



Rational Choice Rewards and the Jihadist Suicide Bomber

Simon Perry & Badi Hasisi

To cite this article: Simon Perry & Badi Hasisi (2015) Rational Choice Rewards and the Jihadist Suicide Bomber, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 27:1, 53-80, DOI: [10.1080/09546553.2014.962991](https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2014.962991)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2014.962991>



Published online: 09 Dec 2014.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 695



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Rational Choice Rewards and the Jihadist Suicide Bomber

SIMON PERRY AND BADI HASISI

Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, The Hebrew
University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel

Suicide terrorism is the most violent and horrifying form of terrorism in the world today. This kind of terrorism causes many fatalities and can throw an entire nation into a state of panic. We usually attribute this kind of terrorism to altruistic motivation, assuming that bombers are willing to sacrifice themselves for a higher cause. The current study uses the criminological theory of Rational Choice to analyze the motivation of jihadist suicide terrorism. By reviewing the religious, personal, and social incentives, we demonstrate that even those who kill themselves in suicide attacks, which are seemingly examples of irrational or altruistic behavior, do so while considering future, self-gratifying benefits. Since this self-destructive behavior is mostly driven not by altruistic motivation but by the anticipation of costs and benefits, we find that there is no fundamental difference between the perpetrators' motivations and those of other criminals; both groups are committed to maximizing self-gratifying, beneficial behavior.

Keywords crime, motivations, Rational Choice Theory, suicide bomber, terror

The 9/11 terror attacks brought the suicide-bombing phenomenon to the world's attention. One key question this phenomenon raises is: What drives people to make this ultimate sacrifice? It is often maintained that individuals willing to make this self-sacrifice, which they consider to be in their society's best interest, are driven by altruism. Based on Emile Durkheim's¹ typology of suicide behavior, some scholars argue that suicide bombing is indeed altruistic suicide: a result of an individual's extreme integration into a social group which indoctrinates its members to sacrifice themselves for a cause they believe supersedes personal interests.²

Another approach considers suicide terrorism to be fatalistic suicide: an outcome of a person's inopportune life, brought upon by their being "too regulated or choked by oppressive discipline."³ Leenaars maintains that suicide terrorism can inherently be a byproduct of both altruism and fatalism. In the altruistic collective dimension, they believe their suicide to be an asset to their society's goals. The fatalistic dimension voices individualism, viewing suicide as an escape route from circumstances of despair.

Dr. Simon Perry is a Professor of Practice with the Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Dr. Badi Hasisi is Chair of the Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Address correspondence to Simon Perry, Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem 91905, Israel. E-mail: simon.perry@mail.huji.ac.il

Alternatively, other scholars argue that suicide terrorist motives should be viewed through the lens of the Rational Choice Model.⁴ A significant number of these scholars use rational choice to explain the motives of the suicide bombers' handlers who mastermind, organize, and dispatch the bombers as "smart bombs." Seeking to increase the attack's success and consequences, the masterminds select a high-value target, to allow the maximum number of potential victims.⁵

While the above-cited scholars use Rational Choice Theory to explain the actions of the suicide bombers' handlers, the masterminds behind suicide terror attacks (mainly in an attempt to identify interventions to thwart situational opportunities), the current study emphasizes the Rational Choice model as exclusively pertaining to the suicide bombers. The study thus focuses on the suicide bombers' pursuit of self-gratifying rewards for maximization of their benefits.⁶ Therefore, the study concentrates on the motivation of suicide bombers and not on the motives of their handlers⁷ (the goals of the terrorist organization). Yet, to execute their motives and attain their goals, the handlers promote the suicide bombers' expected rewards, reinforcing their motivation.

Unlike any other form of terrorist attack (including "no-escape" or "sacrificial" attacks where the attackers have a slim chance of survival), suicide bombing has an additional value. As Margalit⁸ explains, by their own dramatic act of killing themselves, bombers become the ultimate victims. In the eyes of their supporters, such actions bring moral shame upon the innocent victims they murder, as well as upon their families and society, for their collective deeds provoked the suicide bomber's attack. The suicide bombers claim the moral high ground for their declared altruistic motivation. Mohammed Hafez⁹ maintains that in order to understand their motivation, one must be somewhat empathetic towards suicide bombers.

Rational Choice Theory provides our research with a theoretical framework for understanding the process in which suicide bombers are in fact victimized; both by their handlers and by the subculture of Islamic fundamentalism.

Clarke and Newman¹⁰ argue that criminologists only address suicide bombing sporadically, therefore it is mostly done by those who "would appeal to politicians and diplomats and would match the agendas of international agencies."¹¹ These scholars (mostly from disciplines other than criminology) claim that the targeted populations and their counterterrorism policies against suicide attacks are responsible for the suicide bomber's personal motivation. Clarke and Newman claim that these scholars "blame the problem" on conflicts that demand resolution by political and diplomatic processes.¹² Therefore, these scholars argue that counterterrorism methods should concentrate on changing the motivations and not on limiting opportunities for committing these acts of terror. Professor of International Affairs Mia Bloom argues¹³ that "the key is to reduce the Palestinian motivations for suicide bombing rather than their capabilities to carry them out." While we can agree with the importance to reduce motivations for terrorism in general and for suicide terrorism in particular, it is at least as important and more so practical to minimize the capabilities and opportunities for executing the attacks. In their book *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, Clarke and Newman demonstrate what is probably the most prominent application of the "Rational Choice Theory" to terrorism, arguing that: "Terrorism is a form of crime in all essential respects."¹⁴ Following this reasoning, the position in our article perceives terrorism in general, and suicide bombing in particular, not as mainly altruistic in nature but as motivated primarily by ego and hedonism, akin to criminal motivations of ordinary criminals.

