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Female Suicide Terrorism – the Case of Chechnya

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.....

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the phenomenon of female suicide terrorism in Chechnya, particularly with the focus on motivation of individual terrorists and organizations. Besides these two levels of analysis, it looks for facilitating and necessary conditions in the specific socio-political environment of Chechnya.

Key words

Female suicide terrorism

Chechnya

Gender

Russia

Violence

Black Widows

Beslan

Dubrovka

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1. Introduction

Suicide bombing is the number one tactic of contemporary terrorism. It is the most deadly terrorist tactic and draws more media attention than any other terrorist activity. The number of suicide terrorist campaigns worldwide is still rising as is the number of women involved.

The phenomenon of women as suicide attackers has appeared only relatively recently; however, it has quickly become a popular tool of many terrorist organizations and militant movements. This tactic was used (at least marginally) by substantially different organizations like Islamist movements Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, secular Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, initially communist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) or national-liberation organization of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). More recently Iraqi insurgents also started to use this tactic.¹

The first recorded case of suicide bombing perpetrated by a woman took place on 9th April 1985 in Lebanon, where Khyadali Sana, a sixteen-year old member of the Syrian National Social Party, drove a car full of explosives into a convoy of Israeli soldiers and killed two of them.²

1.1. Why *female* suicide terrorism?

The question *if* and *why* it is necessary to make a qualitative distinction between “male” and “female” terrorism is crucial. There are several reasons to make this distinction: different psychological effect on the population, different motivations of the terrorists, different ways of recruitment and perhaps even different efficiency.

In terms of psychological effect, every suicide attack perpetrated by a woman has a stronger psychological impact and causes a much fiercer response than when the perpetrator is a man. In addition to the difference in psychological impact, I claim the

¹ According to data collected by O'Rourke women carried out suicide attacks until now in these countries: Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Pakistan, Russia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Uzbekistan. O'Rourke, L. A. (2009), p. 682.

² Dronzina, T. and V. Astashin (2007), p. 30; Zedalis, D. D. (2004), p. 2.

motivations of women-terrorists and ways of their recruitment by terrorist organizations are in most cases fundamentally different from their male counterparts as well. However, some authors (e.g. O'Rourke) claim that the motivations of female terrorists are basically very similar to those that drive male terrorists.³ In the Chapter 7, I try to show that the claim that both men and women are driven only by their deep commitments to their communities is profoundly false and caused mainly by the lack of sensitivity for gender-related circumstances.

Although it is true that the process of recruitment of female suicide bombers is not the same in different terrorist organizations around the world, we can generally say that this process displays significantly different features from the process of recruitment of men-terrorists. One of the factors involved in the recruitment of female suicide terrorists that distinguishes Chechen terrorist organizations from other such organizations is the use of gender-related coercion, which is one of the main focus points of this paper.

Furthermore, O'Rourke claims that, according to data she collected, female suicide attackers are much more likely to be used by secular organizations than by religious ones.⁴ However, if we assume that Chechen terrorism is religiously motivated, the high number of "Black widows" seems to contradict O'Rourke's argument. Therefore we will analyze the reasons of this anomaly or else challenge the religious character of Chechen terrorist organizations.

1.2. Why *suicide* terrorism?

There is also the question why distinguish suicide terrorism from other types of terrorism. First, we can use the same argument as in the previous instance – that the act of terrorism, in which the perpetrator is willing to sacrifice him/herself, attracts much bigger attention and actually spreads the *terror* in the original meaning of the word⁵ – the most desirable effect for a terrorist organization.

³ O'Rourke, L. A. (2009), p. 684.

⁴ O'Rourke, L. A. (2009), p. 683.

⁵ The term comes from Latin *terror* which means "great fear".

Besides the effect on the target audience, the motivation of suicide terrorists has to be completely different from the motivation of those who only prepare a remote-control bomb and are not willing to die to accomplish the mission. Therefore, we should focus on the sources of these different motivations – especially on the ideological and religious frameworks, as well as on the personal experiences.

Additionally, it is also necessary to consider the benefits of suicide attacks for the terrorist organization. In terms of benefits for the organization, suicide attacks are a useful tool due to their high efficiency. However, the efficiency varies between different terrorist organizations and it fluctuates over time. Therefore, we will discuss the issue of efficiency of suicide attacks in this paper as well.

In order to analyze several types of terrorism, some researchers distinguish three most important forms: demonstrative, destructive and suicide terrorism.⁶ The aim of demonstrative terrorist acts, such as airline hijacking, hostage taking or explosions announced in advance, is to draw public attention while not causing any serious harm in order not to lose potential public support. In contrast to demonstrative terrorism, destructive terrorism does not avoid causing serious harm to the target audience and it is generally more aggressive. However, those who adopt destructive terrorism still have to balance carefully between harm and sympathy, depending on the nature of their political goal. *“For instance, the Baader-Meinhoft group selectively assassinated rich German industrialists, which alienated certain segments of German society but not others. Palestinian terrorists in the 1970s often sought to kill as many Israelis as possible, fully alienating Jewish society but still evoking sympathy from Muslim communities.”*⁷ Chechen terrorist groups are also increasingly aware of the danger of complete alienation to the general public. In February 2012 contemporary Chechen terrorist leader, Doku Umarov made a public statement, in which he claims that his organization will focus only on Russian governmental and law enforcement targets from then on. They will abstain from killing civilians because, as Umarov said referring to the recent

⁶ See Pape, R. A. (2003), p. 345.

⁷ Pape, R. A. (2003), p. 345.

huge demonstrations against Putin “...*Russian population does not support the Putin’s Chekist regime... and these peaceful people are hostages of this very regime...*”⁸

Finally, the most extreme form of terrorism is the suicide bombing. Although some researches show the plurality of terrorist organization’s strategic aims, the main aim appears to be the coercion of government to implement certain policy by imposing grave fear on the country’s population. As for the methods of suicide attacks, they vary significantly (from detonating suicide belt or vest, ramming vehicle into a building to setting the bomb in the aircraft by terrorist personally), but always include the precondition of terrorist’s death.

⁸ The Mujahid, Amir Dokka Umarov Changes His Stance Towards The Russian Population. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkhmFpnPMrs>.

2. Methodological framework

2.1. Available sources of information

It's very difficult to acquire any primary information from field research on issues connected to female suicide terrorism. It is therefore necessary to rely on data collected by those researchers who were lucky enough to have an access to primary sources of information or even had the opportunity to interview individuals personally involved in Chechen terrorism (e.g. leaders of terrorists organizations or detained unsuccessful suicide bombers).

In some cases I compare the data concerning Chechen female suicide terrorists with the data about individuals, organizations and society in other regions where these attacks occur as well, in order to highlight either specifics of Chechen female suicide terrorism or inter-subject similarities and correlations. I mostly use data from Israel-Palestinian conflict, which is in some aspects the most similar to Russo-Chechen one and where the female engagement in terrorist activities is also significant. However, the comparisons with female terrorists from Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Sri Lankan Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) could be fruitful as well, namely due to the fact that they come from far different background and their organizations are, at least nominally, secular. Nevertheless, we are partly limited by insufficient information about these two organizations, while far more attention is paid to Palestinian terrorist organizations.

However, there is still number of methodological problems, which every researcher of female suicide terrorism has to keep in mind. Clara Beyler summarizes them as follows:⁹

First, there are not enough reports with descriptions of the cases. Second, there is not enough documentation on how these women were treated during their stay with terrorist groups. Third problem is that the few reports that we do have "*have mostly been conducted by male researchers and from a man's point of view, which might be*

⁹ Beyler, C. (2003b), p. 4.

inherently gender biased, either consciously or unconsciously. One could imagine the importance of having a woman's perspective on the topic that would bring certain elements to light that had gone unnoticed by male researchers."¹⁰

Furthermore, as Beyler mentions, there is a problem of credibility of male-researchers, conducting interviews with the women, who did not go through with their missions. She assumes that the female researchers might be more credible in the eyes of the female terrorists and therefore calls for including more women on the research side. The last problem is that the necessary condition for comprehension of the role of women as suicide terrorists is to recognize that Chechen women the particularly oppressed part of society - "*oppressed not only because of religion, ...or national origin but also because of sex.*"¹¹

These problems are of course valid, but most of them can still be overcome. The lack of reports with descriptions of the cases and documentation on how women-terrorists were treated in terrorist group is probably the most serious of the problems. However, these problems originate from the very essence of suicide terrorism itself and it is clear that these problems will never be fully overcome. Therefore, we have to search for alternative ways how to study this phenomenon even without a sufficient amount of first-hand data.

While we have to accept these first two methodological problems, we can cope with the next one: the fact that each research on female suicide terrorism by male researcher might be inherently gender-biased. This could be true only in the case of a researcher, who would integrate an essentialist view and not take gender as culturally constructed issue, which have no direct connection to researcher's real sex. Therefore there is a need for gender-sensitive approach, however, this approach could be provided both by female as well as male researchers.

Subsequently, the next problem can be resolved in similar way. Credibility of a male researcher in the eyes of the female terrorist could be surely questioned. This, however, raises the question of credibility of members of other social groups as well – e. g. national, class, religious and others. This fact nevertheless does not imply that a

¹⁰ Beyler, C. (2003b), p. 4.

¹¹ Beyler, C. (2003b), p. 4.

man (in this case) is inherently less credible and his sex automatically creates a burden for conducting interview.

2.2. Three-level analysis

There are several possible ways to analyze suicide terrorist acts in terms of their causes and motivation. Many researches focused on one specific level of analysis – e.g. personal, organizational or societal level. Although it could surely be beneficial to analyze these distinctive levels separately, since suicide terrorism is a very complex phenomenon including a huge amount of mutually interacting factors, it seems more suitable to analyze occurrences of terrorism on all levels and try to develop an integrated framework that would show the relations between these different levels.

Therefore in accordance with Assaf Moghadam, I propose the multi-level approach as a more suitable method. The distinction of three levels of analysis was first introduced by Kenneth Waltz in his examination of the causes of war over fifty years ago. Waltz distinguished the levels of human behavior, internal structure of states and the nature of international system. In the case of analyzing of terrorism it is, according to Assaf Moghadam, more appropriate to replace Waltz' second level (or "image") by the analysis of terrorist organization "*as the unit responsible for the planning and execution of suicide operations.*"¹² Instead of Waltz' third level of analysis – the nature of international system – I propose a "societal level", which emphasizes the causes lying in the social and political environment from which suicide terrorism emerges.

What factors should be analyzed on each level?

*„The first level of analysis, the individual level, is designed to identify personal motivations of the various actors, involved in suicide attacks.“*¹³ Not only perpetrators of attacks themselves, but also other relevant actors like recruiters, organization's

¹² Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 11.

¹³ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 11.

leaders or „spiritual leaders“ should be examined if they exist. In other words, a really comprehensive analysis should focus on this level on the individual motivation of the actor and attempt to identify what reasons led not only the suicide bomber, but also the recruiter, the dispatcher, or the organizational and spiritual leader to contribute by their particular role to the planning and/or execution of the suicide attack.¹⁴ At this stage, the sufficient biographical data of actors are very important to discuss their possible personal motivations. However, lack of this information poses serious limitations to our study.

The motives of suicide terrorists or people who plan or support terrorist attack could be various and most likely they are a combination of several motives,¹⁵ which lead terrorist to perpetrate such act. But possible motivations most often include the seeking of revenge, the expectation of personal posthumous benefits, the expectation of material or immaterial rewards for family members, religious motives, the struggle for national liberation, or the influence of a widespread culture of martyrdom on the individual.¹⁶ Besides these motives there are also other common features among suicide bombers. Especially among female suicide bombers it is often some kind of deep personal trauma¹⁷ like experience with violent death of their close relatives, rape, extramarital relationship, homosexuality, or other „sin“.

„The second level of analysis focuses on organizations. Understanding the nature of terrorist organizations is important because the overwhelming majority of suicide attacks are planned and executed by members of identifiable organizations.“¹⁸ In other words, organizational level of analysis is very important, because individuals are very unlikely to possess all the resources needed to organize and carry out a suicide attack. The reported examples of Palestinian individuals who equipped and sent themselves as suicide terrorist without any organizational support¹⁹ do not decrease the general need to analyze the organizational level separately.

¹⁴ Cragin, R. K. and S.A. Daly (2009), p. 5.

¹⁵ Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006b), pp. 66-67.

¹⁶ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 20.

¹⁷ Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006b), pp. 66-67.

¹⁸ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 12.

¹⁹ Speckhard; Akhmedova; 2006, p. 439

On the organizational level it is usually very difficult to obtain sufficient information, because organization of suicide attacks is extremely secretive in order to preserve the element of surprise crucial for the success of the operation. Moreover, *„a distinct organizational level of analysis is required because organizations have distinct goals and motives – the need to maintain themselves, to act in line with ideological prescriptions, or to adopt suicide terrorism tactics out of competition and rivalry with other terrorist organizations.“*²⁰

Reasons which lead the organization to adopt suicide attacks are probably mainly tactical. Suicide attacks, especially perpetrated by women, are likely to draw attention to the group's goals and also spread extreme fear in the larger population – a key feature of terrorist attacks. Moreover, by using a tactic of suicide attacks, the group may gain stronger support in the international public opinion. *„There is some evidence that outside audiences may sympathize with groups who are using martyrdom tactics, assuming that members of a community willing to sacrifice themselves must have been subjected to particularly gruesome treatment by their enemy, thus leaving them with no other option than to seek death.“*²¹ Besides these reasons, terrorist organizations can also adopt tactic of suicide attacks because of several operational advantages, like great accuracy, high lethality,²² cost efficiency, and the irrelevance of planning a complicated escape route.²³ Therefore, on this level, we will ask *“how and why do terrorist groups deploy women.”*²⁴

First and second levels are closely related for several reasons. First, *„some of the motivations emanating from the individual and organizational level are identical, because they stem from the same environmental context.“*²⁵ Other connecting moment of these two levels is that belonging to some group or organization provides the individual a perceived social status and empowerment to the individual.

Third level of analysis, environmental level, focuses on different structural factors and conditions affecting the occurrence of suicide terrorism. Among

²⁰ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 13.

²¹ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 31.

²² O'Rourke, L. A. (2009), p. 687.

²³ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 32.

²⁴ Cragin, R. K. and S.A. Daly (2009), p. 20.

²⁵ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 15.

these factors belong various political, historical, cultural, societal, religious and economic circumstances. These factors affect individual motivations and actions as well as tactics, ideology and goals of organizations. As Moghadam sums up, “(i)ndividuals and organizations do not act in vacuum, but are affected by the environment in which they live and operate.”²⁶

From what was mentioned above, it is clear that any of the levels of analysis alone is unable to explain why suicide terrorism occurs in some contexts and not in others. Therefore, a multi-level analysis reflecting as much relevant motivations in every level as possible is needed to comprehend the real roots of suicide terrorism.

²⁶ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 14.

3. Definition of basic terms

3.1. Terrorism

Terrorism is a term with such a significant political meaning, that its definition itself is the subject of vivid political clashes. Moreover, almost every terrorism researcher (apart from governments and international organizations) feels the need to fabricate his or her own definition, which is supposed to be the most concise one. I will operate with the definition, following these criteria:

Firstly, it should emphasize, that terrorism is a form of violence, aimed against civilians.²⁷ When the targets are soldiers or policemen in service, it is more suitable to use other terms, such as guerilla or insurgency (although there could be exceptions in some specific cases). Secondly, it should note that the main goal of this kind of violence is to change the behavior of actors, different from the immediate victims (typically state or government). An additional criterion is *non-stateness* of terrorists. It distinguishes terrorist organizations from the set of violent methods, commonly described as *state terror*. Terror used by a state or government against its own or other state's civilians has nevertheless too less in common to terrorism as a strategy of a clandestine organization

The definition used by Dronzina and Astashin²⁸ goes as follows: terrorism is „*deliberate violence against civilian staff and facilities, executed in order to modify the behavior of a target (society, government) different from the immediate target (the victims).*” This definition seems to be appropriate, because it clearly distinguishes on one hand military actions, which target soldiers or military facilities, not civilians, and on the other hand acts of personal vengeance on certain people. In these both cases the main aim is not intimidation of the whole population and causing of general terror, but simply physical destruction of the enemy. The power of terrorist acts is on the contrary based on the terrifying effect on the society – the more shocking the images, the more successful are the terrorist acts. In contrast, the definition used by Robert Pape is more

²⁷ Cases, when terrorists' target are policemen or military persons at the moment out of service, should be included as well. However, to make such a clear distinction is usually very difficult.

