exploitation</th>
<th>Mental illness</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>PIJ</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFLP</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatah/PFLP*</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

n = 19, 13, 5, 2, 1, 1, 1
Chapter 5

Conclusions
1 Main Findings

This dissertation draws attention to the interaction between insurgents and the target state as the appropriate context for studying suicide bombing. This focus distinguishes it from most other studies, which are terrorist-centered. Other studies focus on the state of mind, economic and class background, culture (especially religion), competition among militant organizations and strategic choices of the terrorists themselves, paying little or no attention to the broader sociological context that helps to create suicide bombers. As we have seen, moving the interaction between conflicting parties to the analytical foreground helps explain many of the unresolved puzzles in the field. I now discuss these puzzles in light of my findings.

The macro level. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, during the 1990s, when Israeli repression was relatively moderate, Palestinian public support for suicide bombing was low (26.1 percent in the last poll before the second intifada). However, harsh Israeli repression under Prime Minister Barak’s government was the principal factor underlying the significant increase in Palestinian public support for suicide bombing in the first few months of the second intifada (66 percent). Ongoing repression under Ariel Sharon’s government (2001-05) played an important role in keeping support above the 50 percent mark. Although Palestinians became increasingly aware that suicide bombing had a radicalizing effect on Israeli public opinion, a strong negative effect on Israeli policy towards the Palestinians and their cause, and damaging consequences for the reputation of the Palestinian national struggle internationally, support for suicide bombing remained high. This fact demonstrates that the central mechanism suggested by Pape’s (2005) rational choice theory (that terrorists target the civilians of a democratic state to mobilize them to pressure their government to withdraw its forces) is only part of the story. In the Palestinian case, suicide bombing was not only a means of pushing Israelis to pressure their government, but also a means of punishing them for their silence regarding the
harsh actions taken by their government. Strategic goals and religious beliefs, which vary little over time, cannot fully explain why, in just a few months, Palestinian society changed its position from opposing the killing of Israeli civilians to supporting or even demanding such acts. Harsh repression during those few months does explain the transformation.

Public support increased the motivation of radical organizations to carry out suicide attacks, made it difficult for relatively moderate leaders and organizations to condemn such tactics, turned bombers into heroes, and thus encouraged more individuals to volunteer for suicide attacks. Harsh state repression had direct effects on organizations, not just indirect effects, as Bloom (2005) holds.

The meso level. As we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, harsh military occupier repression did not just increase the frequency of suicide bombing. It was a major factor behind the decision of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) to adopt the tactic in the first place. About half of the leaders I interviewed from these two organizations maintained that harsh state repression was the main factor behind the adoption of suicide bombing, while 40 percent held that strategic factors were most important. Both logics (retaliatory and strategic) co-existed within each of these religious organizations, although suicide bombing was more strategic for PIJ. In contrast, none of the 16 leaders from the two secular organizations that used suicide bombing perceived it as a liberation strategy. Tellingly, the Popular

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1 At the end of the second intifada, Israeli forces withdrew from Gaza. However, the pullout was not a consequence of Palestinian suicide attacks. An examination of the geographic location of suicide bombings and the geographical origin of the bombers themselves casts doubt on this interpretation. Only 18 percent of all suicide attacks during the second intifada took place in Gaza. Just 2 of the 84 suicide bombers who carried out missions in Israel proper came from Gaza. If suicide attacks were a decisive factor in leading to territorial concessions, one would expect those concessions to have been made in the West Bank, not Gaza (Brym and Araj, 2006: 1980). Note also that Gaza is still under effective Israeli control despite the withdrawal.
Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) never launched a suicide attack until Israel assassinated its leader. In total, it conducted fewer than ten attacks – most of them soon after Israel assassinated one of its leaders or activists. The PFLP justified its attacks by pointing to the assassinations. The same applies to Fatah. Suicide attacks were often revenge attacks, not strategic choices or the outcome of inter-organizational competition, as Pape (2005) and Bloom (2005) assert.

If an organization adopted suicide bombing mainly to achieve a strategic goal, particularly the liberation of what insurgents believe is their homeland (Pape), or to increase the popularity and the prestige of their organization (Bloom), one would expect that the central leadership of that organization would initiate and support the decision. As we have seen, the vast majority of Fatah’s suicide bombings were conducted by the organization’s military wing and were condemned by its older, central leadership, demonstrating that Fatah as a whole did not plan to resort to suicide bombing. Instead, the tactic was initiated “from below,” by Fatah’s local leaders, as a reaction to Israel repression.

In Chapter 3, I examined the causal weight of structure, culture, and agency in shaping strategic action, including the decision to adopt or reject suicide bombing. My findings render the conclusions of Chapter 2 more convincing. Political enculturation in Fatah was largely responsible for the Fatah leadership’s rejection and condemnation of suicide bombing. On the other hand, political enculturation in Hamas, as well as changes in the opportunity structure (such as increasing Israeli repression), explain Hamas’ decision to use suicide bombing during the second intifada as both a liberation strategy and a reaction to repression. Moreover, changes in opportunity structure – including not just unprecedented levels or repression but also a series of international and regional political developments that were negative from the Palestinian perspective, explain the decision of Hamas and young Fatah activists to accept a long-term ceasefire in February/March 2005. With few exceptions, two of the most important principles of that long-term ceasefire – cessation of Palestinian suicide bombings against Israeli targets and the assassination of Palestinian political leaders in the West Bank and Gaza -- still hold as of
This point was reached when Israeli repression seriously undermined Hamas’ ability to conduct suicide bombing. As suicide bombers became unable to respond to repression, the tactic became less attractive for Hamas leaders. Does this mean that harsher repression was able to put an end to Palestinian suicide bombing? It is too early to give a final answer to this question. However, two things are clear. First, the decision to stop suicide bombing, at least in the medium term, was partly a result of the interaction between the target state and insurgents rather than a result of a fatwa, strategic achievement, or the growing unpopularity of suicide bombing among Palestinians. Second, the continuation of Israeli repression during and after the second intifada motivated Palestinian insurgents, especially those affiliated with Hamas, to develop an alternative tactic, namely rocket attacks against Israeli population centres. As one Hamas respondent put it, “at least temporarily we replaced our human bombs with our non-human bombs [rockets manufactured by Hamas experts] ….We cannot just watch them [the Israelis] bombing our towns and refugee camps and do nothing about it.” Thus, the continuation of harsh repression plays a major role in motivating insurgents to create new ways of adjust to a new reality.

*The micro level.* As Chapter 4 shows, the effect of harsh repression at the individual level is not weaker than its effects at the organizational and societal levels. I was able to identify the motivations of 40 out of 42 suicide bombers in my sample. Taking revenge because of Israeli action against Palestinians, motivated 39 of the 40 bombers. It was the principle motivation for 67 percent of the suicide bombers, the secondary motivation for 29 percent, and the tertiary motivation for 10 percent. Only one suicide bomber in my sample was not motivated by repression. Even he had a long history with Israeli repression. This finding does not imply that Palestinian bombers were motivated by only one cause. On the contrary, they were motivated by multiple factors. State repression is
only the most important. Islamic religion was the primary motivation of 24 percent of bombers in my sample, a secondary motivation for 48 percent, and a tertiary motivation for 5 percent. The third most important motivation was “liberation of the homeland,” which influenced about half the cases in my sample. However, none of the bombers’ families said that liberating Palestine was the bomber’s main motive. It was the secondary motivation in 5 cases, and the tertiary motivation in 16 cases.

In the context of analyzing the effect of repression on suicide bombing at the micro, meso and macro levels, we noticed mutually reinforcing effects among levels. Public support for suicide bombing turned individual bombers into heroes and thus encouraged more volunteers. Without individuals, organizations could not conduct suicide attacks and without enough volunteers suicide bombing campaigns would not have been possible. Also, it would have been hard for organizations to sustain and intensify such campaigns without popular support. Similarly, it is very unlikely that individual initiatives or non-organized suicide attacks could have continued and succeeded without the help of sponsoring organizations.