Similar to most applications of “Rational Choice Theory” to crime, Clarke and Newman focus almost exclusively on thwarting terrorism through situational prevention, as opposed to promoting genuine political processes: “we must not rely on changing the hearts and minds of terrorists.”¹⁵ Criminological Rational Choice Theory emphasizes the need for counterterrorism methods to deal mainly with the specific terrorists’ goals/targets, including attention to particular on-the-ground issues, referred to by Clarke and Newman as the “four pillars of terrorist opportunity” (targets, weapons, tools, and facilitating conditions). This article argues that the self-lethal behavior of the suicide bomber is not driven primarily by altruistic personal motivation, but by the anticipated costs and benefits, and is not fundamentally different from the motivations of an ordinary criminal. Therefore, we employ the perspective of the criminological “Rational Choice Theory”: that practical counterterrorism should mostly deploy proven situational crime prevention techniques, and focus less on the realm of domestic and foreign policies.¹⁶

It should be emphasized, however, that political scientists and those of other academic disciplines do not deny the personal motivations of suicide bombers; rather they consider such motivations to be marginal contributions. Similarly, the criminological rational choice perspective does not deny the possible existence of a “higher cause,” yet only attributes to it a minor contribution in one’s decision to become a martyr. Additionally, recent works that apply Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) to terrorism argue that SCP could be used to complement approaches whose root cause is political. This is done by buying time and wearing down the terrorist group—reducing the magnitude of terror activity—thus securing the political/diplomatic process.¹⁷

Contrary to altruistic suicide, perceived as non-self-gratifying behavior,¹⁸ we argue that the suicide bomber’s self-lethal behavior is in fact a product of situational rational choice—produced by the bomber’s calculated evaluation of the costs and anticipated rewards. The goal of this article is to describe a Rational Choice Model that embodies religious, personal, and social rewards, as expected by the suicide bomber in return for his self-sacrificing behavior, and utilizing the case of Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab (UFAM) to exhibit this model. There is variation between different suicide bombers as to the importance of anticipated rewards, which makes it difficult to generalize. Yet, this article will show that UFAM, similar to other suicide bombers, anticipated that he would receive a typical set of rewards. We shall illustrate later that the “reward system” of UFAM is consistent with key characteristics of the common suicide bomber.

This study will first present a model that describes the socialization and indoctrination mechanism that breeds suicide bombers, succeeding to build incentives for the choices they eventually make. We then apply this model to the case of UFAM. What we shall show is that both socialization and indoctrination are rational-choice driven, attempting to convince suicide terrorists to perform their acts—which will grant them remarkable rewards. The propaganda present in recorded wills, video testaments, published letters, and other forms of testimony may insinuate suicide terrorism as motivated by altruistic and unselfish nationalistic/religious reasoning. Our study, however, will present another underlying level of motivation, beyond that expressed in the declared propaganda of fundamentalist jihadists. This study argues that the lethal behavior of suicide bombing is in fact a direct outcome of rational situational choice. We believe this choice to be based on the bombers’ evaluation of the anticipated costs on the one hand, and on the product of a dynamic interaction between their anticipation of *religious, personal, and social rewards* on the other.

There are practical limitations to conducting an empirical study on suicide terrorists; some researchers therefore based their studies on interviewing suicide bombers before the act, since it is obviously impossible to interview successful suicide bombers after the act. Circumstances also often prevent scholars from interviewing bombers immediately after failed attempts; bombers whose attack plots were thwarted; and spiritual leaders, recruiters, and attack masterminds of suicide bombers. Therefore, the research approach in this study is based on a case study. Considering the debate around terrorist motivations (rational choice versus altruism), we will illustrate that even in the case of terrorist activities by suicide bombers, a series of rational choice-based decisions occurs, wherein the costs and benefits of actions are weighed. If this is the case among suicide bombers (rational choice consideration: cost/benefit analysis), then one could argue that similar considerations should be expected among non-suicidal terrorist attacks. Our case study will focus on the case of UFAM, “the underpants bomber” who failed in his attempt to detonate a bomb in a plane over Detroit in 2009.¹⁹

The Criminological Theory of Rational Choice and Its Application to Terrorism

According to Cornish and Clarke,²⁰ “Rational Choice Theory” is based upon the assumption that criminals seek profit from their criminal behavior. Such behavior requires the criminals involved to make decisions and choices. According to this approach, individuals contemplating criminal behavior use the same decision-making processes and cognitive strategies as those engaging in non-criminal behavior. Furthermore, according to this approach, there are no differences between the decision-making processes employed by criminals and those of non-criminals, nor are there differences between the basic motivations of the two groups.

This approach contradicts the repeated attempts by determinist, positivist criminologists who try to explain delinquency by identifying differences between criminal and non-criminal groups based upon psychological, biological, sociological, or political characteristics. In Rational Choice Theory, the “rational” concept emphasizes the notion of strategic thinking, and assumes a process whereby information is analyzed, situations are defined (from a subjective perspective), and opportunities and alternatives are evaluated—all directed towards achievement of maximum expected benefits. The concept of “choice” reinforces the position that criminals consider and make decisions. Persons commit crimes if they expect the benefits of committed offenses to exceed the benefits they may obtain by investing in alternative feasible activities (legal or non-legal).