²⁸ Dronzina, T. and V. Astashin (2007). p. 30.

of general nature, it however addresses another important feature: the non-state character of the terrorist organizations. “*Terrorism involves the use of violence by an organization other than a national government to cause intimidation or fear among a target audience.*”²⁹ Both definitions are partially useful, but for our purpose the definition has to meet all aforementioned criteria. Therefore I will use the definition as follows: “*Terrorism is deliberate violence against civilian staff and facilities, executed in order to modify the behavior of a target (society, government) different from the immediate target (the victims), by an organization other than government.*”

Although this definition is sufficient for our analysis, we should keep in mind, that terrorism has at least two purposes – not only to coerce opponents, but also to gain supporters for the terrorists cause.³⁰

3.2. Narrow vs. broad definition of suicide terrorist attacks

According to a narrow definition, a suicide terrorist attack is only that one, when the perpetrator’s death is a necessary *condition* of its success. On the contrary, according to a broad definition, a suicide terrorist attack may also refer to attacks, where the terrorist’s death is only highly probable, but not *necessary*.³¹

We can illustrate the distinction on the examples of the 9/11 attacks on the one hand and the so-called Hebron massacre in 1994 on the other. The latter refers to the moment, when a Zionist fanatic called Baruch Goldstein opened fire on unarmed Palestinian Muslims inside the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron and killed 29 of them. While the death of Al-Qaida terrorists was certainly integral and unavoidable to the mission’s accomplishment, Goldstein’s death was not a necessary precondition of his mission’s success.³² The 2011 Utøya massacre³³ is a similar case. In both Goldstein’s and

²⁹ Pape, R. A. (2003), p. 345.

³⁰ Bloom, M. (2006), pp. 26-27.

³¹ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 17.

³² Goldstein was eventually shot dead by policeman.

³³ On 22nd July 2011, right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik perpetrated an attack against the civilians on the Norwegian Labor Party’s youth camp on Utøya Island, Norway. The assault was preceded by a car bomb explosion in Oslo. As a result of these two attacks, 77 people died; most of them were teenagers.

Breivik's attack, there was a high probability of the perpetrators' death, but according to the narrow definition, these were not cases of suicide terrorism.

The broader definition is preferred by most of the experts on suicide terrorism. However, for the purpose of analysis of some specific aspects of FST,³⁴ it is more appropriate to use the narrow definition, because it characterizes better the essence of *suicide* terrorism. The terrorist determined to carry out a suicide attack has necessarily a different motivation, behaves differently and the process of recruitment differs as well.

The distinction between broadly and narrowly defined suicide terrorism is a key issue, concerning some Chechen terrorist attacks, including two major operations – the so called Beslan school hostage crisis in September 2004 and the Moscow theatre hostage crisis in October 2002. The classification of these operations as suicide terrorism is controversial, since it is not absolutely clear, what the terrorists' intentions were. Some witnesses' description of terrorists' behavior and the fact, that both events lasted for several days (and were eventually ended by assault of FSB), suggests that these two events differ from typical suicide bombings. Anne Speckhard, who has published an important study about behavior of Dubrovka hostage-takers³⁵ includes those terrorists in the sample of suicide terrorism, probably because they “*announced to the stunned crowd that they were on a suicide mission.*”³⁶ Elsewhere, she supports its argument by stating that “*(t)he terrorists announced from the outset that their operation was a suicide mission and that they expected and were willing to die. They called themselves martyrs in their prepared videotape (...)*”³⁷ However, the fact that the terrorists took hostages and were willing to negotiate suggests that there was a certain possibility they would survive the operation. It would mean that both Dubrovka and Beslan do not fit to the narrow definition.

On the other hand, there is clear evidence that Beslan and Dubrovka terrorists were prepared to die in their missions: they allegedly did not prepare any escape routes, women wore suicide explosive belts, they announced their willingness to become martyrs etc. Although the terrorists' rhetoric could be a mere strategy how to put a

³⁴ For instance for the analysis of individual motivations or group's strategic logic.

³⁵ Speckhard, A. (2004).

³⁶ Speckhard, A. (2004), p. 1.

³⁷ Speckhard, A. (2004), p. 10.

higher pressure on the Russian security forces and make the audience outside the theater more nervous and coerce them to certain concessions, the terrorists must have been aware that they would not survive.

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

4. Brief history of Russo-Chechen conflict

4.1. Dissolution of USSR and rise of nationalist ideology

The reasons and consequences of the disintegration of Soviet Union and the rise of ethnic nationalism are not the topic of this work. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this work, it is useful to mention the ideological turn, which happened in the late 1980s.³⁸ In those years, declared internationalism of small nation's communist leaders was progressively replaced by ethnic nationalism, based on the idea that ethnic nation is the given and natural political entity. Christopher Zürcher characterizes the new concept of nation in post-Soviet space as follows: *“The nation was depicted in substantial ethnocultural terms, whereas the concept of a political nation, where ethnicity was not the main precondition, hardly resonated.”*³⁹

Many “communists” were calling for greater sovereignty and later for independence of their respective nations and were providing mutual support for each other's claims. Dissolution of USSR became their main goal. At that time, ethnic nationalism turned into a tool of emancipation from oppressive Soviet communist regime. *“It was the possibility, emerging in the course of the late 1980s, of realizing new collective political projects beyond the moribund Soviet system that lent the concept “nation” its potency, its mobilization effect, and its immunity to deconstruction. The concept of the nation as a substantial, real group was in great demand because the establishing and legitimization of new institutional rules and new polities relied on there being a “real” group as subject and beneficiary of these innovations.”*⁴⁰ However this very concept of nation soon became the engine of several bloody conflicts, including the one in Chechnya.

³⁸ Nationalism had an ambiguous position during the Soviet era. On one hand, any manifestations of nationalism were suppressed as reactionary, preventing the triumph of progressive internationalism, on the other hand, in some cases nationalist sentiments were encouraged as people's right for self-determination. Although internationalist doctrine was in practice largely abandoned since 1940's, it remained part of the official ideology of USSR until the very end.

³⁹ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 38.

⁴⁰ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 38.

4.2. Chechen independence

Political changes in late 80's also brought a new hope to Chechen dreams of freedom. For the first time in modern history, the Chechen independence seemed to be realistic. This nationalist wave rose in practically all Soviet republics and autonomous territories. In addition, new kind of solidarity emerged too – from Estonia to South-Caucasian republics, nationalists suddenly had common aim, and therefore even the leaders of different national movements supported each other. Typical example could be the first Chechen president Dzhokhar Dudayev, who first flew Estonian flag on Soviet air force base in Tartu,⁴¹ then started to organize nationalist movement in Grozny.

On the eve of Soviet Union's break-up, Chechen leaders caught the scent of opportunity to gain greater autonomy. In November 1991, the Supreme Council of then Chechen-Ingush ASSR declared State Sovereignty. Newly elected first president of independent Chechnya Dzhokhar Dudayev was expecting confrontation with Russian central power and declared general mobilization. 62,000 men, together with volunteers from other regions of Caucasus, stood up for independence of Chechnya.⁴² It is important to note that Chechen politics was anything but Islamist at that time. Popular leader Dudayev, supported by the overwhelming part of Chechen society, was a typical nationalist politician, similar to national leaders in many (post-)Soviet republics. His political project was to create an independent, secular Chechnya, not an Islamic state with *sharia* as its constitution.⁴³

For the Russian government, the loss of Chechnya would be very painful – not only as possible first step toward further disintegration of Russian federation itself, but also because there were valuable pipelines on the Chechen territory. Therefore, after the events of November 1991, newly elected Russian president Yeltsin declared the Chechen independence to be illegal and created the Chechen Internim Council to oppose Dudayev. Some minor clashes between Russian airborne regiment and

⁴¹ Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 195.

⁴² Šmíd, T. (ed.) (2007), p. 193.

⁴³ Kullberg, K.A. (2004), p. 114.

Dudayev's forces resulted in Russian defeat.⁴⁴ Chechen rebels were encouraged by this victory and, in addition, they gained a substantial amount of weaponry.⁴⁵

At the beginning of 1991, charismatic leader of Chechen militants Shamil Basayev firstly drew attention to himself when he, with several other armed men, hijacked an aircraft flying on the Mineralnye Vody – Ankara line. Among their demands there was lifting of martial law in Chechnya and organizing of press conference.⁴⁶ This operation ended peacefully and, although Basayev's demands were not satisfied, all hostages were freed. The hijackers were guaranteed a safe return to Chechnya.

In autumn 1993, Boris Yeltsin consolidated his power and began to consider military solution of Chechen issue. In order to gain public support, politicians and mass media started anti-Chechen campaign, depicting Chechens and other nations from Caucasus as criminals and a grave danger for security of Russian people.⁴⁷ The campaign was supposed to awake the persuasion that military invasion to Chechnya was necessary in order to provide local Russians with help. At the beginning of the conflict, Moscow preferred the indirect involvement through supporting Chechen anti-Dudayev opposition led by Umar Avturkhanov.⁴⁸

The first major attack of anti-Dudayev forces began on 26th November 1994, when paramilitary units with a clandestine support of Russian federal military forces attacked Grozny⁴⁹. However, this operation ended as a fiasco for Russia and even caused an unprecedented unity between Chechen clans and increased their commitment to resist.⁵⁰

After this failure, on 29th November 1994 president Yeltsin started to strongly consider an official involvement of Russian army in the conflict⁵¹ and began to prepare

⁴⁴ Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 199.

⁴⁵ Tishkov, V. (2004), pp. 63-64.

⁴⁶ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 97; Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 300.

⁴⁷ Ram, H. (1999), pp. 15-17.

⁴⁸ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 80., Cornell, pp. 204-205.

⁴⁹ Smith, S. (2001), p. 137.

⁵⁰ Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 206.

⁵¹ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 80.

massive attack on Grozny.⁵² As a pretext for the invasion, he declared 48-hour ultimatum for Chechen separatists to lay down their arms. Although Dudayev was not willing to surrender, Yeltsin did not even wait for ultimatum's lapse⁵³ and on the next day he issued Decree no. 2137 "*On measures for the restoration of the Constitution and the rule of law on the territory of the Chechen Republic.*"⁵⁴ This decree officially launched the First Russo-Chechen War.

4.3. The First Chechen War

On 11 December 1994 some 40,000 Russian troops crossed the Chechen borders, but their initial advance met self-confident Chechen resistance. Russian army especially suffered from the disunity of its leadership, low motivation and morale of soldiers,⁵⁵ but also from underestimation of Caucasian winter climate. However, after two months of heavy fighting, the Russian troops eventually succeeded and conquered the Chechen capital Grozny. According to different estimates, up to 7000 Chechen fighters died in siege of Grozny, and Russians lost some 2000 soldiers.⁵⁶ From the rebels' point of view it could be perceived as success, considering the Russian material superiority (especially massive use of aircrafts). However, around 20,000 civilians died during this siege, including many ethnic Russians, mainly as a result of Russian indiscriminate bombing and shelling.⁵⁷

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

⁵² Smith, S. (2001), p. 142.

⁵³ Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 210.

⁵⁴ Šmíd, T.(ed.) (2007), p. 202.

⁵⁵ Gall, C. and T. De Waal (1998), p. 179.

⁵⁶ Smith, S. (2001), p. 165.

⁵⁷ Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 226.

On 14th June 1995 a group of Chechen rebels, led by Shamil Basayev, carried out an attack on the hospital in Budyonnovsk in South Russia. They took more than 1000 hostages⁵⁸ and announced their demands, including the ceasefire and Russian withdrawal from Chechnya. After several days of negotiation (during which FSB twice tried to storm the hospital),⁵⁹ the hostages were released. Although rebels' claims were met only partially, the shock caused by this hostage crisis seriously changed the course of war. Russian commanders were forced to ceasefire, not only by newly appointed OSCE mediators but by the Russian public as well. Although the fighting and guerilla operations continued (hostage crisis in January 1996 in Dagestani city of Kizlyar, assassination of Chechen rebel-president Dzhokhar Dudayev in April 1996, recapture of Grozny by rebels in August 1996) a new wave of negotiation started in summer 1996.

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

However, Russian public rather perceived this agreement as Moscow's capitulation and Yeltsin won the election with only 35% of votes.

The war seemed to be over, but Russian army surprisingly attacked the village of Mekhkety, where at that time almost entire Chechen leadership was present - including Basayev, Maskhadov and Yandarbiyev.⁶⁰ All of them survived and escaped, but the peace process was in a grave danger. As a result of this betrayal, Chechen leaders decided to launch the counter-attack and recapture Grozny.⁶¹

At the beginning of August 1996, Chechens launched coordinated attack on Grozny, Gudermes and Argun. Few days later, 1500 fighters under the command of

⁵⁸ Smith, S. (2001), p. 201.

⁵⁹ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 83.

⁶⁰ Smith, S. (2001), p. 239.

⁶¹ Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 218.

Basayev, Abdulhajiev, Ismailov and Gelayev conquered Grozny, even though they faced overwhelming Russian superiority.⁶²

The re-conquest of Grozny was probably “*one of the most humiliating defeats of a modern army.*”⁶³ Chechen fighters succeeded partly because of improved tactics of urban warfare, when small groups of fighters were assaulting clumsy Russian tanks and troops unprepared for this kind of fight. Eventually, Russians agreed to peace negotiation and on 15th August ceasefire was declared. However, during August fighting, more than 30,000 Chechen civilians were forced to leave their homes. These displaced civilians headed mainly for Ingushetia.

Peace negotiations were concluded on 31st August 1996, when Khasav-Yurt Accord was signed by Aslan Maskhadov and Alexander Lebed. This peace treaty officially marked the end of the First Chechen War. Russia granted Chechnya autonomy, although not formal independence, withdrawing its troops from Chechnya by January 1997. In Chechnya this treaty was celebrated as a great victory; however, the impacts of this war were gruesome - some 60,000 Chechen civilians were killed during two years.⁶⁴

4. 3.1. Partakers, motives and strategies

Under the commonly accepted view, this conflict is presented as a clash of two parties – Russian central power and Chechen separatists. However, this image is misleading and rather blurring. Firstly, it is incorrect to portray the parties as cohesive, unitary subjects – in fact, both “Russian” and “Chechen” sides are internally divided. Of course, this disunity evolved during different stages of war and inter-war period, nevertheless on the Russian side it is necessary to differentiate between hardliners (*siloviki*)⁶⁵ and those who preferred more peaceful solution.⁶⁶ Apart from this distinction, there were also some personal rivalries, based on completely pragmatic

⁶² Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 218.

⁶³ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 83.

⁶⁴ Sarkees, M. R. and F. W. Wayman (2010), p. 463.

⁶⁵ So called “*Siloviki*” (derivate from *Сила*, “force” or “power”) is the informal group of politicians, connected to Russian security forces and services, who, according to current opinion, have a huge influence on the government’s policy.

⁶⁶ E.g. Alexander Lebed.

interests of certain figures – for instance between Y. Luzhkov and A. Lebed, who became quite popular with Russians because of his activity in peace negotiations.

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

With regard to tactics, Chechen military leaders managed to take advantage of urban guerilla warfare. Asymmetry of conflicting parties and partisan character of Chechen rebel forces is one of the key reasons why Russian forces were not able to achieve decisive victory for such a long time. Partisan warfare has a number of advantages as well as a number of limitations. According to Carl Schmitt, one of the constitutive elements of partisan is his so called “telluric nature”, or his connection to the land. This important characteristic means that partisan warfare is territorially limited and inherently defensive.⁶⁷ *“In partisan battle a complexly structured new space of action emerges, because the partisan does not fight on an open field of battle nor on the same plane of open frontal war. Rather, he forces his enemy into another space. To the space of the regular traditional theater of war he, thus, adds another, darker dimension, a dimension of depth, in which the displayed uniform becomes deadly.”*⁶⁸ In short, the irregularity of Chechen rebel troops was their greatest advantage. They could be both fighters and civilians practically at the same time.