Finally, contrary to existing analyses of suicide bombing, which are for the most part monocausal, the approach employed in Chapters 3 and 4 are multivariate. My idea that harsh state repression is a major cause of suicide bombing does not mean that other factors, such as strategic calculation and cultural influence, are irrelevant. Rather, I have built upon previous studies without agreeing with all of their assumptions and conclusions. For example, Pape’s view of suicide bombing as a national liberation strategy is partly correct and represents a major theoretical breakthrough in understanding the causes of this global problem. As we saw in Chapter 2, strategic considerations were part of Hamas’s and PIJ’s logic for suicide bombing, while this was not the case for Fatah and the PFLP. Similarly, strategic considerations were one of the motivating factors for half of the bombers, albeit only of secondary and tertiary importance. Synthesizing Pape’s rational strategic approach with my own ideas has led to development of a typology comprising three ideal types of organizational rationale underlying the use of suicide bombing. Suicide bombing may be (1) an extreme reaction to extreme state
repression (Fatah and PFLP) (2) a combined reactive and strategic action (Hamas and PIJ), or (3) a purely strategic action (this does not exist, or does not exist yet in the Palestinian context).

Contrary to Bloom, I found that Palestinian organizations are more sensitive to the external enemy than to interorganizational competition. Moreover, secular Palestinian organizations did not need to engage in suicide bombing to increase their popularity because public support for guerrilla attacks was 30 percent higher than it was for suicide bombing. However, Bloom’s analysis pointed me in the direction of understanding one of the mechanisms that explain how public support affects suicide bombing: State repression increases public support for suicide bombing, which in turn enhances organizational incentives to conduct suicide attacks.

Contrary to Huntington (1996), I found that religious ideals were the main motivation for just 24 percent of the suicide bombers in my sample. I concluded that while the presence of certain cultural resources increases the probability that individual members of some cultural groups will engage in suicide attacks, one must be careful not to exaggerate the significance of these resources. Here again, my approach was synthetic. Just as Bloom’s work offered useful insights at the macro level, and Pape’s at the meso level, so did Huntington’s analysis helped me better understand micro-level processes – although I found evidence contradicting the exclusivity of the arguments of all three scholars.

Still, my dissertation suffers from several weaknesses that one must keep in mind when interpreting its findings. Let me now review them.

2 The Dissertation’s Shortcomings

I readily admit that several issues may have influenced my findings. First, despite my vigorous attempts to collect accurate and comprehensive data about Palestinian suicide bombers during the second intifada, the fact that I had to rely mainly on family members and close friends of suicide bombers for information leaves room for inaccurate interpretations of the bombers’ words and actions, especially in the several cases where a
video tape, last Will or other hard evidence was lacking. I do not know of any systematic bias in my data or my interpretation of them, but unknown biases may lurk in the background.

Second, the interviews with senior organizational leaders may have been self-serving – the leaders may have said things that make their organization look good and their competitors and enemies look bad. I employed various forms of triangulation to avoid such manipulation before, during, and after the interviews – for example, I checked statements against documentary evidence. Nonetheless, there is still a chance that some leaders provided some inaccurate or “diplomatic” answers, although, again, I know of no systematic bias in this regard.

Third, respondents’ forgetfulness or distortions may have influenced my findings. Despite the fact that all the interviews took place in 2006, the year following the end of the second intifada, some of the questions were about events that took place as long ago as 2000. Some information may have been lost or distorted due to memory-related problems. However, four factors helped to minimize the effect of this problem. (1) By their very nature, political leaders have to be aware of their organizational history. (2) The death of a family member due to a suicide attack is a deeply memorable event in any family’s life. Family members are motivated to keep the memory of the bomber alive. (3) Some information was kept in a manner that allowed it to be unaffected by the passage of time. This information was recorded in Wills, video tapes, organizational documents, pictures, sometimes even poetry written by a bomber. This information contributed much to my analysis. (4) At least seven people from each organization and several people from each family were interviewed. In some cases, family members reminded each other of events that took place before the death of the bomber. As a matter of fact, I have heard the phrase “I never knew that” several times from family members, while listening to each other during the interviews. Thus, memory problems were corrected at various stages of the interview process.
The fourth and final potential shortcoming of this dissertation is that I am an insider. Having left the West Bank in 2000, I know the culture, the language and the accents of every Palestinian county. I have followed Palestinian politics as well as developments in the Palestinian-Israeli context intimately for decades. This background was invaluable in helping me conduct my fieldwork and collect the rich and unique data analyzed in this dissertation. However, being an insider while studying a subject as sensitive as suicide bombing might raise questions about my objectivity. I can only respond as every honest researcher must, by asking my readers to consider the nature of the data I have employed and the dispassionate manner in which I have sought to analyze them. Insofar as possible, I have supported my arguments with evidence and findings from non-Palestinian sources, including data from the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (b’Tselem) and a host of Israeli researchers who have studied Palestinian suicide bombers. Many of my sources are publicly accessible. In the future, I intend to make my interviews available to other researchers.

I do not believe that any of the potential shortcomings that I have outlined affect my main conclusions. At most, they might influence the degree to which some factors affected specific outcomes, but they do not have an impact on the general trends I have identified.

I turn now to some suggestions for future research.

3 Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this dissertation highlight the need to examine whether state repression has similar effects on suicide bombings in other conflicts. The indicators of such effects in countries that have witnessed suicide bombing are enough to stimulate the curiosity of researchers trying to make sense of suicide bombing. They include the effects of the 1983 attacks on Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka, the destruction of Kurdish villages by the Turkish army, the Russian bombing of population centres in Chechnya, the atrocities of the Ministry of Interior and security services against Sunni Muslims in Iraq, human rights violation by the US Army in Iraq, the killing of thousands of Afghan civilians by NATO forces, and the repression of Islamic groups by the state apparatuses of Egypt and Algeria.
in the 1990s. As this list suggests, many suicide bombings in recent decades have been intracivilizational, unpopular among Muslims, non-strategic (in the sense that they took place in countries that do not suffer from foreign occupation) and episodic (and therefore not part of any national liberation campaign). To study such cases, we need more convincing approaches than those currently available. A focus on the effects of repression recommends itself as a fruitful direction for such research.

As noted in Chapter 1, Merari (2007: 101) maintains that the most common explanation of suicide terrorism emphasizes cultural factors. Despite this fact, the effect of culture on suicide bombing still requires examination and clarification, partly because most of the scholars who have studied the subject focus on just one element of culture (religion) while ignoring other elements (such as social solidarity and values).

Specifically, since suicide attacks are by no means a constant in Islamic history, we need to know under what conditions Muslims involved in a political cause use religion to promote suicide attacks. Do Muslims resort to suicide attacks only in periods when they are weak politically, economically, and/or militarily? If so, why did they not employ this tactic in the Middle East during the 18th, 19th, or early 20th centuries, when many Arab countries were under Western military occupation, including the brutal French occupation of Algeria (which lasted about 130 years and witnessed the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Muslims), British colonial rule in Palestine (1917-48), the Italian occupation of Libya, and so on? Is it because the level of religiosity was low, or at least lower than or different from the level of religiosity in the post-Iranian-Revolution Islamic world? In the same context, why has suicide bombing appeared in some Islamic countries or communities but not in others? Why, for example, did Muslims use suicide bombing in Chechnya but not in Bosnia despite the many similarities between both communities and conflicts?

Since suicide attacks have been used in non-Islamic countries, such as Japan and Sri Lanka, we still need to know what Japanese, Sri Lankan, and Islamic cultures have in common that promote the adoption of the tactic. Similarly, one could ask why suicide
bom[b]bing has not appeared in some Western countries or cultures at times when these countries were under direct military occupation and subjected to even higher level of repression or state violence than the Palestinians are. Obvious cases include European countries that fell under Nazi control during World War II. Similarly, why did Jews – one of the first groups to employ suicide missions\(^2\) – not employ this tactic when they were subjected to perhaps the most tragic massacre in human history during World War II? Is their failure to do so related to the availability of other types of weapons, or the influence of Western “individualistic culture” on Jewish activists during the war? These questions suggest that while harsh state repression may be a factor underlying the adoption of suicide bombing in some conflicts, other conflicts involving harsh repression have not given rise to suicide bombing. We need to know the conditions, including the cultural context, under which harsh state repression has different effects.

One possibility is that suicide attacks are a form of what Emile Durkheim called “altruistic suicide,” which, he argued, tends to be most frequent among the most highly integrated or solida[ry groups. All else the same, are highly integrated groups – those in which individuals are most likely to share a common moral code that – especially prone to engage in suicide attacks? Only comparative analysis can determine whether level of solidarity accounts for the different effects of harsh state repression.