According to “Rational Choice Theory,” criminal behavior is a process in which the individual subjectively defines a given situation, perceiving possible future benefits to be provided. This approach has a phenomenological dimension, as criminal behavior largely depends on one’s own subjective definition of “reality,” which is unique to each individual. No two people experience a situation exactly the same way, as each one’s unique personal perspective is influenced by one’s individual background, influenced by such variables as: social groups and effective relationships, religious beliefs, moral concepts, material deprivation, opportunities, and formal and informal sanctions. This explains why an individual may choose a delinquent behavior in a particular situation, yet reject it in another situation. Moreover, it also explains why two people in a similar situation may make different behavioral

choices (criminal or non-criminal). Clarke and Cornish²¹ characterize such behavior as “limited rationality,” since the decision making is less than perfect due to the imperfect conditions of the process. The decision-making process is not *optimal* since, similar to any other person, suicide bombers often act rashly and are affected by significant others as well as by limited available information and resources. In other words, suicide bombers’ actions are rational given the constraints and opportunities available to them.

Jon Elster²² distinguishes between “thin” and “broad” rationality. The concept of “thin” rationality is that there is a consistency between the individual’s actions and his or her beliefs and desires. We argue that the choice to commit an act of terror in general, and a suicide act of terror in particular, is a rational choice based upon an individual’s subjective understanding of the situation and anticipated benefits. If the suicide bombers believe that martyrs are eligible for “paradise rewards,” from their point of view it is rational to kill themselves in an act of martyrdom. Those outside of the Islamic fundamentalist system of beliefs can argue there is no rationality in the belief in the afterlife narrative and in the fulfillment of the desires allegedly satisfied in paradise. Because the paradise narrative is not based on concrete evidence, it does not involve a rational judgment (the “broad” rationality). Therefore, an individual’s rational judgment is not independent of his system of beliefs and not necessarily evidence based.

The “Rational Choice Approach”²³ distinguishes between two levels of analysis when explaining criminal behavior. The first level constitutes “criminal involvement” (or “criminality” according to Hirschi²⁴), including both the analysis of the fundamental decision to be a criminal as well as the analysis of the choice to engage in a particular type of criminal activity (e.g., burglary, robbery, suicide bombing). The second level, “criminal events” (or “crime” according to Hirschi), involves analysis of the decision-making process specific to a given offense; e.g., exactly how to execute the burglary/drug deal/suicide bombing attempt. This situational decision process for performing a specific act of crime is usually shorter and reliant on information dictated by the immediate circumstances of the situation.

“Rational Choice Theory” typically focuses on offenses rather than on offenders. Felson and Clarke²⁵ make a connection between delinquent behavior and the opportunity unique to a specific type of offense in its circumstantial context. Since opportunity plays a central role in creating the offense, they offer ten principles for “situational prevention” policy.

In *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, Clarke and Newman focus almost exclusively on thwarting terrorism through situational prevention, and focus very little on the personal motivations of terrorists in general, and of suicide bombers in particular. At one point in the book, Clarke and Newman address the issue of personal motivation. They briefly argue that great similarities exist between the motivations of “ordinary” criminals²⁶ and those of terrorists; both groups may expect the principal rewards to include an overall sense of belonging, status, excitement, employment, group support, and sex.

Unlike most of the writings which deal with the application of “Rational Choice Theory” to terrorism that mainly focus on the decision making of the handlers and initiators of suicide terrorism and on the application of situational crime prevention,²⁷ the current article focuses on the application of “Rational Choice” model specifically to suicide bombers themselves, who expect religious, personal, and social rewards for their self-sacrificing behavior.

The Rational Choice of “Martyrdom”: Religious, Personal, and Social Rewards

Islamic texts, rituals, and symbols concerning *jihad* and martyrdom have been referenced by Islamic fundamentalist militants to justify, inspire, and promote suicide operations as well as to entice candidates.²⁸ The martyrs’ deaths are thus considered to be in the name of “the glory of God.”²⁹ This form of martyrdom³⁰ is perceived to be the fulfillment of a “divine command,” understood by Islamic *jihad* organizations to be God’s will.³¹ Islamic suicide terrorists are therefore titled *shuhadaa*: martyrs dying in service of *Allah*, committing an obligatory and sacrificial act.³² Rooted in the martyrdom concept, this glory is considered “the highest level of *jihad*”—highlighting the depths of the martyr’s faith.³³ Palestinian Mufti Sheikh Ikrima Sabri praises martyrdom in his sermons at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem: “The Muslim loves death and strives for martyrdom.”³⁴ In kind, Sheikh ‘Ijlin states at the Gaza Mosque: “We, the Muslims . . . each one of us—seekers of Martyrdom.”³⁵

Islamic fundamentalists do not perceive the holy act of martyrdom (*Istishad*) as suicide (*Intihar*) to be forbidden in Islam, as although martyrs die in this world, they live on in paradise.³⁶ According to Mahmoud al-Zahar, co-founder of Hamas: “These are not suicide operations . . . these are martyrdom-seeking operations . . . the the highest level of martyrdom.”³⁷ Upon reaffirming in a video testament the pledge of *jihad* and readiness to die, suicide bombers receive the special honorary status of “the living martyr.”³⁸ This oath transfers the bombers to the mental state of a living dead, commencing their presence in that world.³⁹

Jihadists argue that “he who commits martyrdom sacrifices himself for the sake of his religion and his nation”⁴⁰—namely for altruistic motivation.⁴¹ On the other hand, the jihadist religious belief in martyrdom also entails meaningful personal rewards, as the *Koran* assures that martyrs are alive in the presence of God—who grants them gifts.⁴² In fact, the fundamentalists elaborate extensively on the meaningful benefits of the suicide bomber, beyond the *Koran’s* original indication, describing them in a graphic, colorful manner.