Last but not least, both sides of the war used different strategies. Russian troops waged *attrition* warfare, in which they attempted to win by exhausting the enemy and causing higher casualty rate on the enemy side. This strategy is usually used by those sides of conflict which have large and strong army on their disposal. On the other hand, Chechen partisans chose *manoeuvre* strategy in which the moment of surprise, high mobility and spatial dispersion are the key elements. The aim of *manoeuvre* strategy is

⁶⁷ Schmitt, C. (2004), pp. 48-49.

⁶⁸ Schmitt, C. (2004), pp. 48-49.

to make the enemy feel insecure and cause the constant fear of assault.⁶⁹ According to Clausewitz, both those strategies are complementary, and a combination of both is necessary for the final decisive victory.

4.3.2. New wars

Character of wars in Chechnya (especially of the second one) could be hardly considered traditional. It is the subject of long discussions, but we can say that they fulfill at least some of the defining features of so-called *New Wars*, term introduced by British scholar Mary Kaldor. First of all, Chechen wars were based on “*identity politics*”, unlike “old wars”, which are fought rather for geopolitical or ideological goals.⁷⁰ “*Identities*” could be national, clan, religious, or language, and they are usually reproduced by collective memories and myths. Unlike material goods, identities could not be divided and therefore it is very difficult to solve identity conflicts by compromise. Therefore, conflicts over identities are much more permanent and sometimes end only when one of the conflicting sides is eliminated (as we saw recently in Tamil-Sinhalese conflict in Sri Lanka).

Secondly, “new wars”, unlike the traditional ones, are not usually decided on battlefield. The key is the political control of population – or, in extreme case, physical elimination of people of different identity.⁷¹ That is why “new wars” are quite often characterized by mass killings, ethnic cleansing, expulsions, intimidations etc. The main object of violence is the civil population. There come new, once tabooed forms of violence, such as rape as weapon of war, indiscriminate bombings and executions, exemplary tortures and others. Similarly, cultural sites, buildings, symbols and monuments are being destroyed, in order to destroy the identity itself.

Other distinctive feature of new wars is that unlike “traditional wars”, they are fought by diverse range of paramilitary troops, local warlords, criminal gangs, police, militias and international mercenaries, rather than large, hierarchically organized armies. Additionally, each partaker has its own specific interests and motives.

⁶⁹ Kaldor, M. (2001), p. 22.

⁷⁰ Kaldor, M. (2001), p. 6.

⁷¹ Kaldor, M. (2001), pp. 7-8.

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

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

4.4. Inter-war period

Both Chechen wars were characterized by strong dynamics – if we compare situation at the beginning of the first war in 1994 with 2009, when the second one officially ended, we wouldn't find many features in common. All participants underwent profound change; some of them even changed the side, rebels' ideology as well as demographic composition of Chechen society, Russian interests in the region and even the territory where the war was taking place changed.

While the First Chechen war could be called "Russo-Chechen" or "War in Chechnya", to call the second one the same would be hardly correct. The later one didn't take place only in Chechnya and there was neither "Russian" nor "Chechen" party.

Officially, after the first war Chechnya became independent. In fact, it was hardly functioning state, facing immense humanitarian disaster. The war caused up to 100,000 civilian casualties and 40 to 50% of population became refugees.⁷² 80% of population ended up unemployed and for many of them criminal activity became the

⁷² Šmíd, T. (2007), p. 213.

only source of income. According to some estimate, only 10% of Chechen population was earning their living entirely legally.⁷³ There were practically no social services, health care or even schooling. Furthermore, it is necessary to count immense physical and psychological harms of the civilian population, which will make themselves felt during the second war.

Independent Chechnya evinced almost all typical features of *failed state*: absence of state institutions capable of securing society's needs, regulated anarchy based on clan reciprocity, high level of crime,⁷⁴ huge amount of weaponry in people's hands, but also nepotism and particularism – that was how Chechnya in those years looked like.⁷⁵

In this period, both (or all) parties underwent profound development. Yeltsin lost almost completely his popularity (he resigned on 31st December 1999) and together with new president, group of so called “*siloviki*” came to power. These hardliners preferred vigorous military solution of Chechen case.⁷⁶ Similarly, power of Chechen warlords (namely of S. Basayev, Z. Yandarbiyev and M. Udugov) considerably rose, largely at Maskhadov's expense. Although he won over Basayev in presidential elections in January 1997, the real power was already in warlords' hands.⁷⁷ Additionally, the ideological background of Chechen rebels also significantly changed. Islam (in its various forms) became increasingly attractive. “*Recently freed from Soviet-imposed atheism, underground Muslims openly displayed their faith and many younger-generation Chechens reconnected with their spiritual roots as the means of coping with an environment that was “marred by warlordism, rampant criminality, hostage takings, chaotic violence, grisly attacks on foreign aid workers and general lawlessness.”*⁷⁸ It seems quite natural that in such a devastated country Islam could provide certain level of stability, order and social cohesion. Islam also functioned as an identity-building factor, which perfectly fitted on the distinction between (Christian) Russia and Chechnya as a part of Islamic world. This ideological turnabout was used namely by

⁷³ Moskalyov (1997), p.64, quoted in: Šmíd, T. (2007), p. 213.

⁷⁴ For instance, several hundreds of people were kidnapped for ransom in those years. (Zürcher, C. (2007), p.86)

⁷⁵ Šmíd, T. (2007), p. 213-214.

⁷⁶ Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 235.

⁷⁷ Zürcher, C. (2007), p.87.

⁷⁸ Pape, R. A. and J. K. Feldman (2010), p. 256.

Chechen warlords to weaken the authority of president Maskhadov. Most of the warlords accepted the Wahhabist doctrine – the extremely fundamentalist form of Islamism (there was a substantial influence of Saudi Arab Emir Ibn Al-Khattab⁷⁹) and started to create anti-Maskhadov opposition. This anti-Maskhadov Wahhabist opposition presented itself for the first time in June 1998, when it refused to submit to his authority.⁸⁰ Although even Maskhadov later reacted to the rise of radical Islamism and Wahhabism by the adoption of Islamist rhetoric⁸¹ and proclamation of *sharia* law, he didn't gain a greater popularity among radical Islamists.

Confidence of Chechen field commanders had grown to such extent, that they decided to expand the Islamic resistance in the Caucasus to other regions. The newly created Islamic International Brigade (Islamic International Brigade, IIB), which consisted mainly of Chechens, Dagestanis and Arabs,⁸² led by Basayev and Khattab, carried out on 2nd August 1999 attack on several villages and Russian military targets in Dagestan. Although at the beginning it seemed that the event would be successful, Dagestan militia resisted the IIB invasion and Wahhabists have not succeeded to spark the Islamist uprising in Dagestan.⁸³ Dagestani militia with the support of Russian army repelled Chechen fighters in two weeks.

4.5. The Second Chechen War

The invasion to Dagestan together with series of bombings in Moscow and city of Volgodonsk (allegedly carried out by Chechen rebels) became the pretext for the new war on North Caucasus. So called Second Chechen War started on August 1999, when Russian government forces and FSB crossed the Chechen border and started to take the

⁷⁹ Also known as Habib Abdul Rahman, although his real name was Samir Saleh Abdullah Al-Suwailem.

⁸⁰ Cornell, S. E. (2003), p. 236.

⁸¹ Maskhadov's first post-war trip abroad was to make the *hadj* pilgrimage in April 1997 at the invitation of Saudi King Fahd. (Smith, S. (2001), p. 265)

⁸² There were also numbers of Arab volunteers, often veterans of other wars (Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Bosnia).

⁸³ They understand the invasion rather as an expression of Chechen territorial aspirations than as a legitimate resistance to the Russian oppression. Moreover, given the fact, that Wahhabism by considered by most of Dagestanis an imported, non-indigenous form of Islam, Chechen rebels did not succeed in introduction of the myth of still continuing Caucasian Islamic resistance, initiated by imam Shamil in 19th century. The social situation in Dagestan was also quite different than in Chechnya. In Dagestan, where traditional social, political and religious order was still relatively functioning, Wahhabism could not play the role of alternative as in totally devastated Chechnya.

territory from the north. Russian air force started massive bombings – even of civilian targets. They bombed even highly crowded sites, such as market in the centre of Grozny, where on 21st October more than 100 civilians died.⁸⁴ Totally, as the result of bombings, more than 100,000 civilians were forced to leave their homes.⁸⁵ During so called second phase of the operation, which lasted till the end of November, Russian forces (with the overwhelming power of 100,000 soldiers in arms⁸⁶) took most of the strategically important strongpoints. Number of refugees reached unprecedented levels – according to different sources from 200,000 to 350,000 people had been forced to flee their homes.⁸⁷

By the end of January 2000, Grozny was conquered. Chechen fighters left the city and headed for mountains on the south.⁸⁸ Many Chechen commanders were killed during this escape. During spring 2000, fighting slightly slowed down – which was probably once again the effect of ongoing presidential election campaign. That time, the character of conflict significantly changed. Since Chechen rebels lost their positions in most towns, they resorted to sabotages and surprising assaults of small groups of fighters. According to different sources, there were from 7,000 to 40,000 Chechen fighters in arms.⁸⁹ In June 2000 the very first suicide attack took place – two young women detonated themselves in a OMON (Special Purpose Mobile Unit) base at Alkhan-Yurt in Chechnya.⁹⁰

The Second Chechen War differed from the first one in many aspects. Globalization of this conflict was very important turn. Ratio between *local territorially-tied inhabitants* and *globalists* changed in favor of the later. It was the involvement not only of international jihadists, but also of diverse international organizations, including humanitarian ones. Their aid, intended officially for war-affected civilians,

⁸⁴ BBC News (1999). “Rockets Blast Grozny.” BBC News, October 21, 1999. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/481663.stm>. Guardian (1999). “Russian Rockets Hit Grozny Market.” The Guardian, October 22, 1999. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/oct/22/chechnya.ameliagentleman>.

⁸⁵ Šmíd, T.(ed.) (2007), p. 219.

⁸⁶ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 93.

⁸⁷ Kullberg, K.A. (2004), p. 91. Compare with Šmíd, T.(ed.) (2007), p. 220.

⁸⁸ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 93.

⁸⁹ Šmíd, T.(ed.) (2007), p. 221.

⁹⁰ In December 1999, the town of Alkhan-Yurt became a scene of a massacre committed by Russian forces, when several dozens of civilians were killed and numbers of others were wounded or raped. However the linkage between this massacre and the terrorist attack is not proven, it is highly probable.

paradoxically often ended in hands of militants and local mafias. The other effect was that both sides understood that the information war is at least as important as the successes on the battlefields.⁹¹ Chechen warriors tried to present themselves as noble freedom fighters, while Moscow was disseminating the image of Chechens as bandits and terrorists, who are even connected to the global terrorist networks.⁹² The other important change was the diminishing role of moderates and civilian leaders and increasing power of those, who profited from the conflict – *siloviks* on the Russian side, field commanders on the Chechen side and criminal groups on both sides. Finally, there was a significant attempt by Moscow to “Chechenize” this conflict. As a part of Chechenization, Russians transferred power to pro-Russian Chechen officials (at first to Akhmad Kadyrov) in order to shift from Russo-Chechen to Chechen-Chechen conflict.⁹³ Russians were actively supporting diverse Chechen factions be they anti-Maskhadov- or anti-islamist-orientated, in order to created pro-Moscow opposition in Chechnya. Eventually they succeeded and found their ally in once Islamist, Chechen mufti Akhmad Kadyrov, who had been appointed president of Chechnya, and later in his son, Ramzan Kadyrov, man of infamous reputation.

4.6. Cease-fire and present-day situation

After the end of the strongest fighting in 2000, character of conflict transformed to carrying out unilateral *ad hoc* acts of aggression. While Chechen rebels were attacking not only military targets, but civilian ones both in Caucasus and Russia as well, Russian army and FSB were carrying out so called counter-insurgency operations (*zachistki*), causing death of many civilians.⁹⁴ The largest amount of Chechen terrorist attacks was executed between 2002 and 2004. In this period, bomb attacks alone caused the death of more than 200 people. At this time, Chechen terrorist organizations started to deploy to a large extent so called „Black widows“. Besides that, two major operations were carried out during this period –Hostage taking in Moscow theatre in 2002 and Massacre in Beslan School in 2004.

⁹¹ Zürcher, C. (2007), pp. 93-94.

⁹² Ram, H. (1999), p.18.

⁹³ Šmíd, T.(ed.) (2007), p. 221.

⁹⁴ BBC News (2001). “Russia’s ‘Dirty War’.” BBC News, August 9, 2001. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/crossing_continents/europe/1480159.stm.

Although the Second Chechen War ended officially on 16th April 2009, in fact it only entered the new stage. Military operation was replaced by police. Moscow continues to support Ramzan Kadyrov, whose father Ahmad Kadyrov was assassinated in 2003 by his Chechen enemies. Officially, there is a peace in Chechnya nowadays; in fact there are frequent clashes and skirmishes among different clans, paramilitary groups or mafias.⁹⁵ Kadyrov himself is allegedly connected to different criminal activities and must be protected by his private army.

⁹⁵ Sarkees, M. R. and F. W. Wayman (2010).

5. Political and societal environment of Chechnya

This level of analysis is to show some structural causes and conditions which have the effect on radicalization of both individuals and organizations and their eventual decision to adopt female suicide terrorism as a tool of their struggle. On this level it is necessary to emphasize “*political, economic or social grievances that prompt anger and motivate individuals.*”⁹⁶ It is clear that individuals and organizations do not act in vacuum and that the social and other conditions form the process of radicalization. In other words, the aim of this chapter is the analysis of the role of specific social condition in influencing the human behavior. The underlying hypothesis, which will be discussed in this chapter, states that the emergence of female suicide terrorism would be impossible without a specific mixture of political and societal preconditions, such as the impact of Russian occupation of Chechnya and the increasing brutality of the conflict⁹⁷, the influence of Wahhabist ideology on the traditional social structure and its interaction with customary law, large-scale incidence of rapes and desperate social situation in post-war Chechnya.

5.1. Politics and radical Islamism

Some authors (e.g. Pape, Feldman) emphasize the importance of Russian occupation of Chechnya for the emergence of suicide terrorism. These authors depict suicide terrorism as a weapon of the last resort, after ordinary resistance failed to achieve Russian military withdrawal. Based on the fact that there were no suicide terrorist attacks during the First Chechen War, but later “*the variation in the trajectory of suicide attacks (such as the spikes in 2003 and 2009) corresponds to counter-terrorism campaigns that were first initiated by Russian occupational forces and then*

⁹⁶ Cragin, R. K. and S.A. Daly (2009), p. 12.

⁹⁷ For the further debate about the relation between suicide terrorism and foreign occupation see Pape, R. A. and J. K. Feldman (2010), pp. 19-41.

by the Russian-backed Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov.”⁹⁸ Therefore the key question is to determine out what factors changed between First and Second Chechen wars.

It can be reasonably asserted that during the First Chechen war the national-liberation ideology was dominant over the religious one. Islam did play certain role, but it was rather “a supporting self-identification element”⁹⁹ than an ideological motive. Much stronger than the influence of Islam itself was the effect of diverse national myths that ignited a new wave of enmity between Russians and Chechens. Especially important was the still living memory of the deportation of Chechens (and several other nations) to Central Asia in 1944.

The reason why Islam did not play a role of leading power against the Russian rule at the beginning of 90s, consisted also partly in the character of the local form of Islam. Most Chechens (if they were believers at all) were followers of its specific form sometimes called “*narodnyj islam*” (“popular Islam”), which was the unique combination of local pre-Islamic cults with Islamic beliefs and mystical branch of Islam – *Sufism*.¹⁰⁰ This form of Islam is widely considered to be very tolerant, which does not make it very suitable for creating a base for liberation struggle. Sufism is characterized by substantial non-orthodoxy and decentralization, but also by isolation from other branches of Islam.¹⁰¹ Only with the arrival of adherents of Wahhabism, radical and far less tolerant Sunni movement, radical Islamism could become a fundamental source of Chechen struggle.¹⁰²

Although Islam was not such an important motivation during the First Chechen War, at that time some Chechen rebel leaders tried to make contacts in several Muslim

⁹⁸ Pape, R. A. and J. K. Feldman (2010), p. 251.