It is also necessary to examine whether other elements of culture, such as norms and values, have an effect on suicide bombing and if so, how and to what degree? Recall the police officer mentioned in Chapter 4 who blew himself up partly because he was afraid that the family of his victim might come after him. This case suggests what anthropologists have long known: revenge has deep roots in Arabic culture, extending to

\(^2\) I have in mind the suicidal actions of the Sicari (a Jewish sect) at Masada in the first century CE in their fight against Roman occupiers. Jewish religious sources give us an even earlier example – that of Samson’s attack on the Philistines – but the only historical example of an earlier suicide attack took place in 480 BCE, when one of the two Spartan survivors of the Battle of Thermopylae attacked the Persian army in certain knowledge of his own death.
pre-Islamic times, partly because of the historical weakness, even absence, of the state in the Arab world. My guess is that tens of Palestinians die every year in the West Bank and Gaza due to revenge-related crimes. If this practice is widespread even in internal disputes, then avenging the death of a close relative who has been killed by an external enemy becomes less surprising. Studying the effects of culture on suicide bombing may need to take a direction other than the Islamophobic approach so common today.

We also need to examine whether the types of organizational rationales for suicide bombing identified in this dissertation (suicide bombing as an extreme reaction to extreme state repression, a combined reactive and strategic action, or a purely strategic action) can usefully classify suicide bombing organizations worldwide. This kind of research seems especially important because different policy recommendations may be required for different types of organizations.

Finally, we have seen that the motivations of the Palestinian suicide bombers of the second intifada were typically complex, most frequently drawing on the desire for revenge against repressive forces as a primary motivation and religious inspiration and strategic calculations as secondary and tertiary motivations, respectively. However, we do not know how these motivations emerged in the life-course of suicide bombers. Nor do we know how different motives influenced each other. This knowledge can be gained either by re-interviewing a subsample of the family members who were interviewed for this dissertation or by conducting similar research in other contexts.

Good research raises at least as many questions as it answers. I trust the foregoing demonstrates that this dissertation is derelict in neither respect.
Appendix A  Interview Schedule for Palestinian Militant Leaders

Note: Interviews for leaders of each organization differed slightly. This schedule was used for Hamas leaders.

Part Zero: Pre-interview

V1. Interview ID #: __________

Introduction

My name is Bader al-Araj. I am originally from the West Bank but I am now studying at the University of Toronto in Canada. For my PhD thesis I am analyzing the interaction between Israeli repression policies and Palestinian tactics of resistance, especially during the second intifada. I am interested in knowing more about how Palestinian organizations perceive Israeli state repression and how they react to it.

You can refuse to answer any question I ask and you can stop the interview at any time. The information I gather will be used only for social scientific purposes. If you agree to be interviewed, I will keep your responses confidential and anonymous unless you give me permission to identify you as a respondent.

V2. Are you willing to be interviewed for this study [1=yes, 2=no]? [If the answer to V2 is 2, end interview. If the answer to V2 is 1, go to V3.] __________

V3. May I identify you by name as a respondent or do you wish to remain anonymous and be identified only as a senior member of your organization? [1=okay to be identified by name, 2=identify only as a senior member of a certain organization] __________

With your permission, I would like to record the interview for purposes of subsequent analysis. The recording will be sent to Toronto immediately upon completion of the interview and stored securely. The original recording will then be erased. No copy of the recording will remain in the Occupied Territories or in Israel. The recording will not be made available to anyone other than the researcher.
V4. Will you permit me to record the interview? [1=yes, 2=no] __________

Upon completion of the study, a summary of the results will be posted on the World Wide Web in English and Arabic at www.chass.utoronto.ca/brym/intifada2. A printed summary of the results in your language of choice can also be obtained by contacting me at the following e-mail address: abdalrah@chass.utoronto.ca. Finally, the results of this research will be published in a book about the second intifada in English, Arabic and perhaps other languages.

V5. Month of interview [4-9] __________


V7. Start time of interview [00:00 to 24:00] ______________

[The respondent should receive a copy of this page.]
Part One: Personal and Organizational Background

To ensure that the questionnaire will take no more than 90 minutes to administer, some of my questions are closed-ended; they provide you with a list of responses from which you must choose. To save time, I respectfully request that you do not comment on closed-ended questions. Other questions are open-ended and will allow you to elaborate your opinions and judgments. I begin with some closed-ended questions.

Personal Background

V8. Name [optional] _______________________________________________

V9. Gender [1= male, 2= female] __________

V10. Year of birth___________

V11. Marital status [1=married, 2=unmarried] __________

V12. How many children do you have? [Specify number.] __________

V13. In what type of settlement did you grow up? [1=city, 2= village, 3= refugee camp] __________

V14. Were you born in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, or outside Palestine? [1=West Bank, 2= Gaza Strip, 3=outside Palestine] __________ [If the answer to V14 is 3, go to V16. Otherwise, go to V15.]

V15. What is the name of the settlement where you now reside? (Specify name of city, village, or refugee camp.) __________ [Go to V17.]

V16. In which country were you born? [Specify name of country.] __________

Organizational Background

V17. Please tell me the name of the political organization to which you belong. ______

1. Hamas
2. Fatah
3. Islamic Jihad
4. PFLP
5. DFLP
6. The Palestinian People’s Party (the Palestinian Communist Party)

If you have belonged to other political organization, please place a “1” beside the name of the organization to which you belonged first, a “2” beside the name of the organization to which you belonged second, and so forth. If you have not belonged to another political organization, go to V28.

V18. Hamas _____
V19. Fatah _____
V20. Islamic Jihad _____
V21. PFLP _____
V22. DFLP _____
V23. The Palestinian People Party (the Palestinian Communist Party) _____
V24. The Muslim Brotherhood Movement _____
V25. The Arab Nationalist Movement _____
V26. The Jordanian Communist Party _____
V27. Other (please specify) _____  ____________________________________________

V28. For how many years have you been active in the Palestinian resistance movement in general? ______
V29. Were there specific event(s), specific personal reason(s) or general events (s) that triggered your involvement in the resistance? [1=yes; 2=no] _____ [If the answer to V29 is 1, go to V30; if the answer to V29 is 2, go to Part Two.]
V30. Can you describe it/them?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
**Part Two: Palestinian Organizations’ Perceptions of the Repression Policies of the Israeli State**

In this section we will examine how you perceive the repression policies of the Israeli state – how the type and level of repression changes over time and the factors that you think affect Israeli policy, such as significant changes in Israeli politics, changes in the type and level of Palestinian resistance, etc.

**Levels and Type of Israeli State Repression Since 1967**

Israeli repression is sometimes more violent and sometimes less violent. It is sometimes directed against people who are identified as activists against the resistance and sometimes directed against the Palestinian population as a whole. Below I divide recent Palestinian history into different time periods. For each of those periods, please indicate on a 5-point scale the degree to which Israeli repression was *violent* and the degree to which it was directed *collectively* against the Palestinian population as a whole. A score of 1 indicates the lowest level of violence and the lowest level of collective punishment. A score of 5 indicates the highest level of violence and the highest level of collective punishment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of Repression</th>
<th>Before the first <em>intifada</em> (before 1987)</th>
<th>During the first <em>intifada</em> (Dec 1987 - 1993)</th>
<th>During the Oslo period (1993 - Sep 2000)</th>
<th>During the second <em>intifada</em> (Sep 2000 - present)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of violence</td>
<td>V31 _____</td>
<td>V32 _____</td>
<td>V33 _____</td>
<td>V34 _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of collective punishment</td>
<td>V35 _____</td>
<td>V36 _____</td>
<td>V37 _____</td>
<td>V38 _____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Effect of Change in Israeli Politics on the Repression Policy of the Israeli State

Israel has used different types and levels of repression over time. Such changes in repression policy may be due to changes in Palestinian tactics of resistance, changes in Israel’s ability to face such resistance, international conditions, and significant changes in Israeli politics. Let us now focus on the last factor.

V39. Based on Palestinian experience with the Israeli occupation since 1967, Israel’s repression policy in the WBGS is generally:

1. significantly more aggressive when the Likud Party leads the Israeli government
2. more aggressive – but not significantly so – when the Likud Party leads the Israeli government
3. more aggressive when the Labor Party leads the Israeli government
4. more aggressive when there is an Israeli “national unity” government
5. Change in the nature of the Israeli government had no significant effect on Israel’s repression policy.