Therefore, in light of the meaningful religious and personal rewards offered to the martyr by the fundamentalists, widespread attraction and appeal of martyrdom resonate as the suicide bombers’ primary motivation, overshadowing their altruistic motivation. A fascinating example of such is the suicide video⁴³ of al-Saba, Sidique Khan, who performed the London Underground 7/7 bombing. On the one hand, he insists that: “Our drive and motivation doesn’t come from tangible commodities that this world (paradise) has to offer. . . . This is how our ethical stances are dictated.” On the other hand, he discusses the rewards of Paradise, asking to be granted entrance: “make *duaa* to *Allah* almighty to accept the work from me and brothers . . . and enter us into gardens of paradise.”

In the next section we describe (within the rational choice model) the religious, personal, and social rewards that the suicide bombers expect to attain by virtue of their self-sacrificial behavior. It is important to emphasize that this article presents a series of possible rewards for suicide bombers, yet it is clear that this does not mean that all the rewards are relevant for every suicide bomber. Different rewards can be attributed to different attackers, and we do not expect every suicide terrorist to pursue all the rewards.

Religious Rewards

Eternity in paradise. According to the Islamic jihadist, those willing to kill themselves in the course of defending religion earn eternal life in the highest gardens of paradise.⁴⁴ By pressing the detonator, the martyr immediately opens the door to Paradise (*jannat al-firdaws*).⁴⁵ This instant deliverance, the “reward of heaven,” is enabled by the martyr’s involvement in *jihad*, or “holy war”—also taught as “God’s path to paradise.”⁴⁶ The martyr knows that once he reaches heaven, attaining real immortality and honor (in paradise), God is on his side.⁴⁷ When asked how he felt about being selected for martyrdom, an anonymous captured male terrorist replied: “It’s as if a very high, impenetrable wall separated you from Paradise or Hell.”⁴⁸ Another arrested suicide bomber describes his imaginary entry to paradise: “We were floating, swimming, in the feeling that we were about to enter eternity.”⁴⁹ In her last words, Hawa Barayev, who drove into a building housing Russian Special Forces in Alkhan Kala in 2000, said: “I know what I am doing; paradise has a price, and I hope this will be the price for Paradise.”⁵⁰

Promoting the godliness of a suicide mission, the father of Palestinian suicide bomber Tareq Hamid defines *jihad* as follows: “The only thing they need is to reach Paradise, by means of defense and martyrdom for the sake of *Allah*.”⁵¹ Thayer and Hudson⁵² describe how pervasive this belief is among jihadists both in the Palestinian press and in pre-recorded death announcements of martyrs. They explain that, “indeed, there is boasting, desire, expectations and impatient eagerness to take the short cut and join in one stroke the pleasures of Paradise.”⁵³

There is shared sentiment among Islamic fundamentalists that Paradise reserves exclusive rewards for prophets and martyrs, amounting to the novelty of their being chosen—even if they pay a price to be selected.⁵⁴

Seeing Allah’s face and meeting the Prophet Muhammad. According to this belief, the martyr continues his life in Paradise, now in the presence of *Allah*, permitted to see *Allah*’s face and to meet the Prophet Muhammad, who is quoted as saying: “the soul of a martyr is carried to *Allah* in the bosom of the green birds in Paradise.”⁵⁵ This expectation of experiencing *Allah* and the Prophet Muhammad firsthand is so intrinsic to the suicide bomber legacy that some have described it as their main motivation for participating in a Holy War.⁵⁶ The emphasis on this incentive can be credited to the jihadist organizations’ method of attack preparation; as a Hamas member explains, “we focus his attention on Paradise, on being in the presence of *Allah*, on meeting the Prophet Muhammad.”⁵⁷

In his farewell letter, a suicide bomber who blew himself up in the Gaza Strip exemplifies the *shahid*’s state of mind during the attack: “I decided to see *Allah* today and this meeting is by all means more important than staying alive on this earth.”⁵⁸ This passion for the thrill of meeting *Allah* was expressed by Hanaadi Jaaradat, before bombing the “Maksim” restaurant in Haifa (a northern city in Israel) in 2003: “I believe in all that is written in the *Koran* and long for the rivers of paradise, as I yearn to see the holy face of *Allah*. I long for all of this ever since *Allah* placed me in this world.”⁵⁹ In his farewell testimonial video, Ibrahim Sharahna affirms the martyr’s esteemed reward: “Every martyr has a place in paradise, next to *Allah* and his prophet, Muhammad.”⁶⁰

Washing away past sins, protection from pains of death and Hell. It is believed that during *jihad*, the first drop of bloodshed by a martyr washes all of their past sins

away instantaneously, protecting them from the pains of death.⁶¹ These pains can include “the torment of the grave” and the “Great Horror,” otherwise known as the “Day of Judgment.”⁶² According to a Hamas *imam*, being spared these miseries ultimately reassures the martyr that: “he will not face any reckoning on that Day of Judgment.”⁶³ Another Imam emphasized the virtue of repentance: “there is no reason to clean the corpse of the *shahid*, rather to leave it drenched in blood. Why? So that the blood will testify in his merit before *Allah* on the day of resurrection.”⁶⁴ The martyr is also granted the emotional security of freedom from the “fear of hell.”⁶⁵ This is especially meaningful for female suicide bombers, known for their picturesque imagery of hell; involving thorns, wild fire and people dying—only to be resurrected for the sole purpose of dying again.⁶⁶