⁹⁹ Šmíd, T. (2007), p. 204..

¹⁰⁰ Souleimanov, E. and T. Šmíd (2010), p. 24.

¹⁰¹ Kullberg, K.A. (2004), p. 100.

¹⁰² This dichotomy between Sufism and Wahhabism is nonetheless questioned by some scholars. For instance, Knysh (Knysh, A. (2004)) states that this dichotomy is too simplistic and rather blurring the normative meaning of those terms. While “Sufism” is presented by politicians, journalists and academics as a “traditional” and “peaceful”, “Wahhabism” is presented as “imported” and “aggressive”. Knysh quite rightly points out that the term “Wahhabism” is quite often misused as a label for any Islamic opposition against the establishment in the Post-Soviet space, even by those *muftis* loyal to the political power. Aware of this terminological and ideological problem and given that a detail analysis of this issue cannot be undertaken in this paper due to lack of space, I will keep using the term “Wahhabism” as a covering term for all those fundamentalist Sunni organizations and individuals willing to fight in the name of pure, original form of Islam and *sharia* as the only law.

countries and to get some material and financial support for their organizations. Connections to the international Islamist networks were still relatively sparse. However, this changed during several following years and the reality of Second Chechen war became very different.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, the role of Islam in Second Chechen war is still debatable and it is evident that at least some of rebel leaders adopted Wahhabism out of purely pragmatic reasons.

5.1.1. Wahhabism¹⁰⁴

The so called “Wahhabism” came to Chechnya in a larger extent in the inter-war period. Prior to the war, almost nobody in Chechnya had known about it.¹⁰⁵ As Pape and Feldman state, „(i)nternational Islamist organizations were eager to support the resurgence of Islam throughout the entire Caucasus region, and money from wealthier countries supported the rebuilding of mosques, schools, and other forms of Islamic expression“.¹⁰⁶ Most of these Islamic organizations and missionaries came from Arab countries (above all Saudi Arabia), but some of them were also from Turkey, Pakistan or even Shi'a Iran.¹⁰⁷ However, not all of them were Wahhabist, with an even smaller

¹⁰³ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 444.

¹⁰⁴ The term “Wahhabism” itself is quite controversial. Some authors point out its inaccuracy (See Souleimanov, E. and T. Šmíd (2010), p. 27), since Wahhabism in the original meaning was a radical religious movement, founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in 18th century. His aim was to purge Islam of everything that did not come directly from the Quran and return to the true, original roots – *as-salaf as-salih*. To be accurate, we should use this term only for the followers of Wahhab and not for overall tendency, comprising of people, often with very poor or diverse theological ideas. Salafism is a wider term – Salafists seek for pure Islam, Islam of the Arabs of 7th century and they are not necessarily followers of al-Wahhab. However, in Russian media discourse, term “Wahhabism” is used for any ideas, groups or tendencies, seeking for introduction of Islamic norms into the every-day life, opposing everything they consider non-islamic and are in the opposition against secular government. As Knysh (Knysh, A. (2004), pp. 20-21) points out, there is another problem of this term – its normative value and terminological vagueness. He claims that the term “Wahhabism” is used by Russian and post-Soviet rulers indiscriminately against any opposition that can be interpreted as “Islamist”. Especially after 1998 al-Qaida attacks against American embassies in Africa and events of 9/11, this term became a tool of ideological warfare. Interestingly enough, this term started to be used also by Russian and central-Asian Islamic clergy loyal to political power, to discredit its Muslim rivals.

Aware of those serious objections against this term and I will use it in this thesis, given the fact, that it is already quite well-established term. The other reason is that possible alternative terms – Salafism and Jihadism bear several problematic connotation as well and they could hardly be considered more appropriate. Unfortunately, a detailed analysis of this issue cannot be undertaken here due to lack of space. Given the fact, that this thesis is not focused on (mis)using of those ideologies in contemporary media and political discourse, for our reasons I will consider terms “Wahhabism”, “Salafism” and “Jihadism” to be synonyms.

¹⁰⁵ Tishkov, V. (2004), p. 172.

¹⁰⁶ Pape, R. A. and J. K. Feldman (2010). p. 257.

¹⁰⁷ Souleimanov, E. and T. Šmíd (2010), p. 25.

percentage of really militant ones. Some of them even tried to create a synthesis between Islam and liberal democracy and openly supported Boris Yeltsin.¹⁰⁸

There were many Wahhabist mosques and madrassas (religious schools) opened in Chechen towns, many Wahhabist publications started to circulate within the country and a growing number of clerics took the Wahhabist side (often because of the generous material rewards).¹⁰⁹ The economical support provided by Wahhabist missionaries became an important factor in gaining new supporters. Majority of those who join the Wahhabists in the first years were young men from underprivileged clans and poor families.¹¹⁰ By joining a radical Wahhabist organization, they gained not only material rewards, but also a sense of security and belonging to the wider cohesive brotherhoods.

Wahhabism rejects as un-Islamic the local Caucasian form of Islam, which combined elements of Sufism with customary law (*adat*). As Zürcher points out, “(s)ince the traditional regulatory frameworks of Chechen society—especially the centrality of clergy and the elders—are questioned, Wahhabism contains considerable social explosiveness.”¹¹¹ Although many authors see Wahhabist ideology as an important factor in emergence suicide terrorism in North Caucasus,¹¹² it would be quite misleading to claim that Wahhabism is the root cause of suicide terrorism, especially of the female one. On the contrary, Wahhabist doctrine actually prevents women from the active participation in fight, let alone their activity in suicide terrorist campaign. Either way, Wahhabism helped to radicalize Chechen resistance and cleared the way for future cooperation with terrorist organizations across the Chechen border and by doing so it later *indirectly* contributed to the application of extreme forms of violence such as suicide terrorism.¹¹³ Moreover, by glorifying martyrdom Wahhabism contributed to gradual change of public attitudes towards suicide terrorism.¹¹⁴ To conclude, the presence of Wahhabist ideology aided in the to emergence of female suicide terrorism, but it should not be considered one of key causes of FST in general.

¹⁰⁸ Souleimanov, E. and T. Šmíd (2010), p. 25.

¹⁰⁹ Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006a), p. 445.

¹¹⁰ Standish, K. (2008), p. 7.

¹¹¹ Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 89.

¹¹² “Chechen suicide terrorism is bound to Wahhabist terror ideology.” (Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006b), p.11).

¹¹³ Other important impacts, such a giving the sense to suffering, idea of martyrdom or the illusion of kinship, will be analyzed in the following chapters.

¹¹⁴ Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006b), p. 74.

Excursus: Islam and the suicide terrorism

As for the relation between Wahhabism or Salafist Jihadism and female suicide terrorism, there are a number of paradoxes. There is no doubt that Islam strictly prohibits both suicide and killing of civilians. That means that suicide terrorism – killing of (usually) civilians by killing oneself – is doubly prohibited. Both of these prohibitions are explicitly and clearly expressed in Quran. Therefore it seems paradoxical that suicide terrorist attacks in North Caucasus and Russia are supported by someone who claims to be the true follower of pure Islam.

To understand this paradox we will look at the ideological tools, used by those who support suicide terrorism by notions to Quran, legitimizing the use of this kind of extreme violence. The suicide attack is usually legitimized by distinguishing two types of human behavior – suicide as a way how to escape one's life conditions (which is forbidden), and martyrdom, which is a deliberate act of sacrifice in order to kill "enemies of Islam". The main idea beyond this definition is the notion of human intentionality. The intentions of acting agent are crucial – when person's intentions are to escape the pain of this world, the act is considered to be deplorable as a suicide, while when person is sacrificing him/herself for the benefit of others, then the act is highly valued.¹¹⁵

As for the permissibility of killing civilians, those who support suicide terrorist acts usually question the civilian status of the victims. From their point of view, anybody who collaborates with the enemy (Russian occupation forces) is considered an enemy as well. In their interpretation, even those who sit back and do nothing are collaborator of the enemy, because they tolerate real injustices.

5.1.2. Wahhabism and female suicide terrorism

The Wahhabist ideological background is not very favorably inclined to female participation in fighting, let alone suicide missions. In Islam, both constraints concerning suicide and killing civilians are of course valid for women as well; however,

¹¹⁵ Comp. Hafez, M. M. (2010), p. 372.

as for women conducting suicide missions, there are even more constraints coming from the Islamic sources. These two sources can be divided into two main categories – classical Islamic sources on one hand and modern or contemporary sources on the other. Classical Islamic sources – Quran and Hadiths - devote little attention to issue of women fighting Jihad; more precisely, Quran does not raise this question at all. However, some Hadiths, collections of Prophet's deeds and sayings, deal with it. The most regarded *al-Bukhari collection*¹¹⁶ raises the question of women's participation in Jihad, but there is too little evidence of women fighting in wars throughout the history of Islam. Accordingly, the usual interpretation is inclined to the view that women are not permitted to fight in Jihad, but were told that their Jihad was righteous pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).¹¹⁷ There are some examples of women fighting in Jihad in some classical accounts,¹¹⁸ but they are all rather exceptions and curiosities than examples to follow. A much more common role of women was to be supportive and passive, rather than active. Women's only role is to raise *mujahid* children and to encourage the fighters, not to appear on the battlefield, with possible exception of the medical assistance to wounded fighters.

In the process of modernization of Islamic society, the role of woman in general is put under the question. As women began to engage in public life, including politics, the issue of women's participation even in the most extreme form of politics – war – arose. Women started to join various revolutionary organizations, both secular and religious, and to do this some ideological legitimacy was necessary. Because of the above-mentioned lack of women-fighters in the classical Islamic sources, it was a very difficult task for Islamic ideologists to find any arguments for women participation in Jihad nowadays. This brings us to one very interesting point – theoretical clash between Islamic fundamentalism (essentially traditionalist and anti-modern) and radical Islamic streams, which could be very progressive and use the latest instruments to achieve their goals.¹¹⁹ Islamic fundamentalists (in the original meaning of this term) place greater

¹¹⁶ "Sahih al-Bukhari" is after Quran the second most respected source among Sunni Muslims. It was written by famous medieval Sunni scholar called al-Bukhari (d. 870 AD). Sahih is one of the six authoritative collections of hadith, narrations originating from the words and deeds of Muhammad. Its importance comes also from the fact, that the Islamic law is based partly on these collections.

¹¹⁷ Cook, D. (2005), p. 376.

¹¹⁸ Mendel, M. (1997), p. 41.

¹¹⁹ Kropáček, L. (1996), p. 25.

emphasis on traditional gender roles and social order and therefore it is quite hard to imagine woman in such an active role being approved of by fundamentalists.. In contrast, radical progressive Islamists don't hesitate to use every effective tool to achieve their goals – including the use of female suicide terrorists.

The confusion about women's potential reward in paradise also speaks against female participation in suicide terrorism. In Quran, there is no specified reward for Jihad martyr – neither male nor female. The well known story about 72 houris (virgins) for every mujahedin does not come from Quran, but from Hadith and is strongly misinterpreted. But regardless of this question, it is clear that most of the rewards are directed towards men. Question of female reward for their martyrdom was discussed many times but no clear answer was found. One of the few answers to this question, given by Hamas on its websites, tells that „*the female martyr gains the same reward as does the male, with the exception of this aspect (the houris)*“.¹²⁰

5.1.3. Chechen customary law

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

The main motive which pervades traditional Chechen customary law is the idea of *honor*. However, the meaning of *honor* in *adat* is very broad and concerns wide range of social norms. *Honor* means that “*a man was expected to keep his word, support his family materially so that its members may lead a dignified life, but honour involved also independence, faithful friendship, nearly irrational courage or rather ostentatious fearlessness, tremendous hospitality, honesty and truthfulness, “purity” of girls and*

¹²⁰ Cook, D. (2005), p. 381.

women, etc.”¹²¹ Breaking the *adat* law is considered to be a grave shame, sometimes falling not only onto the wrongdoer himself, but on his/her family or clan as whole. “*In such instances the life of the offender was unbearable. His own teip*¹²² *would excommunicate him landing him beyond law, his daughter could never get married, his son would live in humiliation, and his parents would lie down in their graves with a sense of shame. Moreover, life in the mountains outside the developed system of mutual help within the community was practically impossible. Many mountain people therefore kept a so-called “pledge of honour”, even though they knew in advance it might cost their life. If they were confronted with a choice of either shame for their family and clan or death, they would usually choose the latter.*”¹²³ The honor also means the duty to avenge the offence and in history it often took the form of the blood feud. “*Taking of land, fatal injury, murder or serious insult could serve as causes for declaring a blood feud. In case a woman or girl had been dishonoured, blood feud was usually declared by the entire “dishonoured” clan and it was aimed against all the men of the clan that caused the insult. It was the honour of the clan that was in question.*”¹²⁴

For the emergence of suicide terrorism in North Caucasus, two phenomena seem especially important – the social ostracism, caused by breaking the strict customary law, and the sense of duty to revenge any injustices against one’s family or clan. As we can see from the data collected by Dronzina and Astashin,¹²⁵ relatively many female suicide terrorists were bearers of some kind of “sins” or shame. In their sample of thirty,¹²⁶ eight were proved to bear this kind of social stigma, while only six were proved otherwise. These social stigmas could originate from breaking both Islamic or *adat* law,¹²⁷ but the results for the individual are the same – ostracism and exclusion from the

¹²¹ Souleimanov, E. (2003), unpagued.

¹²² Teip is Chechen and Ingush basic unit of social structure, or clan. There is a long tradition of clan and tribal structure, which still play an important role in the Chechen society. In contemporary Chechen society there are approximately 200 teips.

¹²³ Souleimanov, E. (2003), unpagued.

¹²⁴ Souleimanov, E. (2003), unpagued. Comp. Jaimoukha, A. (2005), pp. 142-143.

¹²⁵ Dronzina, T. and V. Astashin (2007).

¹²⁶ This sample, encompassing the period between 7th June 2000 and 1st September 2004, includes both Dubrovka and Beslan hostage crisis.

¹²⁷ However, in fact there is strong conflict between those who favor the introduction of *sharia* law (Wahhabists) and „traditionalists“, favoring *adat* and sufist norms. Given the fact, that Wahhabism seeks to purge Islam of everything that did not come from Quran, it is clear that Wahhabist strongly oppose any non-islamic or non-orthodox influences – namely *adat* and Sufism. Comp. Zürcher, C. (2007), p. 89.

society. Sometimes the “sinner’s” only way to purify her name and the name of whole clan is to sacrifice herself.

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

- Murder should be avenged with murder.
- Only males may avenge; females are only allowed to avenge if there are no males in her family and among her relatives.
- For the murder of a female, two males should be killed: the murderer and the murderer’s family member.
- The revenge should be directed only at the murderer, not at his family members or close associates.
- Revenge is not limited in time; it can be realized many years after the murder.
- This revenge can be averted if respected elders intervene and ask the victim’s family to forgive the murderer.
- Revenge does not mandate that the avenger should kill him/herself while committing the murder.¹²⁸

Although the Shariatic law, adopted in interwar Chechnya, interdicted blood revenge, it never had a significant influence on traditional practices.¹²⁹

5.2. Post-war society

It is quite clear that the society as damaged as the Chechen one was, generates many negative or socially pathological phenomena. The number of people who lost their relatives in the war, who were tortured, raped or psychically harmed is substantially higher than in society without this recent war experience. Therefore the number of people suffering from any kind of trauma-related psychical harm, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, is also higher, as well as the number of people who have “nothing to lose”. I will discuss these issues in more detail in Chapter 8, but for now, it

¹²⁸ Kurz, R. W. and Ch. K. Bartles (2007), p. 534.

¹²⁹ Jaimoukha, A. (2005), p. 143.

is necessary to acknowledge that the roots of these psychological factors originate largely from the societal or environmental level.

5.2.1. Community support for suicide terrorism: cult of martyrdom?

The other important factor in the emergence of (female) suicide terrorism is the community's support for it, typically in the form of cult of martyrdom. But as the results of Speckhard and Akhmedova's research¹³⁰ surprisingly finds, almost no such influence exists in the Chechen society, unlike e.g. Palestinian society. "*(I)n Chechnya there are no public community-wide celebrations that take place after a suicide act, nor are posters or other markers of honor placed in public places proclaiming the terrorists as either national or religious heroes.*"¹³¹ These celebrations take place in terrorists training camps at the most. The celebrating YouTube videos are rather aimed on the external audience for fund-raising.