[Note to interviewer: Explain that “more aggressive” means that the action or policy under consideration leads to more casualties and more property damage.]

V40. Based on Palestinian experience with the Israeli occupation during the second intifada, (Sep 2000-present), Israel’s repression policy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is:

1. significantly more aggressive when the Likud Party leads the Israeli government
2. more aggressive – but not significantly so – when the Likud Party leads the Israeli government
3. more aggressive when the Labor Party leads the Israeli government
4. more aggressive when there is an Israeli “national unity” government (Likud and Labor)
5. Change in the nature of the Israeli government has no significant effect on Israel’s repression policy.
Palestinian Organizations’ Views of Variations in Israel’s Repression Policy

Palestinian organizations and Israel are engaged in a violent “dialogue” with each other. In this section, I want to focus on the “messages” that you think Israel aims to deliver to the Palestinians through its repressive policies during the second intifada. Later I will focus on the messages that Palestinian organizations aim to deliver to the Israelis.

Israel seems to have targeted some Palestinian organizations more than others. For example, more members of some organizations and people higher in the hierarchy of some organizations have been the victims of targeted killings.

Please rank the following Palestinian organizations according to the level of Israeli repression they have been subjected to during the second intifada relative to the size of the organization. Place a “1” beside the name of the organization that has been subjected to the highest level of Israeli repression, a “2” beside the name of the organization that has been subjected to the second highest level of Israeli repression, and so forth.

V41. PFLP _____
V42. Islamic Jihad _____
V43. Hamas _____
V44. DFLP _____
V45. Fatah _____
V46. The Palestinian People’s Party (the Palestinian Communist Party) _____

In your opinion, why has Israel subjected some organizations to more repression than others? Please mention the most important reason first, then the second most important reason, and so forth.

V47. ____________________________________________________________
V48. ____________________________________________________________
V49. ____________________________________________________________
V50. ____________________________________________________________

Please list three specific types of specific Israeli actions during the second intifada that you think have angered the Palestinians the most and played a very significant role in escalating violence? Please mention the most important type of Israeli action first, then
the second most important type of Israeli action, and so forth. Note that we are not concerned here with significant changes in Israel political positions (e.g., its readiness withdraw fully from the occupied territories) but in changes in Israel’s repressive policy (i.e., the way Israel reacts to Palestinian resistance tactics).

V51. (Type 1) ____________________________________________________________

V52. An example: ____________________________________________________________

V53. (Type 2) ____________________________________________________________

V54. An example: ____________________________________________________________

V55. (Type 3) ____________________________________________________________

V56. An example: ____________________________________________________________

Please list three types or examples of specific Israeli actions during the second intifada that you think deescalated the violence, at least temporarily. List the most important action first, the second most important action next, and so forth. [If the respondent has no examples or thinks that Israel did not take any such actions, go to V69.]

V57. (Type 1) ____________________________________________________________

V58. An example: ____________________________________________________________

V59. (Type 2) ____________________________________________________________

V60. An example: ____________________________________________________________

V61. (Type 3) ____________________________________________________________

V62. An example: ____________________________________________________________

Please list three types or examples of actions that Israel could in principle take that would deescalate the violence of the second intifada. List the most important action first, the second most important action next, and so forth
V63. (Type 1) _______________________________________________________
V64. An example: __________________________________________________

V65. (Type 2) _______________________________________________________
V66. An example: __________________________________________________

V67. (Type 3) _______________________________________________________
V68. An example: __________________________________________________

V69. Let’s assume that the Palestinians have conducted four attacks against Israeli targets and each of those attacks has led to the same number of Israeli casualties and occurred in similar political circumstances. The first attack was against a civilian target inside Israel, the second against a military target inside Israel, the third against a civilian target inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the fourth against a military target inside the WBGS. Based on what you have experiences, the aggressiveness of the Israeli reaction would be:
1. The same in all four cases.
2. More aggressive when the attack is against civilian targets.
3. More aggressive when the attack is against targets inside Israel.
4. More aggressive when the attack is inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
5. More aggressive when the attack is against civilian targets and inside Israel.
6. Other (please specify) ______________________
99. Don’t know.

Palestinian Organizations’ Views of Harsh Israeli Repression

V70. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of harsh repression (e.g., targeted killings, mass killings) during the second intifada?
1. It aims to suppress Palestinian resistance activities.
2. Most of the time it aims to suppress Palestinian resistant activities, but sometimes it aims to provoke such activities.
3. Most of the time it aims to provoke Palestinian resistance activities.

4. Other (please specify)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

[If the answer to V70 is 2 or 3, go to V71. Otherwise, go to V73.]

**V71.** Can you explain how, specifically, harsh repression was used to provoke your organization? Give one or two examples if possible.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

[If the respondent gave an example in V71, go to V72. Otherwise, go to V73.]

**V72.** How did your organization react to such provocations?

1. mainly by conducting military operation(s)
2. mainly by not conducting military operation(s)
99. don’t know

**V73.** Many Palestinians call the killing of tens of Palestinian in a specific area in a few hours or a few days “massacres.” How do you see such massacres?

1. Massacres have negative effects on the resistance, that is, they deter people from involvement in the resistance.
2. Massacres have positive effects on the resistance, that is, they increase the involvement of people in the resistance
3. Massacres do not have a significant effect on the resistance.
4. Other (please specify) __________________________

**Palestinian Organizations’ Views of Israeli Concessions**

**V74.** What are the causes and consequences of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza?
The Role of Palestinian Collaborators

Palestinians recruited by Israeli intelligence institutions to serve as collaborators play an important role in Israeli repression in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. I’d now like to ask you a few questions about that role.

V75. In your judgment, what percentage of the Palestinian population over the age of 13 served as collaborators during the second intifada? ________

V76. In which of the following periods was Israel better able to recruit Palestinian collaborators?
1. 1967-74 (a period of little Israeli repression and weak PLO influence)
2. 1974-87 (a period of little Israeli repression and strong PLO influence)
3. 1987-93 (during the first intifada)
4. 1993-2000 (during peace negotiations)
5. 2000-present (during the second intifada)
6. It was about the same in all of these periods.
7. other (please specify) ________________________________
99. don’t know

V77. Why was Israel better able to recruit Palestinian collaborators in the period you chose? ________________________________

Would you please describe three of the most common methods of recruiting collaborators that Israel employs, starting with the method that you think has been used the most and finishing with the method that you think has been used the least?

V78. ________________________________________________

V79. ________________________________________________

V80. ________________________________________________

V81. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “a great deal,” to what degree did Palestinian collaborators help the Israeli occupation? _____
V82. How did Palestinian collaborators help the Israeli occupation?

Part Three: The Changing of Palestinian Organizations’ Tactics Over Time

In this section I will ask you questions about why and how Palestinian organizations changed their tactics over time. I will pay special attention to suicide bombing since it represents one of the most significant changes in Palestinian tactics since 1967.

Types and Levels of Palestinian Protest over Time

I will now present you with a list of different types of means of resistance used by Palestinian organizations since 1967 and a list of time periods from 1967 to the present. Please indicate which of the following means or tactics was used by your organization in each time period, where:

0= never used
1= rarely used
2= sometimes used
3= used most of the time
4= always or almost always used
99= don’t know
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of tactics</th>
<th>Before the first <em>intifada</em> (before 1987)</th>
<th>During the first <em>intifada</em> (Dec 1987-93)</th>
<th>During the Oslo period (1993 – Sep 2000)</th>
<th>During the second <em>intifada</em> (Sep 2000 - present)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonviolent means such as organizing mass demonstrations, marches, strikes, boycotting Israeli products, organizing a tax revolt, etc.</td>
<td>V83________</td>
<td>V84________</td>
<td>V85________</td>
<td>V86________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-level violence such as stone throwing, burning ties, throwing Molotov cocktails, using knives, etc.</td>
<td>V87________</td>
<td>V88________</td>
<td>V89________</td>
<td>V90________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerrilla attacks inside Palestine and Israel, including all kinds of military operations except plane hijackings, rocket attacks from or within the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and suicide attacks.</td>
<td>V91________</td>
<td>V92________</td>
<td>V93________</td>
<td>V94________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocket attacks from the West Bank or Gaza Strip against Israeli targets in Israel or the occupied territories</td>
<td>V95________</td>
<td>V96________</td>
<td>V97________</td>
<td>V98________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks against Israeli civilian targets outside Palestine and Israel, such as plane hijackings, taking Israeli hostages, bombings, etc.</td>
<td>V99________</td>
<td>V100________</td>
<td>V101________</td>
<td>V102________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide bombing</td>
<td>V103________</td>
<td>V104________</td>
<td>V105________</td>
<td>V106________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactic other than those listed above (please specify):</td>
<td>V107</td>
<td>V108</td>
<td>V109</td>
<td>V110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V115</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**V119.** Which of the following situations provide the best opportunity to escalate the resistance?