72 *Black eyed virgins (houris), food, and wine.* Islamic *jihad* spiritual leaders assert that in heaven, the martyr will be served and then married by seventy-two *houris* (the black-eyed virgins of unnatural beauty).⁶⁷ *Jihadist* leaders attest to these weddings in their sermons and writings. For example, Sheik ‘Ikrim Sabri, the Mufti of Jerusalem, describes how lucky the martyr is, since “the angels usher him to his wedding in heaven.”⁶⁸ Sheikh Radhwan describes in a sermon that the martyr “is given 72 black-eyed women. . . . This is one of the miracles of the *shahid*.”⁶⁹ In an Al-Qaeda manual found in Mohammad Atta’s suitcase, intended for him to read prior to the 9/11 attacks, a promise was written: “You will be soon, with God’s permission, with your heavenly brides in Heaven. Smile in the face of death. . . . Know that the Heavens have raised their most beautiful decoration for you, and that your heavenly brides are calling you . . . while wearing their most beautiful jewelry.”⁷⁰

These beliefs are ingrained into the minds of martyrs during recruitment and at the outset of attack. Immediately before one martyr set out on a martyrdom mission, a teacher wished him that the virgins should give him pleasure.⁷¹ Muhammad Abu Wardeh, a Hamas suicide bomber recruiter, discussed his conversation with a martyr candidate: “I described to him how God would compensate the martyr for sacrificing his life for his land. If you become a martyr, God will give you 70 virgins, 70 wives and everlasting happiness . . . the dark-eyed *houris*, chaste as hidden pearls.”

Islamic spiritual clerics solidify their reward message by bringing statements from the *Koran*, describing the virgins: “beautiful like rubies, with complexions like diamonds and pearls . . . the martyrs and virgins shall delight themselves, lying on green cushions and beautiful carpets.”⁷² Abu Hamza al-Kuwaiti, before performing his attack, describes his dream of paradise: “I saw myself swimming in a river with other people. The river led to a cave or a tunnel on which it was written: ‘To the Highest Paradise’ . . . when I approached, something was dragging me to the bottom of the river. It was a beautiful young maiden of paradise. We hugged each other under water.”⁷³ Furthermore, al-Kuwaiti’s friend describes him as giving up the good life, forfeiting his own scheduled wedding for the virgins of paradise.⁷⁴ Jalal, a 15-year-old bomber captured with an explosive belt, expresses a similar stance: “I would even sell my parents, the entire world . . . for paradise. . . . It has the 72 virgins, and God will grant me marriage with 72 virgins.”⁷⁵ Mahdi Abu Malek wrapped toilet paper around his genitals in expectation for his sexual rewards, when preparing for his (foiled) attack, as to protect his organs for enjoying the sexual rewards.⁷⁶

Hamas celebrates martyrdom through festivities akin to a wedding, publicizing a death notice in wedding announcement format. Desserts and juices chosen by the fallen youth (in his will) are served to the hundreds of guests congregating at the

martyr family's house.⁷⁷ These death announcements are phrased as “weddings” between the martyr and the pure virgins of paradise.⁷⁸

Martyrs wholeheartedly believe their spiritual leaders are to grant them unlimited sex in the afterlife.⁷⁹ The promises of such rewards are extremely powerful, especially in a traditional society that forbids casual relationships with the opposite gender, and above all premarital sex. An anonymous martyr rejoices about paradise: “All that is forbidden in this world is permitted in the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden has everything . . . 72 virgins.”⁸⁰

The martyr's exclusive rewards are also commonly believed to involve luxurious food and wine—as emphatically depicted in Hasan-al-Saba's farewell video testimony: “In Paradise there is wine which you can drink without getting drunk. There is also honey and leben.”⁸¹ Abu Kim, in his farewell video before committing his attack, said: “72 virgins in paradise are waiting for a bachelor, the *shahid* . . . Everything we dream about is in paradise, food, delicacies . . . there shall wait on them immortal youths . . . a cup of purest wine . . . with fruits of their own choice and flesh of fowls that they relish.”⁸² As mentioned above, not all the rewards are relevant for every suicide bomber. Different rewards can be attributed to different attackers, as in the case of female suicide bombers.

Guaranteed path to paradise for seventy of the martyr's beloved ones. The *shahids'* benefits are not limited to themselves alone, rather the act of martyrdom also guarantees the path to paradise, otherwise described as “a place with God,” to seventy of the martyr's beloved ones.⁸³ Furthermore, the martyrdom operation is said to redeem these 70 family members from the “grave's pains.”⁸⁴ This promise alone can motivate the martyrs' families to consent to their suicide,⁸⁵ explaining why the martyrs often remind their families of this privilege during their farewells.⁸⁶ Martyrs may portray their eventual resurrection as compensation for their present departure.⁸⁷ Hamed Abu Hejleh, who blew himself up in Netanya in 2001, promised: “If I have fallen short in my duty toward you in this world, I will not fall short during judgment day. . . . Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, has said that the martyr intercedes (with God) on behalf of seventy of his family members.”⁸⁸ A female prisoner said that on the day she went out to commit the suicide attack, she felt a euphoric sense of fulfillment, like a bride on her wedding day; she couldn't stop thinking about the redemption of her family.⁸⁹ Thus, the martyr's privileged incentive to choose 70 family members for admittance to Paradise is intrinsic to the choice to partake in terrorism.⁹⁰