Speckhard and Akhmedova arrive at the same conclusion from interviews with the family members of Beslan and Dubrovka hostage-takers; none of them proudly acknowledge their sons or daughters as a martyr – instead they express pity for the killed hostages.¹³² This is in a sharp contradiction with data from Palestinian samples.¹³³

5.2.2. Unemployment and poverty

The extent of destruction caused by the wars is clearly expressed by Chechen scholar Dzhabraïl Gakaev: "*Out of 428 villages, 380 were bombed, 70 per cent of houses were destroyed, and large parts of the city of Grozny were razed to the ground. More than 60,000 houses and administrative buildings have been completely or partially destroyed..., and more than 30,000 hectares of agricultural land were contaminated with explosives....A whole generation of young men (some 150-200,000) have grown up without education. Many of them are involved in the armed conflict and the only skill they have is to wage war.*"¹³⁴ Destruction of infrastructure and

¹³⁰ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 441.

¹³¹ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 441.

¹³² Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 442.

¹³³ Comp. Oliver, A. M. and P. F. Steinberg (2005).

¹³⁴ Gakaev, D. (2005), p. 40.

manufacturing facilities along with soil made difficult to be cultivated caused immense unemployment, which subsequently created whole generation of young people who had never had proper job and whose frustration became one of the factors which perpetuate the conflict.

The Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov himself admitted in 2009 that unemployment in Chechnya remains above 50%. “*That means tens of thousands of young men with no formal income and nothing to do.*”¹³⁵ According to other sources, unemployment rate is as high as 80 %.¹³⁶ Similarly dismal are the data about poverty. In 2005, around 90 % of Chechen population lived below the poverty line (with less than 72 Euros per month¹³⁷). To compare, at the national level, an average of 17 percent of people were living in poverty.¹³⁸ Individual impacts of poverty, (lack of) education, or unemployment will be discussed in chapter 8, but as for the impacts on population as a whole, it is useful to emphasize several important things.

Available evidence about unsuccessful Chechen female suicide terrorists shows that out of six, at least four were unemployed - occupational status of one of them is unknown and one was only thirteen years old¹³⁹ (we can reasonably expect that the percentage is similar for successful ones). According to Speckhard and Akhmedova,¹⁴⁰ 88 percent (30 out of 34)¹⁴¹ of Chechen suicide terrorists (both male and female) included in their survey were technically classified as unemployed. It seems quite convincing that the lack of legitimate employment opportunity can lead to the frustration, which can become the cause of people’s further radicalization and eventually to joining a terrorist group.

In the war-torn society as the Chechen one was, people who achieve a higher degree of education on one hand realize the overall misery of their communities and therefore tend to be more frustrated and on the other hand they feel obliged to pay society back because of their education. In those circumstances, “*for many, especially*

¹³⁵ BBC News (2009). “Chechen Problem Is Far from Over.” BBC News, April 16, 2009.

¹³⁶ Puddington, A. (2011), Isayev, R. (2008).

¹³⁷ Agence France-Presse (2005). “Russian Fed. – Nine Tenths of Chechens Living in Poverty.”

¹³⁸ Index Mundi, <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=rs&v=69>.

¹³⁹ Dronzina, T. (2008), p.82.

¹⁴⁰ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 452.

¹⁴¹ They include also the Dubrovka and Beslan hostage-takers.

those most sensitized by traumas in their own lives the only positive repaying option seemingly open to them is to become martyrs for their communities.”¹⁴² The general atmosphere in post-war Chechnya was depressive, as one Chechen journalist sums up: *“The entire territory of the post-war republic is an aggressive space. The gutted houses, dirty markets at every turn (there is no other source of income), heaps of garbage even in the center - and crowds of men in camouflage fatigues, all armed, always gloomy. Total unemployment, most of the people living below the poverty line, young people having no prospects. An environment devoid of any aesthetic impulses - depressing, alienating, embittering. No wonder we have in today’s Chechnya so many destructive people, so few creative ones.*”¹⁴³

5.2.3. Rape and violence against women

Rape was an extremely scarce phenomenon in traditional Chechen society¹⁴⁴ and remained very uncommon even during the First Chechen war. *“Few cases of rape by armed groups were reported, even at the height of the violence, and federal soldiers, too, rarely violated this taboo. In this respect, the first Chechen war differed from many other violent conflicts, in which rape is common.”*¹⁴⁵ However, the situation changed for the worse during the Second war. The Second Chechen war brought a drastic decline of the status of women in Chechnya. At that time, rape began to be used as a weapon of war, mainly by Russian federal and contracted soldiers.

War could be considered the most powerful expression of patriarchal power and rape during wartime is the extreme case of demonstration of the men’s control over women as well as a tool of ethnic cleansing. Like in many other places where ethnic cleansing took place, *“(w)omen’s bodies are controlled by the enemy, in order to obtain control over the ethnic group’s future.”*¹⁴⁶ Traumatizing experience of brutal rape makes women either physically or psychically incapable of child bearing in the future. In patriarchal society as in Chechnya, women who were raped subsequently face even more troubles due to their inability to fulfill traditional roles as mothers. On top of being

¹⁴² Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 454.

¹⁴³ Words of a Chechen journalist Aset Vazayeva, in: Tishkov, V. (2001), p. 44.

¹⁴⁴ Jaimoukha, A. (2005), p. 96.

¹⁴⁵ Tishkov, V. (2004), p. 154.

¹⁴⁶ Rousseva, V. (2003), p. 65.

traumatized physically and psychologically, married rape victims were also more likely to get divorced,¹⁴⁷ which creates another social stigma. Specifically the rape by Russian soldiers is the most traumatic and debilitating experience, by many Chechen women referred to as worse than death. *“The implications of rape by a non-Moslem man on a Moslem woman’s life, seen through the lenses of the specific culture and religion, could alter fundamentally her prospects to marry and have a family, and her role in society.”*¹⁴⁸ In accordance with some Chechen "traditions", a raped woman should commit suicide or be murdered by her family members.¹⁴⁹

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

5.3. Clan and family structure

A long tradition of clan and tribal structure still plays an important role in the Chechen society. There is a strict hierarchy within the family, and the young people are obliged to manifest a proper respect to the elders. Family’s honor is sacrosanct and the keeping of the honor is the responsibility of each member of the family.¹⁵⁰ All members of the same *taip* are considered brothers and sisters. There is a rule of exogamy and

¹⁴⁷ Jaimoukha, A. (2005), p. 96.

¹⁴⁸ Rousseva, V. (2003), p. 65.

¹⁴⁹ Liborakina, M. (1996), unpagued.

¹⁵⁰ Jaimoukha, A. (2005), p. 91.

marriage is prohibited between members of the community who share common descent up to the twelfth ancestor. According to Chechen customary law, widow could only remarry one of brothers of her deceased husband, or any other member of the *taip*, with the offspring of the union being considered those of the deceased. The widow is allowed to remarry outside the group only if she could redeem her price.¹⁵¹ Although these traditions were largely abandoned during the Soviet era, some traces of them still exist at least in the most remote mountain villages.

Not only the Caucasian customary law, but also some aspects of “pure Islam” contribute to shape Chechen society. In the Soviet era, the Muslim practice of polygamy was officially prohibited. However after the introduction of Shariatic law in the interwar period, the position of women in the family substantially changed and polygamy was legalized.¹⁵² Polygamy could be also seen as a response to the current demographic situation, especially to the lack of marriageable men who had been killed in the war or had fled the region.¹⁵³

As for the Chechen post-war families, almost everyone had lost a family member. In the kind of society that is based on close family ties, the loss of relatives also has serious social consequences. Especially for women, the loss of their husbands or brothers creates great problems. In such cases, the woman lost her protector and become extremely vulnerable. This vulnerability could be even multiplied by her economical insecurity and subsequent dependency. Women’s position in Chechen family is subordinate to men’s. In the traditional way of social life, they did not participate in clan’s decision-making, were not allowed to eat with their husbands at the same table or travel unless they were accompanied by the husband or another male member of his family.¹⁵⁴ Wives were considered to be a property of their husband’s family and after his death, other members of the household could lay claim on her as their wife.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Jaimoukha, A. (2005), p. 88.

¹⁵² However it has not become widespread phenomenon, probably due to further extensive legal regulations, namely concerning the wives’ property and to overall mistrust of large part of society to the Islamic norms.

¹⁵³ Tishkov, V. (2004), p. 163. Jaimoukha, A. (2005), p. 138.

¹⁵⁴ Jaimoukha, A. (2005), p. 138.

¹⁵⁵ Jaimoukha, A. (2005), p. 138.

5.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I outline several societal factors which could have played a role in the emergence of FST in Chechnya. I focused on the following: Russian occupation of Chechnya and increasingly brutalized wars, impact of imported form of radical Islamism, traditional customary law, social impacts of first and (especially) second Chechen war and last but not least the increased violence against women.

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

The role of radical Islamism is very ambiguous. As I mentioned in Chapter 5.1.1., radical Islamism rather dissuades women from the participation in armed resistance, not to mention suicide terrorism. However, the influence of the Wahhabist “missionaries” had a certain *indirect* effect: by sponsoring the local militant organizations, Wahhabists contributed to their increasing power and these organizations subsequently opened the space for more violent means of confrontation as well as for the suicide terrorist campaigns. As FST emerged also in the regions, where there was no widespread popularity of Wahhabism or in non-Muslim (Sri Lanka) and secular environment (PKK in Turkey, Arab secular terrorist organizations), Wahhabism is most likely not the necessary condition of FST.

The other factor which played a certain role is the Chechen customary law, specifically the concept of honor and duty to revenge. These social rules apparently led at least some Chechen women to join terrorist organization and perpetrate suicide attack. On the other hand, some social mechanisms, known from other regions where FST also emerged (e.g. Palestine), are absent in Chechnya. Especially the “cult of martyrdom” is largely missing and therefore should be excluded from the list of possible factors supporting FST in Chechnya.

Poverty and other social problems were important, nevertheless rather on social than on individual level. Although most of the female suicide terrorists were probably unemployed, given the immense level of unemployment, they didn't protrude from the rest of the society. In addition, only few of them came from the lowest social class. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that the frustration of Chechen female suicide terrorist came rather from overall social misery than from their own economical situation. However, this hypothesis should be tested by comparison with other regions where FST also occurs.

Probably the key element for the Chechen female suicide terrorism are the gender-related issues. The boom of violence against women, emergence of the use of rape as a weapon of war, the declining position of women in both society and family etc. are definitely the most important factors. In addition, this factor was even multiplied by the traditional norms of Chechen society, concerning for example woman's dependency on her husband's family and restriction of the role of female to the means of reproduction of the nation. The hypothesis of the existence of a link between gender-related violence and emergence of FST is supported by the fact that FST emerged in Chechnya only after the dramatic decline of level of women's security, during the Second war. Until that, rape and violence against women remained relatively rare.

6. Chechen terrorist organization

Most of the Chechen female suicide terrorist attacks were executed by a single person.¹⁵⁶ However, it does not mean that these terrorists acted alone. Suicide terrorism usually requires cooperation of a number of people – apart from suicide terrorists also recruiters, suppliers of the necessary material, trainers and ideological or religious leaders. As Harrison states, “*at the core of suicide terrorism are specialisation and exchange.*”¹⁵⁷ Although worldwide there are some known cases of individuals who planned suicide attacks solely by themselves, there is no proved case of such individuals in Chechnya. All Chechen suicide terrorist attacks were planned and carried out by terrorist *organizations*.

The main objective of this chapter is to emphasize the importance of organizational level of analysis, since the motivations of terrorist organizations are substantially different from motivations of individuals.

6.1. Chechen terrorist organizations

Information about organizations linked to the conflict in Chechnya is hard to obtain, however, available sources indicate that there are several terrorist groups deploying female suicide terrorists acting in the North Caucasus.¹⁵⁸

In most cases, Chechen (or rather north-Caucasian) terrorist organizations are not strictly organized, permanent groups, but rather loosely organized groups with semi-independent commanders. Sometimes they are only *ad hoc* groups of fighters loyal to a certain commander. However, some of these groups show more continuous activity and therefore could be called terrorist organizations. The best known are the following:¹⁵⁹ Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)¹⁶⁰ with possible links to al-Qaeda’s

¹⁵⁶ See Appendix: *List of all Chechen suicide attacks*.

¹⁵⁷ Harrison, M. (2006), p.2.

¹⁵⁸ Kurz, R. W. and Ch. K. Bartles (2007).

¹⁵⁹ Kurz, R. W. and Ch. K. Bartles (2007), pp. 539-542.

¹⁶⁰ IIPB has reportedly been running training camps in Georgia (Pankisi Gorge), Azerbaijan and Turkey.

financial funds from the Middle East, Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR),¹⁶¹ and the Riyad us-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs. In addition to aforementioned groups, there are some others operating in neighboring regions of North Caucasus – e.g. Dagestani Shari’ah Jamaat and Ingush Jama’at Shariat.¹⁶²

6.2. Rationality

Suicide terrorism follows a strategic logic and it would be a mistake to consider it to be irrational. Although the personal behavior of suicide bombers could in some cases be irrational (to be discussed in the following chapter), the organization’s behavior is definitely *not irrational*. Terrorist organizations have certain objectives and choose the best tools to achieve them. As Pape points out, “*viewed from the perspective of the terrorist organization, suicide attacks are designed to achieve specific political purposes: to coerce a target government to change policy, to mobilize additional recruits and financial support, or both.*”¹⁶³

Using the *suicide* terrorist tactic has several strategic advantages for the organization. First of all, suicide attacks are generally more destructive than other terrorist attacks. As Pape writes, “*(a)n attacker who is willing to die is much more likely to accomplish the mission and to cause maximum damage to the target. Suicide attackers can conceal weapons on their own bodies and make last-minute adjustments more easily than ordinary terrorists. They are also better able to infiltrate heavily guarded targets because they do not need escape plans or rescue teams. Suicide attackers are also able to use certain especially destructive tactics such as wearing “suicide vests” and ramming vehicles into targets.*”¹⁶⁴ What is true for suicide terrorism in general is even more valid in the case of female suicide terrorism, because women (at least at the beginning of their campaign) are less suspicious and can go through security checkpoints much more easily. Moreover, women are able to hide the explosive devices more easily by wearing loose clothes or pretending they are pregnant.

¹⁶¹ SPIR was allegedly responsible for the Dubrovka hostage crisis as well as several suicide bombings.

¹⁶² Kurz, R. W. and Ch. K. Bartles (2007), p. 541-542.

¹⁶³ Pape, R. A. (2003), p.344.

¹⁶⁴ Pape, R. A. (2003), p. 346. Comp. with Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 32.

Other reason which could lead the organization to adopt suicide attacks concerns the public opinion. Suicide attacks, especially perpetrated by women, are likely to draw greater attention to group's goals and also create extreme fear in the larger population – the key aim of terrorist attacks. Moreover, by using the tactic of suicide attacks, the group may gain stronger support in the international public opinion. „*There is some evidence that outside audiences may sympathize with groups who are using martyrdom tactics, assuming that members of a community willing to sacrifice themselves must have been subjected to particularly gruesome treatment by their enemy, thus leaving them with no other option than to seek death.*“¹⁶⁵ This argument is in accordance with that of Pape and Feldman, who consider suicide terrorist acts as a weapon of last resort.¹⁶⁶

Terrorist organization usually tries several different terrorist tactics before adopting suicide attacks.¹⁶⁷ As Moghadam points out, “(m)ost terrorist groups existed for years or decades before they began executing suicide missions.”¹⁶⁸ Similarly, in most suicide terrorist campaigns, female suicide terrorist attacks usually occurred several years after the first male suicide terrorist attack. The first time Hamas claimed responsibility for female suicide terrorist attack was only in 2004, 17 years after it was founded,¹⁶⁹ and it took almost 30 years in case of Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In this sense, Chechnya is a rare exception – female suicide bomber attacks emerged literally at the same time with attacks of their male counterparts,¹⁷⁰ soon after Chechen terrorist organizations were founded.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 31.