1. When the Israeli government is led by the Likud Party.
2. When the Israeli government is led by the Labor Party.
3. When the Israeli government is a national unity government.
4. Changes in the nature of the Israeli government has no significant effect on the escalation or de-escalation of the Palestinian resistance

[If the answer to V119 is 1, 2 or 3, go to V120. Otherwise, go to V121.]

**V120.** Why?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Suicide Bombing

**The Adoption of Suicide Bombing as a Tactic**

**V121.** When was the first Hamas suicide bombing in Israel, April 16, 1993 (at Mekhola Junction in the Jordan Valley when Tamam Nabulsi drove a van into a parked bus and detonated it) or April 6, 1994 (in a car bomb attack on a bus in the centre of Afula)? [April 1993=1, April 1994=2] _____

People have different views regarding the factors that motivated Hamas to first use suicide bombing. Some of those factors are listed below. You may add factors to the list. After you have done so, please rank each of the factors in order of their importance in motivating Hamas to used suicide bombing for the first time:

**V122.** _____ The method proved successful in Lebanon during the 1980s and early 1990s.

**V123.** _____ The way the Israeli authorities dealt with the first intifada (1987-93) provoked the use of suicide bombing.

**V124.** _____ The opportunity to use suicide bombing appeared when Hamas’s leaders and activists were deported to Lebanon in 1992 and went to Hizballah training camps.
V125. _____ There began a peace process that Hamas leaders feared would undermine Palestinians’ historic rights.

V126. _____ It became clear that other violent methods were not possible or not effective.

V127. _____ Increased religiosity among Palestinians led to the increased use of suicide bombing.

V128. _____ The appearance of Islamic Jihad in the early 1980s and its use of violent tactics threatened Hamas’s popularity. By using suicide bombing, Hamas ensure that its popularity would grow.

V129. _____ (other; please specify) ____________________________________________________________

V130. _____ (other; please specify) ____________________________________________________________

V131. _____ (other; please specify) ____________________________________________________________

The Effects of Suicide Bombing

V132. Do you think that the armed resistance played a major role in Israel’s decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip? [1=yes; 2=no] _____  

[If the answer to V132 is 1, go to V133. If the answer to V132 is 2, go to V140.]

Which of the following means of resistance had the strongest effect on Israel’s decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip? Please rank the following means of resistance, where “1” = the strongest effect, “2” is the next strongest effect, etc.

V133. suicide bombing inside Israel launched from West Bank _____

V134. suicide bombing inside Israel launched from the Gaza Strip _____

V135. suicide bombing inside the Gaza Strip _____

V136. guerilla attacks inside Israel _____

V137. guerilla attacks inside Gaza strip _____

V138. Palestinian rockets launched from the Gaza Strip toward Israel or its settlements _____

V139. Why do you think your first two choices were most effective? __________
According to Palestinian public opinion polls, Hamas’s popularity in July 2000 was relatively low. However, this popularity increased dramatically during the second intifada in local and legislative elections. Some of the reasons for this change are listed below. You may add factors to the list. After you have done so, please rank the following reasons for the increase in Hamas’s popularity, where “1” is the most important reason, “2” is the second most important reason, and so forth:

V140. _____ the Hamas suicide bombing campaign
V141. _____ Hamas guerilla attacks (all military operations except suicide bombing)
V142. _____ Hamas social services
V143. _____ the political positions and programs of Hamas
V144. _____ the high level of Israeli repression against Hamas (e.g., the assassination of many of its leaders)
V145. _____ Israeli repression actions against the Palestinian in general
V146. _____ an increase of the level of religiosity among Palestinians
V147. _____ Israeli political positions and agendas
V148. _____ the failure of Fatah as a ruling party (e.g., corruption in the Palestinian Authority)
V149. _____ the absence of any other alternative to Fatah but Hamas
V150. _____ other (please specify) _________________________________________________
V151. _____ other (please specify) _________________________________________________

V152. The frequency of Hamas suicide bombings varies over time. The number of suicide bombings was much higher in the period 1994-96 than in the period 1998-2000. How do you explain this difference?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

V153. The frequency of Hamas suicide bombings was also much higher in the period 2001-03 than in the period 2004-06. How do you explain this difference?
______________________________________________________________________________
Earlier I asked some questions about the “benefits” of suicide bombing, let us now examine the costs or “costs” of suicide bombing.

**V154.** How has Israel’s assassination policy affected the ability of your organization to conduct suicide bombing operations?

1. It has increased the ability of Hamas to conduct suicide bombing operations.
2. It has decreased the ability of Hamas to conduct suicide bombing operations.
3. It has decreased the ability of Hamas to conduct suicide bombing operations in the short run but increased that ability in the long run.
4. It has not affected the ability of Hamas to conduct suicide bombing operations.

**V155.** In comparison with other tactics used by your organization, how costly has suicide bombing been to Hamas in terms of the human and material resources used, damage to your organization, etc.?

1. much less costly
2. somewhat less costly
3. about the same cost as other tactics
4. somewhat more costly
5. much more costly
6. other (please specify) ____________________

99. don’t know

**V156.** Would you please summarize the costs to Hamas of using suicide bombing as a tactic?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

In the immediately preceding question we talked about the cost of suicide bombing to your organization. Now let us examine the cost to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian resistance.
V157. In comparison with other means of resistance, the cost of suicide bombing to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian resistance are:

1. much less costly
2. somewhat less costly
3. about the same cost as other tactics
4. somewhat more costly
5. much more costly
6. other (please specify) _________
99. don’t know

V158 Some people say that if Hamas restricted its suicide bombing operations to Israeli military targets in the occupied territories, both Hamas and the Palestinian people would gain more benefits and pay fewer costs. What is your opinion on this matter?

1. strongly agree
2. agree
3. neither agree nor disagree
4. disagree
5. strongly disagree
99. don’t know

[If the answer to V158 is 1 or 2, go to V159. If the answer to V158 is 4 or 5, go to V160. If the answer to V158 is 3 or 99, go to V161.]

V159. How do you explain Hamas’s insistence on using suicide bombing against civilian targets inside Israel?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

[Go to V161.]

V160. Why do you disagree?

______________________________________________________________________________
The Effect of Intra-Palestinian Politics on Suicide Bombing

V161. Some people say that political factors within Palestine have a big effect on whether Hamas decides to use suicide bombing, increase its use or decrease its use. One opinion is that Hamas uses suicide bombing mainly to increase its popularity among Palestinians. People who hold this view argue that your organization increased the frequency of suicide bombings when Palestinian public support for this tactic was high (notably between 2001 and 2003) and decreased the frequency of suicide bombings when Palestinian public support for this tactic was (notably between 1998 and September 2000). Do you:

1. strongly agree
2. agree
3. neither agree nor disagree
4. disagree
5. strongly disagree
99. don’t know

V162. Why do you hold this opinion? ________________________________________________________________

V163. A second opinion focused more on the competition between Palestinian organizations, especially the competition between your organization and Fatah. They argue that Hamas started and intensified its use of suicide bombing during the first year of the second intifada because of Fatah’s successes with guerrilla attacks, while Fatah started to use suicide bombing in 2002 because Hamas started using suicide bombing a year earlier. What is your opinion about the idea that competition between Hamas and Fatah has affected Hamas’s willingness to use suicide bombing?