The typical martyrs' attributing motivation for martyrdom to these religious rewards (based quite clearly on this Paradise scenario), suggests that their preparedness for arrival in Paradise is not a function of pathological thinking, but of religious socialization—characterized by:

- (a) *Deep religious feelings:* In an interview with John Miller in 1998, Osama bin Laden himself subscribed to this belief, saying: “I am one of the servants of *Allah*. We do our duty of fighting for the sake of the religion of *Allah*. It is also our duty.”⁹¹
- (b) *Following Islamic laws:* All four *Sunni* Islamic schools of thought (*Hanafi*, *Maliki*, *Shafa'i*, and *Hanbali*) and *Shi'i* traditions contend that, “*jihad* and martyrdom, while not part of the five Islamic pillars of faith, are among the best expressions of religious devotion and surest way.”⁹² Islamic fundamentalists consider *jihad* and the role of martyrdom as so vital to Islamic laws and

theology that they are all the more motivated to pursue them, obliged as a “soldier for *Allah*” to perform terrorist attacks.⁹³ Hassan Salame, a notorious Palestinian suicide bomb commander, said: “the bombers are holy fighters who carry out one of the more important articles of faith.”⁹⁴

- (c) *Spending a great deal of time at the mosque*: A failed suicide bomber mentions their spiritual experience in a mosque: “I spent a month in a mosque. I learned how important it is to be a *shahid*. It is the loftiest objective. It’s the biggest and most holy thing you can do. And then you receive all the rewards in Paradise.”⁹⁵
- (d) *Becoming a student of Martyrdom*: “Dying in the noblest of all causes, *Jihad*, which is an incumbent religious duty.”⁹⁶ As we have seen, martyrs incorporate religious principles into their farewell testimonies; Ismail al-M’asoubi, who killed two Israelis in Gaza in 2001, states: “love for *jihad* and martyrdom has come to possess my life, my being, my feelings, my heart . . . my heart ached when I heard the Qur’anic verses.”⁹⁷

This fervent loyalty within the jihadist mindset can also be attributed to the very young age at which believers are socialized into this martyrdom culture. Many suicide bombers attest to these very elements in their recruitment firsthand. Mohammed Rezaq, who skyjacked an Egypt Air passenger jet in 1985, describes being socialized from boyhood “to be a heroic revolutionary fighting for the Palestinian nation.”⁹⁸ *Jihad* is often the first word children learned to spell in Taliban religious schools. As in the following Harakat (Pakistani-based Al-Qaida ally) Oath to *Jihad*: “I . . . state in the presence of God that I will slaughter infidels my entire life.”⁹⁹ This early stage of religious indoctrination only further enhances the loyalty that cultivates within the Jihadist *protégé*.

Personal Rewards

The fundamentalists expertly circulate and publicize propaganda (via the media, internet, education system, the mosque, etc.)—guaranteeing martyrs significant personal rewards as well: honor, fame, and glory; redemption from “sinful behavior”; negating negative feelings of depression and helplessness; perception of empowerment and identity; feeling morally superior; revenge. This upgraded status is understood as the suicide bomber affirming his “newborn identity” by becoming a martyr.¹⁰⁰

Honor, fame and glory; Becoming a hero. Becoming a martyr, subject to glorification through a special saintly status, is one of the highest personal attainments.¹⁰¹ Through this heroic sacrifice, the suicide bomber, yearning for individual glory, is declared a “living martyr,” admired and envied by the community.¹⁰² In this society, young people are taught from birth that acquisition of honor and avoidance of shame are the critical motivators of behavior. Any act of retaliation, even one that has no realistic chance of recompense, can still be interpreted as heroic, nullifying shame and negating humiliation.¹⁰³

Various sects in Islamic fundamentalism promote this link between a suicide attack and glorified martyrdom. Hamas, for example, uses posters, martyr cards, video statements, and films to institutionalize and inspire a “culture of martyrdom.” For that reason, many martyrs stress the “necessity of martyrdom” in their videotaped statements—fulfilling their expectation of gaining the status and respect owed

to martyrdom.¹⁰⁴ Palestinian national television inserts the virtue of martyrdom into “Children’s Club”—a Sesame Street-like program whose puppet shows, songs, and Mickey Mouse character present martyrdom as a good and honorable deed, celebrating violence, singing, “When I wander into Jerusalem, I will become a suicide bomber.”¹⁰⁵ *Hizbullah* demonstrates their members’ willingness to die for the terrorist cause in a “Martyr of the Month” calendar, featuring pictures of fallen zealots—posted in public spaces, as well as by giving a shroud uniform lining to members prepared to die.¹⁰⁶

Obeying the guidance of their leaders, many aspiring martyrs pursue this glorified status and reputation. As expressed by Hafiz Hanif, a 16-year-old Al-Qaeda recruit in Pakistan: “There is nothing more to be strived for in this life except joining the *Jihad* and becoming a *shahid*.”¹⁰⁷ Mohammed Alessa, an arrested jihadist explains: “What’s better than sitting back here and working like a dog . . . than moving forward to a life of honor, life of dignity, once *Allah* . . . takes your soul upon that.”¹⁰⁸ Saliman Arafı states in his farewell testimony, “I put on the suicide belt and I felt proud.”¹⁰⁹ Or, as stated by an anonymous prisoner: “. . . martyrdom attacks which earn the most respect.”¹¹⁰ Finally, upon arrival in paradise, the *shahid’s* soul “lives inside the vitals of the green birds of paradise circling around the throne of honor.”¹¹¹