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter 5.1.

¹⁶⁷ E.g. Hamas, being founded in 1987, first time used strategy of suicide terrorism in 1994, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (founded in 1976) only in 1987. See Global Terrorism Database (GTD) <http://www.start.umd.edu>.

¹⁶⁸ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 93.

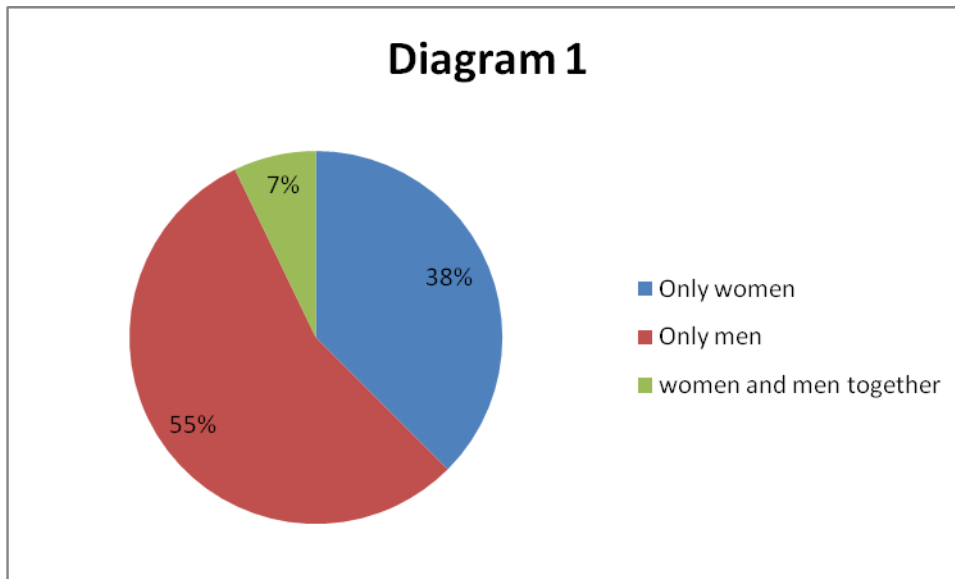
¹⁶⁹ O'Rourke, L. A. (2009), p. 697.

¹⁷⁰ See Appendix: List of all Chechen suicide attacks.

¹⁷¹ E. g. Riyadh-us Saliheen Brigade of Martyrs was founded only in October 1999, the Islamic International (Peacekeeping) Brigade in 1998.

6.3. Frequency of female suicide attacks

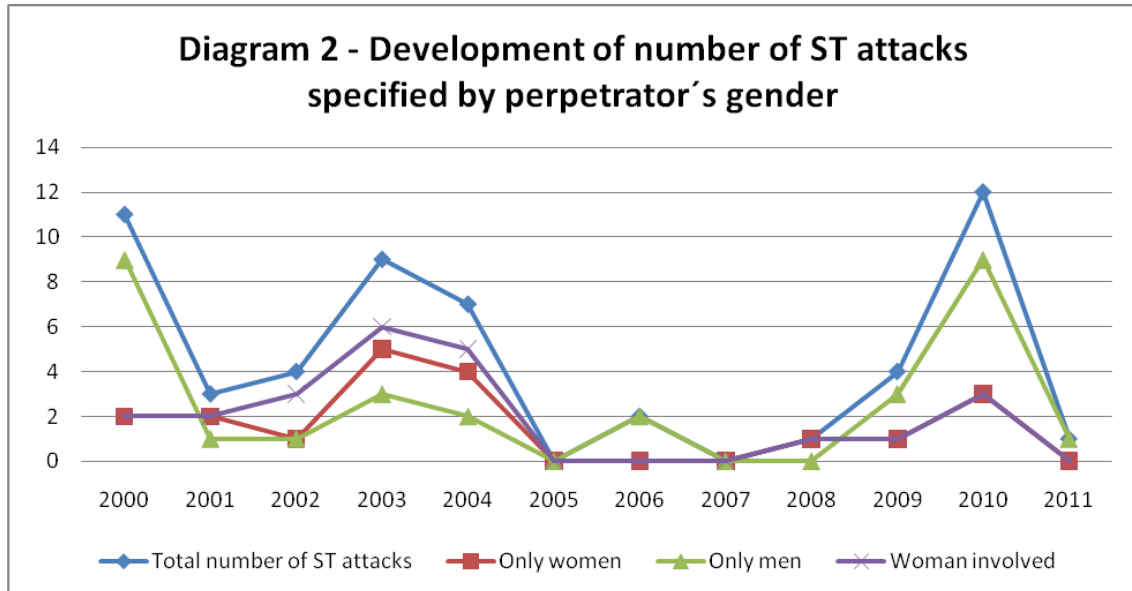
In our sample, which includes all suicide terrorist attacks, carried out by North-Caucasian rebels on the territory of Russian federation, there are 56 events. The sample also includes two major hostage crises – in school in Beslan and Dubrovka theatre in Moscow. Out of these 56 attacks, 31 were carried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



The differences between our definitions and methodology and those of other researchers nevertheless sometimes lead to relatively different conclusions. For example Speckhard and Akhmedova¹⁷² use a slightly different definition of *single* suicide terrorist event, and therefore their conclusions are quite different from ours: according to them, Chechen female terrorists have been involved in twenty-two out of twenty-seven suicide attacks (81 percent of the total number) attributed to Chechen rebels (in the period 2000-2005). Our data show substantially less involvement of women, even in the first 5 years of female suicide terrorist campaign. However, compared to other regions where female suicide terrorism occurred (especially compared to those in other predominantly Muslim countries), the involvement of women in suicide terrorist

¹⁷² Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006b).

missions is still surprisingly high. For example in Palestinian terrorist organizations women carried out only 5% of all suicide bombings.¹⁷³



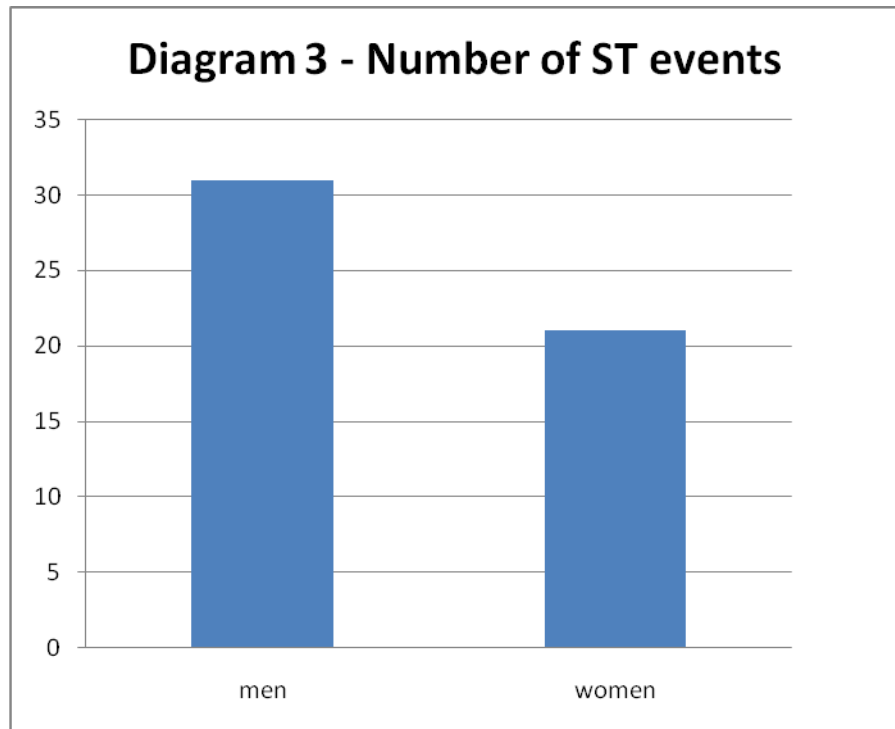
6.4. Efficiency

As for the efficiency of the suicide bombings, the role women play in terrorist organizations could be *“the result of strategic decision making. Perhaps women can more easily penetrate security barriers or hide suicide-bombing vests.”*¹⁷⁴ In the analyzed sample (see Table 1) there are 56 suicide bombings on the Russian territory attributed to North-Caucasian rebels. Out of them,

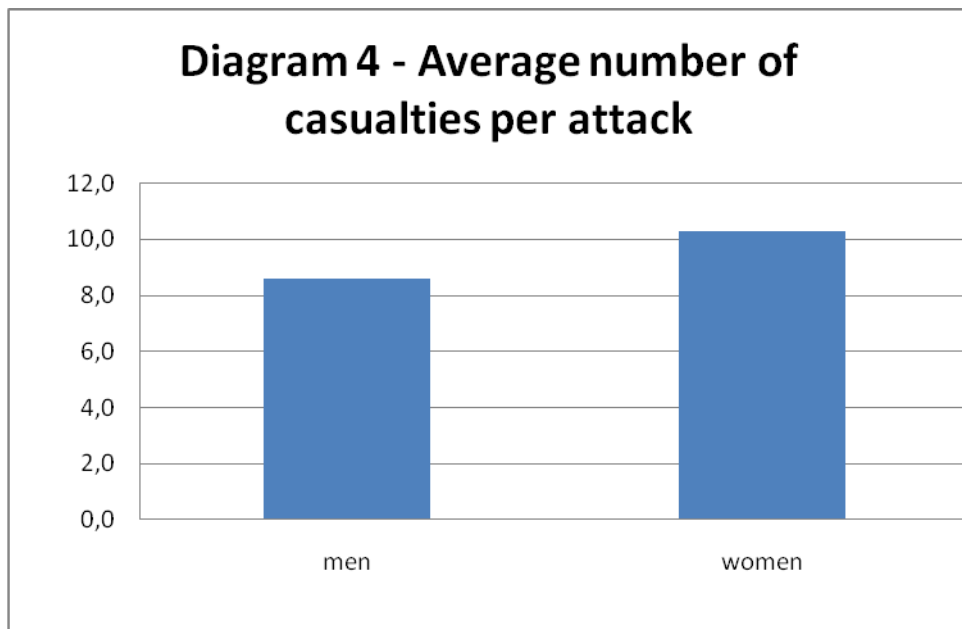
- 31 were carried out by male terrorists (267 victims),
- 21 by females (216 victims),
- 4 by group of women (total 6 terrorists, 38 victims),
- 2 by group of men (5 terrorists, 9 victims) and
- 4 by mixed-gender groups (total 54 men, 24 women, more than 596 victims).

¹⁷³ Reuter, J. (2004), p. 26.

¹⁷⁴ Cragin, R. K. and S.A. Daly (2009), p.18.



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



Data in my sample show that males have higher probability of failure during their campaigns – there was a 24% failure rate¹⁷⁵ (5 out of 21) of FST, and 32% (10 out of 31) of MST. However, our sample does not include all cases of failed missions and in fact there were many more of them. Therefore this finding is not entirely reliable.

As for the usual assumptions that female suicide attacks are more deadly, it shows to be true. However, the effectiveness quantified using the number of casualties is probably not a key to understanding the use of female suicide terrorists. As Cragin and Daly state, “*effectiveness is unlikely to be the full explanation for the presence of women in terrorist groups, and effectiveness also is unlikely to be the full explanation for the different operational roles that women have assumed in terrorist organizations.*”¹⁷⁶ To understand the phenomenon of female suicide terrorism as well as terrorism itself, it is therefore necessary to assess its other possible effects, especially the degree of inflicted horror.

6.4.1. Terrorism as a means of strategic communication

It would be an evidence of misapprehension of the very essence of terrorism if we restricted the evaluation of the effect of terrorism on the mere number of casualties. As I already mentioned in the introductory chapter, creating the atmosphere of fear and horror is the core aim of terrorism. Although it is extremely difficult to measure the fear in the society, we can say that a suicide terrorist attack inflicts more horror than for example an explosion of a time bomb. In the same way, a female suicide attack causes more horror than suicide attack perpetrated by men. This effect is greater in societies where social norms restrict the role of women to the private sphere. As Cragin and Daly point out, “*(t)here is something disturbing about the concept of women as terrorists. Perhaps it has to do with the feminine identity as nurturer—women are mothers, sisters, and wives, but not killers.*”¹⁷⁷ Moreover, every suicide terrorist attack is a story, a message disseminated to the broad public by all major media.

¹⁷⁵ By failed suicide attacks I consider cases when suicide-terrorist failed to detonate (for different reasons) or detonated and killed only him/herself.

¹⁷⁶ Cragin, R. K. and S.A. Daly (2009), p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ Cragin, R. K. and S.A. Daly (2009), p.1.

The overall effect on the overall population is supported even by the name used (originally by journalists) for the Chechen female suicide bombers – so called Black Widows or *Chyornyye Vdovy* in Russian. As Cragin and Daly already noticed, “*it is an excellent name, evoking both deadliness and some degree of tragedy. Indeed, to some, the only logical explanation for these women’s devotion is that their husbands and lovers must have been killed by Russian security forces. This mystique, however, is somewhat misplaced, because female operatives are motivated by a complex variety of factors, just as their male counterparts.*”¹⁷⁸

This brings us to an often overlooked aspect of terrorism: its communication function. Suicide terrorism is a specific way of communication or “*form of ‘strategic signaling,’ whereby terrorist attacks are used to communicate a group’s character and goals to the target audience.*”¹⁷⁹ In other words, the terrorists’ aim is not only to coerce the government to adopt or give up certain policy, but also to raise the awareness of their cause among a broad public as well as to gain new supporters and sympathizers. Schmid puts it as follows: “*What the terrorist basically does is to direct attention to the cause in ways which indicate that he is willing to die or to sacrifice himself for the cause. It is a cause that most people, in some sense, have some sympathies with, but find it impossible to deal with until the terrorist forces them to deal with these sympathies.*”¹⁸⁰ Although it is much more likely that suicide attacks cause rather harsh rejection of the terrorist group by broader public, suicide operation surely draws attention to a group’s cause. In order to gain public attention, Chechen terrorists usually tend to proudly acknowledge their responsibility for even the bloodiest attacks; however, in some cases they rather relativize their guilt. The well-known examples are two hostage-takings – in Moscow Dubrovka Theater and in elementary school in Beslan, North Ossetia.¹⁸¹

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

¹⁷⁸ Cragin, R. K. and S.A. Daly (2009), p. 55.

¹⁷⁹ Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 95.

¹⁸⁰ Schmid, A. P. and A. J. Jongman (2005), pp. 22-23.

¹⁸¹ See e.g. Kavkazcenter (2004). “School in Beslan to Be Stormed.” And Kavkazcenter (2006). “Dubrovka: Nord-Ost.”

government's response and the escalation of the Russo-Chechen conflict, which subsequently could attract new sympathizers from the affected community. However, such calculations are always chancy and there is a high probability of alienation of target audience.¹⁸²

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

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

Although it is not clear whether Beslan terrorists really expected harsh assault by Russian troops that would not care about hostages themselves and their plan was to blame Russian forces for the victims' suffering from the very beginning, or they only *ex post* realized that they crossed the line by putting lives of small children at risk, they justified themselves by placing all responsibilities on Kremlin. That time Chechen rebels' leader Shamil Basayev released his explanation of the massacre and his statement was published by almost all of the world's major newspapers. It seems, however, that such spectacular operations like Beslan or Dubrovka hostage-taking were rejected by Chechen terrorists from that time on. There are many possible reasons for the rejection, perhaps its relatively huge logistical difficulty, but also its inefficiency in terms of ability to deliver the right message to the right recipient.

¹⁸² Pape, R. A. (2003), p. 345.