1. strongly agree
2. agree
3. neither agree nor disagree
4. disagree
5. strongly disagree
99. don’t know

V164. Why do you hold this opinion?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

V165. A third opinion is that competition between local leaders and activists, regardless of their organizations, has a strong effect on the frequency of suicide bombing (e.g., some local leaders send suicide bombers to increase their prestige or power in their areas). What is your opinion about the idea that competition between local leaders and activists has affected Hamas’s increased or decreased use of suicide bombing?
1. strongly agree
2. agree
3. neither agree nor disagree
4. disagree
5. strongly disagree
99. don’t know

V166. Why do you hold this opinion?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

The Effect of Organizational Structure on Suicide Bombing

V167. During the second intifada some people noticed a conflict between Fatah’s military wing (al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade) and Fatah’s political central leadership (the Central Committee, Arafat, Abu Mazen, etc.), especially regarding suicide bombing. For example, most of the suicide bombings conducted by Fatah’s military wing were condemned by Fatah’s central political leadership. Do you think such conflict was less common within Hamas?
1. strongly agree
2. agree
3. neither agree nor disagree
4. disagree
5. strongly disagree
99. don’t know

[If the answer to V167 is 1 or 2, go to V168. Otherwise, go to V169.]

V168. How do you explain the fact that such conflict was less common within Hamas?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Hamas’s Cessation of Suicide Bombing

According to the Cairo agreement of March 2005, Hamas agreed to a tahdiya, freezing its military operations in general and suicide bombing in particular. Some of the reasons Hamas did so are listed below. You may add factors to the list. After you have done so, please rank the following reasons for this change of policy, where “1” is the most important reason, “2” is the second most important reason, and so forth:

V169. _____ The significant decrease in the ability of Hamas’s military wing to launch effective attacks; it was necessary to give the military wing time to recover.

V170. _____ The assessment by Hamas’s political leadership that the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were “tired” because of Israeli reaction to Palestinian military operations.

V171. _____ Hamas’s intention to “harvest” political gains in Palestinian local and legislative elections.

V172. _____ The pressure that was put on Hamas by some Arab and Muslim countries, such as Egypt.

V173. _____ The frequent assassination of Hamas political leaders, especially in 2003 and 2004.

V174. _____ other (please specify) ___________________
V175. In general, from the perspective of your organization, suicide bombing is primarily:

1. a strategy that aims mainly to liberate Palestine or the West Bank and Gaza Strip
2. a tactic that aims mainly to stop Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians
3. a tactic that aims mainly to stop Israeli attacks against Hamas
4. a tactic that aims mainly to stop Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians and Hamas
5. other (please specify) ________________________________________________

Part Four: General Questions

Below I list some factors that might affect your organization’s choice of tactics at a given time. Please review the list, add other factors that I may have omitted, and rank the list, placing “1” beside the most important factor, “2” beside the second most important factor, and so forth.

V176. ______ Israeli policies and actions against Hamas.
V177. ______ Israeli policies and actions against the Palestinians in general.
V178. ______ Competition with other Palestinian organizations.
V179. ______ The mood and the readiness of the Palestinian public for specific actions.
V180. ______ International conditions.
V181. ______ Conditions in the Arab and Muslim world.
V182. ______ other (please specify) _________________________________________
V183. ______ other (please specify) _________________________________________
V184. ______ other (please specify) _________________________________________

V185. Under what conditions will your organization temporarily stop resistance activities against the Israelis?
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________

V186. Under what conditions will your organization permanently stop resistance activities against the Israelis?

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V187. Is your organization willing to recognize Israel under any conditions?

1. yes
2. no
3. other (please specify) __________________________________________________________

99. don’t know

[If the answer to V187 is 1 or 3, go to V188. Otherwise, go to V189.]

V188. What are the conditions required for such recognition?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

V189. Some people argue that the second intifada is over. What is your opinion?

1. I agree.
2. I disagree.

99. don’t know

[If the answer to V189 is 1 or 2, go to V190. If the answer to V189 is 99, go to V193.]

V190. Why do you hold that opinion?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

[If the answer to V189 is 2 (“I disagree”), go to V191. Otherwise, go to V193.]

V191. What do you expect will happen in the intifada in the short run?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
V192. What do you expect will happen in the intifada in the long run?

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you very much for your time and effort.

Part Five: Post-interview

V193. On a scale from 1 to 7, where “1” is “very honest” and “7” is “completely dishonest,” how do you evaluate the honesty of the interviewee? ______

V194. On a scale from 1 to 7, where “1” is “very comfortable” and “7” is “very uncomfortable,” how do you evaluate the level of comfort of the interviewee? ______

V195. Portion of interview recorded:
1. The whole interview was recorded.
2. The whole interview was not recorded.
3. Part of the interview was recorded.

V196. End time of interview [00:00 to 24:00] ______________

V197. Interviewer’s notes:
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B  Interview Schedule for Families of Palestinian Suicide Bombers

Part Zero: Pre-interview

V1. Interview ID #: __________

My name is Bader al-Araj. I am originally from the West Bank but I am now studying at the University of Toronto in Canada. For my PhD thesis I am analyzing the interaction between Israeli repression policies and Palestinian tactics of resistance, especially during the second intifada. In the first stage of this research I interviewed tens of senior leaders of Palestinian organizations including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah, the PFLP, and so on. In this second stage of the research I am interviewing family members of Palestinian martyrs. I want to know about their demographic and organizational background, motivations, the conditions surrounding their participation in martyrdom operations, and the like.

You can refuse to answer any question I ask and you can stop the interview at any time. The information I gather will be used only for social scientific purposes. If you agree to be interviewed, I will keep your responses confidential and anonymous unless you give me permission to identify you as a respondent.

V2. Are you willing to be interviewed for this study [1=yes, 2=no]? [If the answer to V2 is 2, end interview politely. If the answer to V2 is 1, go to V3.] __________

V3. May I identify you by name as a respondent or do you wish to remain anonymous and be identified only as a relative (brother, father, sister, mother, etc.) of a martyr? [1=okay to be identified by name, 2=identify only as a relative of a martyr] __________

With your permission, I would like to record the interview for purposes of subsequent analysis. The recording will be sent to Toronto immediately upon completion of the interview and stored securely. The original recording will then be erased. No copy

---

1 To increase the likelihood that respondents will cooperate and to respect their feelings and beliefs, suicide bombers are referred to as “martyrs” and suicide bombing operations are referred to as “martyrdom operations.”
of the recording will remain in the Occupied Territories or in Israel. The recording will not be made available to anyone other than the researcher.

V4. Will you permit me to record the interview? [1=yes, 2=no] __________

Upon completion of the study, a summary of the results will be posted on the World Wide Web in English and Arabic at www.chass.utoronto.ca/brym/intifada2. A printed summary of the results in your language of choice can also be obtained by contacting me at the following e-mail address: abdalrah@chass.utoronto.ca. Finally, the results of this research will be published in a book about the second intifada in English, Arabic and perhaps other languages.

V5. Month of interview [7-9] __________


V7. Start time of interview [00:00 to 24:00] __________

[The respondent should receive a copy of this page]

Part One: Personal information about the respondent and his/her relationship with the suicide bomber

V8. Name [optional] _________________________________________________

V9. Relationship with the martyr (brother, sister, father, etc.) __________

V10. Gender [1= male, 2= female] __________

V11. Year of birth_____________

V12. Occupation _____________

V13. Number of years of formal education________________

V14. Name of settlement where you reside _________________________

V15. Since many of our questions are about _________ (insert the name of the suicide bomber), would you please describe your personal relationship with him or her, for example, was it close, remote, open, guarded, did you live in the same house, the same town, etc.)?
Part Two: Personal information about the suicide bomber

V16. Name ______________________________________________________

V17. Gender [1= male, 2= female] __________

V18. Date of birth [mm/dd/yy] _____________

V19. Date of death [mm/dd/yy] _____________

V20. Occupation at the time of death ______________

V21. If applicable, the monthly income of the martyr right before his/her death in thousands of shekels ________

V22. Number of years of formal education ______________

V23. If the martyr was a student, how you would describe his/her grades?