Suicide bombers personally attest to this incentive of becoming a hero. One example is Saajid Badat, who backed out of an aircraft bombing. He described his feeling when listening to an audio tape about people killed while fighting in Bosnia: “It was almost the glamour factor of it, drawing me in . . .”¹¹² Or, as phrased by Abu-Huzaifa before committing a terror attack, “It’s better to die with pride than to live without dignity.”¹¹³

Redemption from “sinful behavior.” Through suicide bombing, martyrdom is said to provide a spiritual form of both personal and collective redemption, a legitimate means to clear one’s name from adulterous or any other forbidden sinful behavior. Palestinian female suicide bombers have attested to committing or planning a suicide attack so as to redeem themselves from a sin they had shamefully committed, such as cheating on their husbands. This was the case with Andalib Takatka, who blew herself up in a Jerusalem market. Similarly, during her interrogation, Tahani Khalil confessed that she was en route to commit a suicide attack—in order to purify her name after being caught cheating on her husband.¹¹⁴

Terminating negative feelings of depression and helplessness. Martyrdom also offers a dignified method to terminate negative feelings of depression, helplessness, and an unfulfilling life. Entering paradise as a martyr therefore appeals as solving circumstances of despair, rather than resorting to forbidden suicide. In many cases, performing a suicide attack is an attempt to redeem shame and humiliation, to regain pride and self-respect. Thus, the motivation behind fatalistic suicide is its sensational reward: termination of negative feelings—an escape route from hopelessness.¹¹⁵

Illusion of empowerment and identity. Performing a suicide attack can provide an illusion of empowerment by overcoming feelings of helplessness, defying the victim position by overcoming the fear of death.¹¹⁶ Hammami, an American jihadist, demonstrates this belief in an Internet forum: “Where is the desire to do something amazing? Where is the urge to get up and change yourself . . . let yourself fly?”¹¹⁷ Extremist ideologies appeal to those who lack control of their own destiny, solving

their societal estrangement by offering a new identity and purpose with an escape route to a fantasy world of *jihad*.¹¹⁸ Thus, the martyr paradoxically believes that one desperate act of self-destruction will bring forth self-recreation.¹¹⁹

From Islamic religious extremism, martyrs derive an ultimate purpose to live and to die for, trumping their personally lost significance and powerlessness.¹²⁰ Islamic fundamentalists contend that although composed of war-like martyrdom, *jihad* births ethics and justice:¹²¹ self-sacrifice as per *Allah*'s will.¹²² When chosen for martyrdom, one is thought to be sacrificing him or herself for the good of the community,¹²³ thereby gaining empowerment, exhilaration, and jubilation.¹²⁴ This sensation can explain why martyrs express no personal enmity toward their victims—perceiving them as mere collateral damage.¹²⁵ An anonymous suicide bomber conveyed the idea in this way: “I regarded armed actions to be essential . . . it proclaims that I am here, I exist, I am strong, I am in control, I am in the field, I am on the map . . . a major tool for penetrating the public consciousness.”¹²⁶ In their last will and testaments, suicide bombers frame self-sacrifice as a test of their identity, courage, and faith.¹²⁷

Feeling morally superior. In the context of empowerment and self-identity as personal awards, it should be mentioned that altruism might be, although not necessarily, the opposite of self-interest, since people who make large sacrifices for a defined cause often feel morally superior to people who do not make as big a sacrifice—even if they avoid admitting it to others.

Revenge. Another powerful appeal of the martyr's self-sacrifice is revenge—be it for a collective loss on behalf of the community, or for the death of a loved one.¹²⁸ In fact, some criminologists claim vengeance to be the most common accountable motive for any terrorist enterprise.¹²⁹ Sana Snif, Safaa Jaber, Hala Jaber, and Arin Ahmad, all of whom were females who failed to complete suicide attack plots, attribute their motivation mostly to revenge. For example, after the suicide attack in Afula, Israel, performed by Hiba Draagma in 2003, she expressed her desire to avenge her sister's arrest for Islamic *jihad* activity.¹³⁰ Such desires to avenge are also stated more emphatically, as by Salah Abed El Hamid Shaker, whose attack killed 18 Israelis in 1995, stating, “I am going to take revenge upon the sons of the monkeys and the pigs.”¹³¹ In another example, Najibullah Zazi, who failed to detonate bombs on the New York City Subway system, declared in his martyrdom video that his attack would be payback for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹³² Accordingly, attack recruiters often exploit such candidates' innocence, enthusiasm, personal distress, and thirst for revenge.¹³³

According to Pedahzur et al.,¹³⁴ martyrdom's benefits are present in “altruistic fatalistic suicide terrorism”: as a suicidal act allegedly “stems from a strong religious conviction in the glorious destiny that awaits the perpetrator in the afterlife, following the fulfillment of his mission on earth.”¹³⁵ That is to say that even altruistic suicide promises a reward in the afterlife.

Social Rewards

The *social* environment is an intrinsic part of martyrdom culture, emphasizing virtues of honor, revenge, and the precedence of family over the self. These ideals legitimize and essentially encourage *Istishad* behavior, glorifying the martyr. As part of this process, favoring the terrorist organization's wishes, individuals

become influenced to blow themselves up—declaring dedication to the cause.¹³⁶ Additionally, the socialization process ultimately offers the martyr substantial social rewards.