One of the possible ways of analysis is to understand terrorist attack as a form of message and examine what it actually tells the target audience. As Karber suggests, terrorist act “*can be analyzed much like other mediums of communication, consisting four basic components: transmitter (terrorist), intended recipient (target), message (bombing, ambush) and feed-back (reaction of target).*”¹⁸³ In this sense, female suicide terrorist act is a message of special kind. The fact that the transmitter is a woman emphasizes the emotional tension of the communication, telling the story of desperate Chechen widows, who lost their husbands in the bloody war with Russian federal forces. It also transmits the message that the Chechen society is already devastated to such an extent that local insurgents have to send even women on suicide missions. But on the other hand, there is always space for alternative interpretations of the communication, such as saying that those who organized the attack were such cowards that they were not able to fight on their own and sent women instead of fighting themselves. It is evident that media have extremely huge opportunity to interpret the message and use it for different political reasons. To avoid such an unwanted interpretation, Chechen terrorist organizations usually publish a statement explaining what are their exact stances, reasons why they organized the attack and conditions under which they would refrain from continuing the attacks. They usually have their own news channel, typically an affiliated website.¹⁸⁴

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

The target-victims of other Chechen suicide terrorist attacks had similarly symbolic value. One of two female suicide bombers who committed the terrorist attack in Moscow metro in 2010 detonated herself in Lubyanka station, near the directorate of

¹⁸³ Karber, Ph. A. (1971).

¹⁸⁴ For this reason, Chechen rebels use the website Kavkazcenter.com.

Federal Security Service (FSB). The target of the latest suicide terrorist attack perpetrated by Chechens in Moscow at Domodedovo International Airport bears a symbolical value as well. Given the fact that the attack was carried out in the arrival hall of international airport and therefore there was a high probability of presence of foreigners, the attack was most likely intended to spread the awareness of Chechen issue to other countries.

The message itself - the way how the attack was carried out - further indicates terrorists' intended aim. For instance, hostage-taking tells the recipient that terrorists most likely want some conditions to be met and they want to negotiate, while suicide bombing tells rather that terrorists are determined to keep on fighting until the very end. Although Chechen rebels have not claimed a responsibility for every terrorist attack attributed to them, apart from Beslan and Dubrovka hostage-crisis they claimed responsibility for number of suicide bombings. If we define suicide terrorism not only in terms of direct violence but also as a tool of propaganda, we could understand suicide terrorist acts as an advertisement or "teaser" that draws an attention to the main message – to the terrorists' statement. Female suicide terrorism could therefore be seen as a means of "advertising resistance" and recruitment of supporters.¹⁸⁵ As was already mentioned, women detonating themselves in order to kill innocent civilians are actually the *message* expressing the utmost desperation of the oppressed society. Moreover, the logic of this kind of extreme violence is that it must be constantly intensified in order to uphold the same horrifying effect and keep the public's attention in enduring conflict. The role of media is very controversial. The media-attention helps terrorists to get their message across and by doing this encourages further incidents of this kind.¹⁸⁶

Suicide terrorist campaign, as an extreme case of terrorism, also sends a message to other terrorist organizations, expressing their higher prestige and relative superiority over them.¹⁸⁷ Some researchers also mention the role suicide attacks play *inside* the terrorist organizations. For instance Dolnik claims, that it could function as an internal

¹⁸⁵ Standish, K. (2008).

¹⁸⁶ Comp. Beyler, C. (2003b), pp. 12-14.

¹⁸⁷ Clauset, A. (ed.) (2010).

morale-booster, supporting the determination of the members to fight for their shared cause.¹⁸⁸

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the possible incentives for the terrorist organizations to adopt female suicide terrorism. I kept the line of argumentation considering the adoption of this tactic as a part of organization's strategic logic. This logic substantially differs from the motives of an individual suicide terrorist.

Terrorist organization is motivated primarily by its reproduction (and possibly inter-group competition). As diagram 4 shows, FST attacks are more effective in terms of average number of casualties per attack than male suicide attacks. But the essence of suicide terrorism is the inflicted horror; therefore we should evaluate the psychological impact on the target population as well. The attention given to the FST phenomenon indicates that it is very successful. However, we still lack the comprehensive analysis of this effect.

In my opinion, one of especially fruitful ways of future study of FST is to analyze it as a specific form of *communication* between the terrorist organization and the target audience (or state government). The horror caused by (female) suicide terrorists helps the organization to send the message about their goals to the target audience, shows the inability of government to provide security for its citizens, helps to gain support (both material and ideological) from global terrorist networks, solidify the intra-group cohesion and in some cases even gain new supporters and volunteers willing to sacrifice themselves for *the cause*.

Therefore I consider the analysis of suicide terrorism as a form of strategic communication the most fruitful direction of study at the moment. Similarly, a comprehensive analysis of the role of media in the conflict dynamics is the key to understanding suicide terrorist logic.

¹⁸⁸ Dolnik, A. (2004), p. 846, quoted by Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 95.

7. Black widows – individual level

7.1. Individual motivation of female suicide terrorists

Prevailing analytic approach to suicide terrorism focuses on the strategic logic of the terrorist organization. It emphasizes the efficiency, cost-benefit ratio, psychological impact on the target audience etc. Ariel Merari was one of those, who shifted their emphasis in the last decade toward the organizational level of analysis, saying that “*Terrorist suicide is an organizational rather than an individual phenomenon. In all cases, it was an organization that decided to embark on this tactic, recruited candidates, chose the target and the time, prepared the candidate for the mission, and made sure that he/she would carry it out.*”¹⁸⁹ Indeed, Merari is right at this point, but to paraphrase him, at the same time it is an individual, not an organization, who carries the suicide belt or drives an explosive-laden truck, pulls the trigger and kills and dies. Therefore both levels of analysis (organizational and individual) are equally important.

Organizational level of analysis is necessary for us to understand why terrorist organizations use this method, but it tells us nothing about the motivation of individuals or, in different words, why individual suicide bombers agree to sacrifice themselves in order to kill.¹⁹⁰ The main aim of this chapter is to show that motivations of individual (female) suicide bombers are different from motivations of terrorist organizations or their leaders.

Individual motivation of female suicide terrorists is the most obscure part of the phenomenon. Although there was a significant increase of scholars’ interest in individual motivation of suicide bombers since 9/11, our knowledge about their personal lives is still limited to rare findings acquired from interviews with their family members and acquaintances and a small number of unsuccessful terrorists who survived their operation. Therefore it is highly difficult to answer questions like: Are Chechen suicide bombers religious fanatics? What is the role of psychical trauma? How does the education and poverty influence their motivation? What is the influence of potential material reward? Are women motivated to become suicide bombers by the same factors

¹⁸⁹ Merari, A. (2002), quoted in: Kruglanski, A. W. and A. Golec (2006), pp. 2-3.

¹⁹⁰ Hafez, M. M. (2006), pp. 54- 55.

as men? Last but not least – is their choice to become suicide terrorist ultimately rational or irrational?

There is a popular belief that personal profiles of suicide terrorists characterize them as socially deprived, isolated, unemployed, poorly educated young male religious fanatics. But as can be seen from different data collections¹⁹¹, there are so many exceptions to this idea, showing that suicide terrorist can be both man or woman, single, married or widowed, uneducated or university graduate, employed or unemployed, poor or even relatively wealthy, young or old. The variety of suicide terrorists' characteristics is immense and we can agree with Lindsay O'Rourke, who says that "*there is no such thing as a typical female suicide attacker.*"¹⁹²

7.2. Rationality

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

As far as rationality¹⁹³ of an individual suicide bomber is concerned, first we face the obvious question: how can self-destruction be self-interested? There seems to be logical discrepancy in this case. As Hafez claims, according to rational choice theory people would incline to *„free ride rather than participate in collective action in situations where the collective effort produces public goods that are not excludable to*

¹⁹¹E.g. the survey of Speckhard and Akhmedova says that out of 34 Chechen female suicide terrorists in sample, 2 (6%) were of high socio-economical status, with the same number of those of poor socio-economical status. Vast majority of the women in the sample were either of middle (59 %) or good (29%) socio-economical status. (Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 453).

¹⁹² O'Rourke, L. A. (2009), p. 707. Compare with Merari, A. (2010).

¹⁹³ In this section, I understand "rationality" in economical terms of rational choice theory, based on methodological individualism. Rational behavior is when an individual acts *as if* balancing costs against benefits and finally decides for the action, that maximizes personal advantage. Rational individual acts in his/her self-interest.

*those who participate.*¹⁹⁴ It does not seem very rational, that people should strive for reward, which they cannot enjoy due to the fact that they are dead. Nonetheless, there is a possibility that those people just trade off their senseless life for a few days of appreciation among other members of the terrorist group and its sympathizers. However, this is possible rather in a society where so called “cult of martyrdom” exists; in other situations (as in Chechnya) it is quite unlikely. Moreover, many suicide terrorists come from relatively well-situated families and have above-average social status.¹⁹⁵

One of possible ways out for rationalist explanations of suicide bombing lies in incorporating of non-material values in costs and benefits evaluations. Indeed, values such as posthumous rewards offer possible explanation for suicide terrorists’ behavior. However, the argument that suicide terrorists calculate their costs and benefits and their decision is based on rational reasoning is problematic, since both their *ends* (rewards in afterlife) and *means* (martyrdom in the path of God) are contingent on terrorist’s deep religious faith, which is fundamentally *irrational*. In other words, “*the rationality of self-sacrifice is possible because of a transcendent belief system that links death with heavenly rewards, not just the instrumentality of human reasoning.*”¹⁹⁶

Some researchers also point out the role of one’s identity. For instance, as Harrison writes, “*The logic that drives voluntary self-destruction is therefore as follows. Each person who chooses the death of the self does so because at the given moment death will maintain her most valuable asset, the identity that she has selected and invested in through her life, but living on will damage it irreparably. The moment is such that by choosing life she must abandon this identity.*”¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Hafez, M. M. (2006), p. 57.

¹⁹⁵ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 453; Hafez, M. M. (2006), p. 60.

¹⁹⁶ Hafez, M. M. (2006), p. 59.

¹⁹⁷ Harrison, M. (2006), p.4.

7.3. Psychopathology

The issue of psychopathology as a possible motivation is controversial. As for the mental health of suicide terrorists, there was a popular belief among some analysts and especially in the media discourse in the 1990's that most of suicide terrorists suffer from some kind of mental illness. Recent surveys tend to show that most of Chechen female suicide terrorists probably suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder,¹⁹⁸ however in other aspects they didn't suffer any other psychological illness and there is a growing consensus among psychologists and psychiatrists that suicide terrorists, "*while clearly highly alienated from society, are sane and relatively 'normal,' that is, they do not exhibit signs of suffering from a salient psychopathology.*"¹⁹⁹ O'Rourke reached similar conclusion, saying that there is no evidence that female suicide terrorists suffer from either mental illness or the intense isolation that normally accompanies conventional suicide.²⁰⁰ Pape adds that "*while 30 percent of those who commit conventional suicide have a severe physical illness and 25 percent have a history of alcoholism or drug dependence, no female suicide bomber has been known to suffer from either of these predicaments.*"²⁰¹

7.3.1. Trauma

While it seems that mental illness does not play any significant role in the case of Chechen FSTs, some psychiatrists argue that trauma and subsequent post-traumatic stress disorder belongs to important factors of individual behavior. Speckhard and Akhmedova found that all individuals in their sample had experienced a deep personal trauma²⁰² and showed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.²⁰³ Nearly all of them lost close family members during the conflict with Russian forces²⁰⁴ and many of them personally witnessed their death. In addition, all subjects in Speckhard's and Akhmedova's sample had experienced multiple societal traumas including having

¹⁹⁸ Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006b), p. 66.

¹⁹⁹ Moghadam, A. (2006), pp. 90-91.

²⁰⁰ O'Rourke, L. A. (2009), p. 704.

²⁰¹ Pape, R. A. (2005), p. 177.

²⁰² Rape as a special kind of trauma will be discussed in Chapter 7.7.

²⁰³ Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006b), p. 66.

²⁰⁴ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 455. Dronzina and Astashin found out similar information – in their sample of twenty-nine, twenty three lost some family member (Dronzina, T. and V. Astashin (2007), p. 35).

survived bombings, destruction of their homes and witnessing death or torture of others.²⁰⁵ These experiences had deep psychological impact and caused serious personal changes of future-terrorists. *“According to the reports of family members and close associates, the following changes were observed in the female suicide bombers following their traumatic experiences: depression in 73 percent (19/26); social alienation and isolation in 92 percent (24/26); aggression in 23 percent (6/26); and repetitive talking about a strong desire for revenge in 31 percent (8/26). In the majority of cases (73 percent – 19/26), those who ultimately became bombers, sought a connection to Wahhabist groups soon after the trauma and in direct reaction to it; in a minority of cases (27 percent – 7/26) they were already affiliated with the Wahhabist groups by marriage or family ties but began to become more deeply invested in seeking the terror-promoting aspects of these groups.”*²⁰⁶

Although psychological aspects of (female) suicide terrorism are substantial for comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon, they need to be approached with caution. Psychological theories of terrorism tend to be subjective and speculative and therefore any generalizations may be misleading.²⁰⁷

7.4. Religious motivations

Religious motivation is probably only complementary and it is not sufficient explanation of female suicide terrorists' behavior, however as some interviews with unsuccessful terrorists and their relatives as well as some farewell letters show, its effect is very important. As Dronzina and Astashin shows, 14 out of 30 FSTs in their sample had evident relations to Wahhabists prior to their suicide mission and only one had proven the opposite.²⁰⁸

Religiosity itself could not lead to one's decision to sacrifice oneself; however, in interaction with other factors such as post-traumatic stress disorder, it often becomes a key factor. As Speckhard and Akhmedova point out, *“(t)he individuals are*

²⁰⁵ For detailed data see: Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a). p. 455.

²⁰⁶ Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006b), pp. 66-67.

²⁰⁷ For more detailed argumentation about treacherousness of psychological theories of terrorism, see Moghadam, A. (2006), p. 91).

²⁰⁸ Dronzina, T. and V. Astashin (2007), pp. 43-44.

*emboldened by their beliefs to face death and told that to sacrifice themselves is a great honor and that death is only a doorway to rewards in much better afterlife.”*²⁰⁹

Therefore, under certain conditions, religiosity makes the would-be terrorist's decision easier and facilitate his or her path from recruitment to the terrorist act itself. Among the facilitation aspects belong the religious notions of eternity and posthumous rewards which decrease the terrorist's fear of death.²¹⁰

The other aspect connected to religious beliefs occurs in cases of those, who lost the beloved ones during the war. Sometimes the desire to be with them again is so overwhelming that they are willing to abandon their earthly lives and meet their loved ones in heaven. There is evidence of several cases of such thinking among women, participating on Dubrovka Theater Crisis. *“This longing to reunite with a dead loved one, even if it means dying to do so and feeling that a loved one visits in vivid dreams or daydreams is actually a frequent attribute of traumatic bereavement and can be very confusing for the traumatized individual, making him or her much more susceptible to suicide during the unresolved grief period.”*²¹¹

Speckhard and Akhmedova have found two other religious mechanisms which are especially important in the initial stages of recruitment for the terrorist organization. The first one is the notion of “brotherhood” or “sisterhood”, which is usually present in radical Islamic terrorist group. This kind of fictitious kinship increases people's willingness to sacrifice themselves for somebody else's sake - just as blood relatives are often willing to do.²¹² The second important mechanism is the way how religious terrorist organizations provide the answer and comfort²¹³ for those who underwent traumatic events. Members of religious terrorist organization share religious rituals that can help to calm traumatizing experiences. The sense of belonging to the radical organization also offers its members the possibility to take active stand on their trauma - in other words not to be just a victim, but to fight actively. Last but not least,

²⁰⁹ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 447.

²¹⁰ Kurz, R. W. and Ch. K. Bartles (2007), p. 534.

²¹¹ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 448.

²¹² Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 448.

²¹³ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 448.

transcendent ideology gives the *meaning* to their suffering and the *hope* of justice (no matter that only at the Day of Judgment).²¹⁴

7.5. Culture of martyrdom and the community support

Another factor which may be significant in the occurrence of FST is the existence of martyrdom culture. There are societies that highly praise self-sacrifice for the community's benefits and generate relatively high number of volunteers for suicide missions. As Hafez describes, *"Rather than manipulate or brainwash individuals to become human bombs, they (terrorist organizations) engender the myth of the "heroic martyr" in public discourse and debates. Strategically oriented organizations employ religion, ritual, and ceremony to legitimate and honor martyrdom; frame their tactics as a continuation of accepted and revered historical traditions; and enshroud their worldly goals with a transcendent morality associated with national salvation or religious redemption. The symbolism of martyrdom becomes the vehicle through which individual bombers frame or give meaning to their different motivations for self-sacrifice."*²¹⁵

While Palestinian and Tamil society could serve as good examples of societies with highly developed culture of martyrdom,²¹⁶ the level of martyrdom culture's development is uneven. As discussed in previous chapters, there is an evidence that martyrdom culture is much less developed in the Chechen society, in spite of continuous effort of some terrorist leaders to implement it.²¹⁷ But at least for some of the Chechen female suicide terrorist, martyrdom played a substantial role in their decision to become suicide bomber, as they embraced their act as a religious duty.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), p. 465.