1. below average

2. average

3. above average

4. other, please specify____________________________________________________

99. not applicable (not a student)

V24. Marital status [1=married, 2=never married, 3=divorced, 4=engaged, 5=widowed] __________

V25. How many children did s/he have at the time of his/her death? __________

V26. [Only if the martyr was a male] Did he have more children after his death (i.e., was his wife pregnant at the time of his death)? [1=Yes, 2=No] __________

If yes, please provide details

V27. Name of first settlement where the martyr grew up __________________________

V28. Type of settlement [1=village. 2=city, 3=refugee camp] ________

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**V29. Region** [1=West Bank, 2=Gaza Strip, 3=Other [please specify and explain]]

**V30.** If the martyr grew up in more than one settlement, please tell me the name of the other settlement(s), when did s/he move there, etc.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V31.** In the last year of his/her life, which of the following applies to the financial relationship between the martyr and his/her family:

1. s/he was the main provider for his/her family
2. s/he was one of the providers for his/her family
3. s/he was independent financially (neither provider nor receiver)
4. s/he was completely dependent financially on his/her family
5. s/he was partly dependent financially on his/her family
6. Other, please specify _____________________________

**V32.** Please describe the martyr and his/her personality (what kind of person was s/he – his/her main characteristics, relations with others, social skills)?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V33.** Did you notice any significant changes in his/her behaviour, mood, or habits in the last period of his life? (1=Yes, 2=No, 99= Don’t know, 3=Other [please specify])

________________________________________________________________________

**V34.** If the answer to V33 is 1, please explain such changes (when and why did they appear?)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V35.** Was the martyr physically and mentally healthy? (1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other [please specify])

________________________________________________________________________
V36. If the answer to V35 is 2, please provide details.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

V37. Did s/he suffer of any social, emotional or financial crisis in the last year of his/her life that might have affected his/her decision, in one way or another, to participate in a martyrdom operation? ([1=Yes, 2=No, 3. Other [please specify]) ________________

________________________________________________________________________

V38. If the answer to V37 is 1, would you please explain that crisis and how it affected him/her? ____________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V39. Was the martyr ever arrested, either by the Israelis or by any other authority (e.g., the Palestinian Authority? (1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other [please specify])

________________________________________________________________________

If the answer to V39 is 1, Please complete the following table (starting with the most recent arrest):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arresting authority (Israel=1, PA=2, other=3)</th>
<th>Date of arrest [mm/dd/yy]</th>
<th>Date of release [mm/dd/yy]</th>
<th>Type of arrest (administrative, released before going to court, etc.)</th>
<th>Name of prison</th>
<th>Charges</th>
<th>If tortured, explain how</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V40</td>
<td>V41</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**V89.** Was s/he ever subjected to any type of injury due to Israeli action? [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other [please specify] ________________________________________________________________

If the answer to V89 is 1, please complete the following table (starting with the most recent injury):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of injury [mm/dd/yy]</th>
<th>Type of injury (1=light, 2=moderate, 3=serious)</th>
<th>Circumstances of the injury (how and why it happened)</th>
<th>Did the injury leave any permanent effect or disability? (1=Yes, 2=No)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
V115. Did the Israelis ban the martyr from traveling outside the country? (1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other [please specify]) ____________________________________________________________

V116. If the answer to V115 is 1, please provide details (e.g., how long was the ban, when was his/her last attempt to travel abroad, why did the authorities ban him/her from travel, etc.) ____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

V117. Did s/he personally suffer from any Israeli action other than the ones mentioned above? (Please include any events or stories that might have affected him indirectly – for example, if s/he witnessed harsh actions taken by the Israeli army against other Palestinians) ____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

V118. Did any general events take place (actions taken by the Israelis against the Palestinians in general) that had a significant effect on the martyr’s willingness to participate in a martyrdom operation? [1=Yes, 2=No, 99=Don’t know, 3=Other [please specify] ____________________________________________________________

V119. If the answer to V118 is 1, please elaborate.
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

V120. Some people look up to some political, historical, social leaders, or martyrs as symbols that they try to imitate or inspire from. Do you know any figure or leader the “martyr” used to admire or sought to emulate? [1=Yes, 2=No, 99=Don’t know] _______

V121. If the answer to V120 is 1, please elaborate:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

V122. Some martyrs were religious long before their deaths. Others became religious only towards the end of their lives. Others were never religious. How would you describe the religiosity of the martyr to whom you were related?
V123. How many times a day did s/he pray in the mosque or at home in the three months preceding his/her martyrdom? _________

V124. How many times a day did s/he pray in the mosque or at home two years before his/her martyrdom? _________

Part Three: Information about the family

I would like to know more about the family of the martyr – the family into which s/he was born (parents and siblings), other relatives who used to live in the same home with the martyr during the three months prior to his death (e.g., grandparents), and, if applicable, the family into which s/he married (spouse and children). Please answer the questions in the following table starting with the oldest family member and finishing with the youngest.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First name</th>
<th>Relation to martyr</th>
<th>Sex (1=M, 2=F)</th>
<th>Year of birth</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Marital status (1=married, 2=never married, 3=divorced, 4=engaged, 5=widowed)</th>
<th>Lived in same house? (1=Yes, 2=No)</th>
<th>In the case of death, which year?</th>
<th>Israeli repression against the family member before the martyrdom (was the family member arrested, injured, killed, etc., due to the actions of the Israeli occupation or any of its policies?)</th>
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</table>
**V251.** Please list any actions taken by the Israelis against the family before the suicide operation other than the ones mentioned above (e.g., actions against the family as a whole)?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V252.** Were there any Israeli actions against any of the suicide bomber’s friends, relatives, neighbours, or acquaintances that affected his/her preparedness to participate in the suicide mission? (1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other [please specify, 99=don’t know])

________________________________________________________________________

**V253.** If the answer is to V252 is 1, please provide details.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V254.** Although most Palestinian families are involved in the struggle against the Israeli occupation, the degree of involvement seem to vary from one family to the next. In comparison with other Palestinian families in your area, how would you describe the level of involvement of your family before the martyrdom operation?

1. Much less than average
2. Somewhat less than average
3. Average
4. Somewhat above average
5. Much above average

**V255.** Please explain or support your previous answer (e.g., give examples).

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V256.** Although most Palestinian cities, villages, and refugee camps are involved in the struggle against the Israeli occupation, the degree of involvement in the struggle varies from one settlement to another. In comparison with other Palestinian settlements, how
would you describe the level of involvement of your city, village, or refugee camp in the struggle against the Israelis before the martyrdom operation?
1. Much less than average
2. Somewhat less than average
3. Average
4. Somewhat above average
5. Much above average

V257. Please explain or support your previous answer (e.g., give examples).

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V258. Although most Palestinian districts (e.g., groups of villages) are involved in the struggle against the Israeli occupation, the degree of involvement in the struggle varies from one district to another. In comparison with other Palestinian districts, how would you describe the level of involvement of your district in the struggle against the Israelis before the martyrdom operation?
1. Much less than average
2. Somewhat less than average
3. Average
4. Somewhat above average
5. Much above average

V259. Please explain or support your previous answer (e.g., give examples).

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V260. Based on the occupations of your family members, their assets, and annual income, how would you classify your family economically just before the martyrdom operation?
1. poor
2. a little below average
3. average
4. a little above average
5. well-to-do

**V261.** Please estimate your monthly household income in thousands of shekels immediately before the martyrdom operation. ______

**V262.** Which of the following applies to the place where the family used to live just before the martyrdom operation?
1. rented apartment
2. rented house
3. owned apartment
4. owned house
5. other [please specify] _______________

**V263.** Please describe that residence (how many rooms, floors, was it made of stone or cement, how many people used to live there, etc.)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Part Four: The martyrdom operation**

**V264.** Year of operation __________

**V265.** Month of operation [1-12] __________

**V266.** Day of operation [1-31] __________

**V267.** Location of operation [1=Israel, 2=West Bank, 3=Gaza Strip] __________

**V268.** The name of the settlement (e.g., city or town) where the operation took place)
________________________________________________________________________

**V269.** Target of operation:
1. police
2. military
3. bus/bus stop
4. restaurant
5. school/university
6. entertainment facility
7. shopping area
8. port
9. ship
10. train station
11. train
12. religious institution
13. settlement
14. other (please specify) ____________________