²¹⁵ Hafez, M. M. (2006), p. 55.

²¹⁶ Hafez, M. M. (2006), p. 54.

²¹⁷ Chechen rebels issued an unsigned fatwa, celebrating the act of Hawa Barayeva, first Chechen FST, which became a semi-official sanction for female suicide terrorists, later used as a legitimization of other suicide missions. See Ness, C. (2005), pp. 360-361.

²¹⁸ Dronzina, T. (2008).

The cult of martyrdom does not have to stem only from religious beliefs, but also from nationalism and community ties.²¹⁹

7.6. Material rewards and revenge

Although not that usual as in the case of Palestine²²⁰, there is evidence showing that Chechen terrorist organizations in some cases promised a material reward for the suicide mission which would be given to the suicide terrorist's family. No matter whether the reward was really eventually paid out, it is important that the would-be terrorist calculated with it.

The issue of material reward for a suicide mission is closely connected to the issue of debts and extortion, to which the Chechen widows are especially vulnerable. There is a well-known case of 23-year-old Ingush woman Zarema Muzhakhoyeva, who was supposed to blow herself up in Moscow café, but surrender to police. Later investigations showed that, at the age of fifteen, she had been married to a Chechen man, who was not long afterwards killed by Russian troops. *“According to Chechen tradition, she and her baby daughter then “belonged” to her husband's family, who treated her as a household slave. She eventually escaped alone (knowing that the family would never let her have custody of her child). She got by however she could, stealing and borrowing money. Her debts became so great that a group of men from whom she had taken a loan told her she had no choice but to pay them back with her life: if she would complete a suicide mission, her debts would be repaid and her family would also receive money.”*²²¹

Among other motivations which could be perceived as rational is the seeking for revenge, even if it requires the avenger's death. In the Chechen society with its strong tradition of blood feud and duty of retribution and given the fact that almost everybody in Chechnya lost a family member during the war, it is hardly surprising that revenge was an important motivation for many suicide bombers. However the revenge was in many cases not aimed at the actual perpetrator, but at the Russian society as whole. One

²¹⁹ See Hafez, M. M. (2006), p. 62.

²²⁰ Beyler, C. (2003b), p. 11.

²²¹ Groskop, V. (2004), unpagued.

of relatively rare exceptions was the case of Aisa Gazuyeva, who blew herself up in the office of her husband's murderer, Russian officer Geidar Gadzhiev.²²² But unfortunately, development of the ethnic conflict in Chechnya with the growing level of traumatization and bereavement in the society, revenge became increasingly generalized in the minds of many. Generalized revenge, although formerly unacceptable, started to be accepted in the radical discourse.

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

7.7 Gender-related motives

Some researchers such as Cragin and Daly²²³ claim that women suicide terrorists display the same motivations as men and the main difference is not in the minds of women bombers, but in the minds of the leaders of their respective terrorist organizations. Psychiatrists Anne Speckhard and Khapta Akhmedova arrived at a similar conclusion.²²⁴ They put the emphasis on the experienced trauma and subsequent post-traumatic stress disorder as a main factor, leading people to join terrorist organization on the individual level. By this, they diminish any gender-related factors, implicitly saying that motivations of men and women do not substantially differ. However, one of the main objectives of this chapter is to oppose this argument.

Trauma caused by loss of husband or other family member played significant role in most of the cases however as Dronzina and Astashin²²⁵ found out, almost half of Chechen female suicide terrorists in their sample also suffered another trauma closely connected to their gender status. Among these traumas belong: humiliation (on the basis of gender roles), limitation of various rights and particularly social ostracism caused by "sins", or social stigmas acquired by transcending the strict gender roles. Most common "sin" in their sample was extramarital sexual relationship, incest and infertility. Other

²²² See Moghadam, A. (2006), p.24. Tsvetkova, M. (2002), unpagued.

²²³ Cragin, R. K. and S.A. Daly (2009), p. 56.

²²⁴ Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a).

²²⁵ Dronzina, T. and V. Astashin (2007), p. 35.

sources confirm the same argument²²⁶ - Rayman Kurbanova who participated in Dubrovka hostage crisis, got divorced from her husband because of not being able to have children; Aset Gishlurkaeva, another hostage-taker from Dubrovka, also got divorced probably for the same reason, and Marem Sharipova, who blew herself up in the rock concert in Tushino near Moscow, had an abortion. Zulikhan Elihadjieva, Sharipova's accomplice from Tushino, maintained sexual relationship with one of her relatives, same as Hava Barayeva, the first Chechen female suicide terrorist.²²⁷ Other FSTs also became stigmatized for their "sins", like 13 year-old Zarema Inarkaeva, who was raped by her school-mate, or Luiza Asmaeva, who was sexually abused in the terrorist training camp.

7.7.1. Rape

The mechanism of coercion and blackmailing is best illustrated by the story of Mareta Dudayeva. On December 19 2000, a seventeen year-old girl from a small Chechen village tried to ram a truck stuffed with explosives into the police station in Chechnya's second largest city of Argun. She failed to detonate the explosives and survived the mission. The investigations revealed very interesting information about her background and motivation. It turned out that she was not fanatic Muslim at all - she has never read Quran and did not attend services in a mosque. Her motivations were much more prosaic. Forensic expert discovered that she started her sexual life at the age of 12. *"In fact, this behavior is very shameful for a Chechen girl; if the fact received publicity the whole of her clan would have been held up for shame."*²²⁸ Dudayeva was blackmailed by the terrorist group's recruiters and was eventually forced to drive the explosives-loaded truck. *"It is not ruled out that terrorists filmed raping of the girl"*²²⁹, in order to crush girl's young psyche. Dudayeva was completely sane and she behaved rationally, although even under extreme conditions.

²²⁶ Dronzina, T. (2008).

²²⁷ These personal data are taken from different sources, mainly: Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a), Dronzina, T. (2005), Dronzina, T. and V. Astashin (2007), Dronzina, T. (2008).

²²⁸ Bosirov, T. (2003), unpagged.

²²⁹ Bosirov, T. (2003), unpagged.

In the Chechen society where a high value is placed upon the marital fidelity and women's maternal role,²³⁰ women who realize they have deviated (intentionally or unintentionally) from these gender norms may feel strong pressure to reaffirm their commitment to the society.²³¹ It is not very difficult for a terrorist group to persuade such a woman (especially if she suffers from serious trauma) that the only way of the reaffirmation is the suicide mission for "the cause".

7.7.2. Fighting for equality?

There is another alternative explanation of the individual motives of FSTs, stating that females participating in suicide missions attempt to resent social norms, in other words they fight for gender equality. One of the proponents of such approach is Barbara Victor,²³² who applies it to the Palestinian female suicide terrorists. Although it is possible that this explanation is valid especially in some Palestinian left-wing terrorist organizations or Tamil LTTE, it is hardly possible in the case of Chechen FSTs. On the contrary, Chechen female suicide terrorists by their behavior rather reject than embrace any feminist values. According to different sources, Chechen FSTs are much less active during their mission than their male counterparts. In mixed terrorist groups, women are always subordinated to men – the most obvious cases were hostage crisis in Dubrovka Theater and Beslan School. Women were actually just holding the explosives and every decision-making was limited only for men. Also the traditional Arab dresses which female hostage-takers wore indicate that they do not perceive their activity as a fight for gender equality.

²³⁰ Divorce is a relatively big social stigma for Chechen women, suggesting that she is unable to fulfill the expected gender norms.

²³¹ O'Rourke, L. A. (2009), p. 711.

²³² Victor, B. (2003).

8. Conclusion

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

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

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

On the organizational level, we followed argumentation of organizational strategic logic, which states that the organizational shift towards FST is given by logic of efficiency and cost-benefit calculation. While we confirmed earlier findings of different authors that FST is more effective than suicide attacks committed by men, we outlined that the main difference between MST and FST resides in the psychological

effect on target audience. In this chapter, we focused mainly on the communication function of the female suicide terrorism. We developed the argumentation that female suicide terrorism serves as a message directed to several recipients. The most important is the target audience, both the very victims as well as the government and security forces. The aim of the message is to spread fear among the population and coerce the government to certain concessions. Nonetheless, female suicide terrorism as a message is directed at the members of the organization as well as at other terrorist organizations. Its function is to boost the morale of the members or manifest the superiority or higher prestige to competing organizations.

The individual level of analysis is the most obscure. Given the lack of information about individual terrorists' motivation, it is difficult to get to a reasonable conclusion. Therefore I focused only on formulation of several possible motivational factors, which are as follows: post-traumatic psychological disorder, religious and material motivations and revenge. In addition to these, we found evidence showing that the impact of gender-related violence is especially important since great number of female suicide terrorists had some experience with rape or were punished for breaking the strict social and gender rules. Such "sins" are usually extra-marital relations, inability to bear children or incest. On the other hand, some factors suggested by other authors,²³³ such a possible fight for gender equality, proved to be irrelevant in the Chechen case. Similarly, the religious aspect is often over-emphasized by some authors and media.

²³³ E.g. Victor, B. (2003).

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10. List of abbreviations:

FSB - Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation

FST - Female suicide terrorism

IIB – Islamic International Brigade

IIPB – Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade

LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

MST - Male suicide terrorism

OMON - Special Purpose Mobile Unit

PKK - Kurdistan Workers' Party

SPIR – Special Purpose Islamic Regiment

11. Appendix

Table 1 – List of All Chechen Suicide Attacks²³⁴

no.	date	place	m	f	dead/injured	organization
1	7 June 2000	Alkhan-Yurt	0	2	3/5	Unknown
2	11 June 2000	Khankala base, near Grozny	1	0	5/1	Commander Movladi Udugov
3	12 June 2000	Grozny	1	0	7/0	Commander Movladi Udugov
4	14 June 2000	Grozny	1	0	0/0	Commander Shamil Basayev
5	2 July 2000	Argun, Chechnya	1	0	50/81	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
6	2 July 2000	Gudermes, Chechnya	1	0	6/0	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
7	2 July 2000	Gudermes, Chechnya	1	0	9/0	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
8	2 July 2000	Urus-Martan, Chechnya	1	0	2/0	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
9	2 July 2000	Novogrozny, Chechnya	1	0	4/20	Commander Ramzan Akhmadov
10	8 Dec 2000	Gudermes, Chechnya	2	0	3/12	Unknown
11	19 Dec 2000	Grozny, Chechnya	0	1	0/0	Black Widow
12	July 2001	unknown	0	1	0/1	unknown
13	17 Sep 2001	Argun, Chechnya	1	0	1/0	Unknown
14	29 Nov 2001	Urus-Martan, Chechnya	0	1	4/1	Black Widows
15	15 Feb 2002	Grozny, Chechnya	0	1	0/1	unknown
16	31 May 2002	Grozny, Chechnya	1	0	5/?	Unknown
17	23-26 Oct 2002	Moscow	21	19	170+/700+	SPIR, R-S, IIPB
18	27 Dec 2002	Grozny, Chechnya	2	1	57/121	Black Widows
19	10 Jan 2003	Urus-Martan, Chechnya	1	0	1/0	Unknown
20	12 May 2003	Znamenskoe, Chechnya	2	1	59/197	Commander Shamil Basayev
21	14 May 2003	Iliskhan-Yurt	0	2	19/78	Commander Shamil Basayev
22	21 May 2003	Checkpoint, Ingushetia	1	0	1/0	Unknown
23	5 June 2003	Mozdok, North Ossetia	0	1	20/11	Commander Abu al-Walid
24	5 July 2003	Tushino airfield (rock fest), Moscow	0	2	16/60	Black Widows
25	27 July 2003	Grozny	0	1	unknown	unknown
26	1 Aug 2003	Mozdok, North Ossetia	1	0	39/76	Unknown
27	9 Dec 2003	Red Square, Moscow	0	1	5/14	Black Widow
28	6 Feb 2004	Metro (Avtozavodskaya st.), Moscow	1	0	40/120	unknown
29	6 Apr 2004	Nazran	1	0	0/8	Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs
30	24 Aug 2004	airplane (Tula)	0	1	42/0	Islambouli Brigades of al-Qa'ida, Black widows
31	24 Aug 2004	airplanes (Rostov)	0	1	45/0	Islambouli Brigades of al-Qa'ida, Black widows
32	31 Aug 2004	Metro (Rizhskaya station), Moscow	0	1	10/50	Islambouli Brigades of al-Qa'ida, Black widows
33	1 Sep 2004	Beslan, N. Ossetia	29	3	380+/?	R-S
34	21 Sep 2004	Urus-Martan, Chechnya	0	1	unknown	unknown
35	17 May 2006	Nazran	1	0	6/?	Unknown
36	7 July 2006	Nazran	1	0	0/0	Commander Doku Umarov
37	5 Nov 2008	Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia	0	1	11/40	Unknown
38	23 June 2009	Nazran	0	1	2/5	R-S
39	26 July 2009	Grozny, Chechnya	1	0	7/10	NVF

²³⁴ Table 1 is based on data from Global Terrorism Database (GTD), made by The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) on University of Maryland. www.start.umd.edu and Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, run by The National Counterterrorism Center, www.nctc.gov.

40	23 Oct 2009	Grozny, Chechnya	1	0	0/0	Unknown
41	17 Dec 2009	Nazran	1	0	1/18	Unknown
42	6 Jan 2010	Makhachkala, Dagestan	1	0	4/10	Unknown
43	29 Mar 2010	Metro (Lubyanka station), Moscow	0	1	25/?	Dagestan Front of Caucasus Emirate
44	29 Mar 2010	Metro (Park Kultury st.), Moscow	0	1	13/?	Dagestan Front of Caucasus Emirate
45	31 Mar 2010	Kizlyar, Dagestan	1	0	6/?	Unknown
46	31 Mar 2010	Kizlyar, Dagestan	1	0	6/?	Unknown
47	3 Apr 2010	Kizlyar, Dagestan	1	0	3/5	Dagestan Front of Caucasus Emirate
48	5 Apr 2010	Karabulak, Ingushetia	1	0	3/4	Dagestan Front of Caucasus Emirate
49	30 June 2010	Grozny, Chechnya	1	0	1/5	Unknown
50	17 Aug 2010	Prigorodny district, North Ossetia	1	0	2/3	Karabulak Gang
51	9 Sep 2010	Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia	1	0	18/173	R-S
52	19 Oct 2010	Grozny, Chechnya	3	0	6/17	Unknown
53	31 Dec 2010	Moscow	0	2	0/1	unknown
54	24 Jan 2011	Domodedovo airport, Moscow	1	0	37/173	unknown
55	3 May 2012	Makhachkala, Dagestan	0	1	unknown	unknown
56	27 Aug 2012	Chirkei, Dagestan	0	1	unknown	unknown

Table 2 – List of Chechen Female Suicide Terrorists²³⁵

²³⁵ The list was compiled from multiple sources, including open source databases and several articles on Chechen suicide terrorism. In some cases, specific information about terrorist events and its perpetrator are taken from news articles. All data were double-checked and in case of any discrepancy, the information from more reliable source was accepted. The data were taken from following sources: Speckhard, A. (2004); Speckhard, A. and K. Ahkmedova (2006a); Speckhard, A. and K. Akhmedova (2006b); Groskop, V. (2004); Dronzina, T. (2005); Dronzina, T. and V. Astashin (2007); Dronzina, T. (2008); Kurz, R. W. and Ch. K. Bartles (2007); database at Global Jihad, <http://www.globaljihad.net>; Chechen Times (2004). “Women’s question.” Chechen Times, March 29, 2004; and Kommersant.ru: “Теперь всех нас будут взрывать.” *Kommersant.ru*, April 9, 2004.