V270. Number of Israeli deaths: __________
V271. Number of Israeli injuries: __________
V272. Did Hamas declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V273. Did the PFLP declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V274. Did the PFLP-GC declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V275. Did Palestinian Islamic Jihad declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V276. Did Fatah (al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade) declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V277. Did the DFLP declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V278. Did Abu Reesh Brigade declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V279. Did the Popular Resistance Committees declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V280. Did the Arab Liberation Front declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V281. Did the Palestinian Liberation Front declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V282. Did another organization declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V283. If the answer to V282 is 1, please specify the name of the organization.________________________________________________________________________
V284. Was Hamas actually responsible for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V285. Was Islamic Jihad actually responsible for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V286. Was Fatah actually responsible for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V287. Was the PFLP actually responsible for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V288. Was another organization actually responsible for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V289. If the answer to V288 is 1, please specify the name of the organization.
________________________________________________________________________
V290. Was the martyr:
1. a member of any organization(s) that conducted the martyrdom operation?
2. a supporter of any organization(s) that conducted the martyrdom operation?
3. a member of an organization other than the one(s) that conducted the martyrdom operation?
4. a supporter of an organization other than the one(s) that conducted the martyrdom operation?
5. an independent (never a member or supporter of any political organization)
7. other (please specify____________________________________________________
[If the answer to V290 is 3 or 4 please go to V291. Otherwise go to V304.]
V291. Was the martyr a member of Hamas? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V292. Was the martyr a member of the PFLP? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V293. Was the martyr a member of the PFLP-GC (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V294. Was the martyr a member of Palestinian Islamic Jihad? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V295. Was the martyr a member of Fatah (al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade)? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V296. Was the martyr a member of the DFLP? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V297. Was the martyr a member of the Abu Reesh? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V298. Was the martyr a member of the Arab Liberation Front? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V299. Was the martyr a member of the Palestinian Liberation Front? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
V300. Was the martyr a member of the Palestinian People’s Party? (1=Yes, 2=No) _____
**V301.** Did another organization declare responsibility for the operation? (1=Yes, 2=No) 
_____

**V302.** If the answer to V301 is 1, please specify the name of the organization.

________________________________________________________________________

**V303.** If the answer to V290 is 3 or 4, how do you explain that s/he conducted the operation with an organization other than the one s/he supported or was a member of?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

If the answer to V290 is NOT 5 (an independent), please list all the organizations the martyr used to support or used to be member of, starting with the organization that recruited him/her for the martyrdom operation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization (1=Hamas, 2=PFLP, 3=PFLP-GC, 4=Palestinian Islamic Jihad, 5=Fatah (al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade), 6=DFLP, 7=Abu Reesh, 8= Arab Liberation Front, 9= Palestinian Liberation Front, 10= PPP, 11=other (please specify))</th>
<th>Year(s) of belonging to or activism in the organization.</th>
<th>Type of association (1=passive supporter, 2=active supporter, 3=passive member, 4=active member)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V304</td>
<td>V305</td>
<td>V306</td>
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<td>V312</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What are the main reasons that motivated him/her to participate in the martyrdom operation? Please rank each of the factors in order of their importance in motivating the martyr. Please try to support your answer by quoting some of what s/he had to say about the operation, for example in his/her videotape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V320</th>
<th>V321</th>
<th>V322</th>
<th>V323</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

V324

V325

V326. What were the reason(s) for the martyrdom operation as declared by the organization(s) claiming responsibility for it?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
V327. What is your opinion regarding those reasons? Do you think these were the real reasons or were there other reasons?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

V328. It seems that some martyrs took the initiative and were looking for an organization to recruit him/her for an operation while others were recruited and encouraged by the organization to engage in an operation. Based on what you heard after the operation and your knowledge of the martyr, which of the following options seem to apply his/her case?
1. S/he approached the organization
2. S/he was approached by the organization
3. Other (please specify) ___________________________________________________
99. do not know

V329. Could you please tell us when and how you and your family learned about the event?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

V330. If you still remember the first reaction of family members when they heard the news, please describe it. [If not, go to V331.]
________________________________________________________________________

V331. Were you surprised when you first heard about the martyrdom operation? [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)] __________ [If the answer is 2 or 3, go to V334.]

V332. If the answer to V331 is 1, can you explain why you were surprised?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

V333. Were other people from the family or social circle surprised when they learned about the event? [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)] __________
V334. If the answer to V333 is 1, can you explain why they were surprised? [If the answer is 2 or 3, go to V335.]

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________


Part Five: Post-operation

Please list the main actions taken by the Israelis against the family and friends of the martyr due to his/her participation in the operation (e.g., did they destroy a house, arrest any of the martyr’s relatives or friends, etc.).

[Note: If the Israeli destroyed the house or apartment of the family, please indicate whether their action affected the houses or apartments of your neighbours.]

V335. ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V336. ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V337. ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V338. ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V339. ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V340. ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V341. ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V342. ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
V343. ________________________________________________________________

V344. ________________________________________________________________

V345. Did the Israelis keep the body of the martyr? [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)] ________________________________________________________________

V346. If the answer to the preceding question is 1, please elaborate (For how long? Why? Did you get the body back?)

V347. Did the Israelis take any actions against the settlement (city, neighbourhood, village, refugee camp) after the martyrdom operation? [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)] ________________________________________________________________

V348. If the answer to the preceding question is 1, please elaborate. [If the answer is 2 or 3, go to V349.]

V349. If the Israeli actions were against people who were not immediate family members (e.g., members of his or her hamula, friends, members of his or her organization in the settlement, etc.), please describe the actions. [If there were no such actions, go to V350.]

While the Israeli authorities seem to punish the martyr and his/her family in different ways, Palestinian society and its institutions (and some Arabic states such as Iraq during Saddam’s rule) tend to praise the martyr and support his or her family. Please list the main types of praise the martyr received after the operation (e.g., naming a street, institution or military unit after the martyr, etc.)
350.________________________________________________________________________
351.________________________________________________________________________
352.________________________________________________________________________
353.________________________________________________________________________
354.________________________________________________________________________
355.________________________________________________________________________
356.________________________________________________________________________
357.________________________________________________________________________
358.________________________________________________________________________
359.________________________________________________________________________

V360. Is the family more or less satisfied with the types of emotional and material support it received from friends, relatives, and neighbours. [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)]

V361. Please support or explain your answer.

V362 Is the family more or less satisfied with the emotional and material support it received from the organization(s) that claimed to be responsible for the operation? [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)]
V363. Please support or explain your answer.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V364. Is the family more or less satisfied with the emotional and material support it received from other institutions such as the Palestinian Authority, the Iraqi state, and al-Zakat committees?
[1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)] ________________________________

V365. Please support or explain your answer.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V366. If the home of the family was demolished or closed by the Israelis due to the martyrdom operation, please indicate where the family lives now. [If not, go to V369.
1. rented apartment
2. rented house
3. owned apartment
4. owned house
5. other [please specify] _______________

V367. Please describe that residence (how many rooms, floors, was it made of stone or cement, how many people used to live there, etc.)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Part Six: General questions

V368. Have your feelings regarding what the martyr did changed since the period immediately after the operation? [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)] [If the answer is 2 or 3, go to V371.]
**V369.** Please elaborate. What were your feelings immediately after the operation and what are your feelings now?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V370.** Why have your feelings changed?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V371.** Have the feelings of your family members regarding what the martyr did changed since the period immediately after the operation? [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)] [If the answer is 2 or 3, go to V374.]

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V372.** Please elaborate. What were there feelings immediately after the operation and what are their feelings now?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V373.** Why have their feelings changed?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V374.** Generally speaking, do you think that martyrdom operations will help the Palestinians liberate their homeland? [1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Other (please specify)]

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**V375.** On what basis do you hold your opinion? How do you support it?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Is there any message you would like to say to the Israelis or “to the world” in this regard?

**V376.** To the Israelis:
V377. To the world:

V378. Do you have any pictures, video tape, posters or other things that you could show or give to us that we might find useful in telling the story of the martyr?

V379. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about that we have not covered but that you think is relevant to the martyr or the martyrdom operation?

Just in case we need to contact you in the future, could you please provide us with your phone number and/or your e-mail address?

V380. Phone number ____________________________________________________________
V381. e-mail address ____________________________________________________________

(Thank you very much!)

Part seven: Post-interview

V382. On a scale from 1 to 7, where “1” is “very honest” and “7” is “completely dishonest,” how do you evaluate the honesty of the interviewee? ______

V383. On a scale from 1 to 7, where “1” is “very comfortable” and “7” is “very uncomfortable,” how do you evaluate the level of comfort of the interviewee? ______

V384. Portion of interview recorded:
1. The whole interview was recorded.
2. The whole interview was not recorded.
3. Part of the interview was recorded.

V385. End time of interview [00:00 to 24:00] ____________
**V386.** Interviewer’s notes (this should include description of the place where the family lives and any indicator that might help us estimate their financial situation such as whether they own a car, is it used or new, etc.)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
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