The martyr's personal social status upgrade. The martyrs' individual social status and reputation in the community are significantly upgraded by gaining communal approval and celebration.¹³⁷ Not only are they admired and envied by their peers,¹³⁸ their terrorist activities are considered acts of "ultimate patriotism and heroism."¹³⁹ An anonymous Fatah militant recalls: "After recruitment, my social status was greatly enhanced. I got a lot of respect from my acquaintances, and from the young people in the village."¹⁴⁰

Furthermore, having attained the community-wide status of hero and martyr,¹⁴¹ every suicide bomber receives extensive and honorable media coverage.¹⁴² This coverage can be in the form of posters, websites, and public exhibits, for example in murals at the al-Najah University of Nablus.¹⁴³ Alternatively, songs praising the *shahids*, having formed a genre called "revenge songs," are the greatest hits. So too, martyrs' actions are mimicked in children's games.¹⁴⁴ Newly born babies, streets, and terrorist cells are named after them.¹⁴⁵ Their faces adorn playing cards and street posters; their recorded testimonies attract huge audiences, and at their funerals they are celebrated with a fervency that is almost sexual in character—celebrating their entry into heaven.¹⁴⁶ In other words, the martyrs become the "the rock stars" of young Muslim militants.¹⁴⁷

All of these promotional methods contribute to suicide bombers' evolution into "model youth, worthy of emulation."¹⁴⁸ Consequently, the martyr's inspirational identity, promoted by recruitment posters, enhances motivation for fellow terrorists, as the cause now appeals to those seeking power, wealth, and ideology—encouraging them to join as volunteers.¹⁴⁹

Suicide bombers seize the opportunity for personal glory and an admirable place in history through personification of warrior ethos.¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, the suicide act brings the community's endless gratitude for their sacrifice, becoming the subject of martyrdom pamphlets, sermons, and mosque decorations.¹⁵¹

More than mere gratitude, the martyrs' choice to die this heroic death translates into living on as a heroic legacy that future generations will strive to emulate.¹⁵² This is enabled by celebration of the suicide operation's commencement rather than the deaths brought forth.

It is not solely the glory of becoming a fallen martyr that draws Palestinian youth to join a terrorist organization; rather a myriad of social incentives, such as the bond they form with group members.¹⁵³ This appeal of social solidarity is especially worthwhile to jihadist Muslims, as counteracting their emotional reality of alienation sustains them with camaraderie, commiserating over feelings of "Muslim victimhood."¹⁵⁴ In this kinship, individuals revoke personal beliefs to enjoy social solidarity.¹⁵⁵ Many Muslims in Europe, for example, utilize terrorist group alliances as part of their quest for social and emotional support, due to the rejection and alienation by their local societies.¹⁵⁶

The martyr's family's status upgrade. In tandem to the martyr's individual rewards, the martyr's family also undergoes a status upgrade—both socially and monetarily.¹⁵⁷ This familial social status is enhanced through special recognition and honor.¹⁵⁸ The family hosts a wedding-like festival at their house, partially

sponsored by the terror organization, greeting hundreds of guests who arrive to congratulate them. The mother often ululates and dances joyfully over the honor given to her by *Allah*, taking pride in her child's heroic death.¹⁵⁹ In the martyrdom video of Um-Suhaim, he stated: "I have decided to sacrifice myself in the name of *Allah* and for the sake of my family."¹⁶⁰ When discussing the martyrs' rewards, *Sheikh* Mudeiris validates this martyrdom celebration, describing the *shahid* as "enjoying virtues and the ability to perform miracles, which gives us the right to congratulate the *shahid* and his family."¹⁶¹ As one Kashmiri father noted, "everyone treats me with more respect now that I have a martyred son... it encourages more children to join the jihad... it raises the spirit of the entire village."¹⁶²

Familial monetary upgrade. Financial reward can be given to the family by rebuilding their homes¹⁶³ or in direct sums of money, varying from \$5,000 when given for example by Hamas, and up to \$10,000 to \$25,000, when provided by Saddam Hussein, or by the "Martyr's Fund," endorsed by private Saudi donors.¹⁶⁴ Over time, this amount has grown to \$285,000. This money is delivered ceremonially, presented to a parent or close relative of the fallen bomber.¹⁶⁵ Nada Mahdi, who arrived at the ceremony carrying her son to collect a \$25,000 check as compensation for her husband Mohammad's suicide attack, commented, "I am proud of him... May God reward him."¹⁶⁶ Ali Assad is one example among at least 60 other martyrs, such as Muhammad Oumran and Ahmad Youssef, whose families, in exchange for the martyr's death, were given new homes adorned with the martyr's picture and name.¹⁶⁷ The recruiting terror groups embellish this incentive, reassuring the suicide bombers that "their families will be better taken care of in their absence."¹⁶⁸ Alternatively, suicide bombers and their families receive other forms of material support—such as flour, sugar, clothing, and access to better jobs,¹⁶⁹ health care, and schooling. It is often this familial assistance alone that drives the suicide bomber to commit an attack.¹⁷⁰

Method

Our assumption has been that the case of suicide terrorism is an anomaly, not representative of all fundamentalist terrorism. But if the crime theory of Rational Choice validly applies to this case (which appears irrational by definition), it may indeed be applicable to other jihad terrorism cases as well.

The study of suicide terrorists poses empirical limitations; researchers cannot base their studies on interviewing suicide bombers before the act, and it is obviously impossible to interview successful suicide bombers retroactively. However, some studies base their analysis on case studies of failed suicide terrorist attacks. The case study method is especially useful for the current study, focusing on illustrating *why* individuals commit the act of suicide terrorism.¹⁷¹ This study also attempts to infer from the specific case of suicide bombing to patterns of terrorism in general.

Previous SCP and terrorism research has tended to use the script approach to identify how the crime was committed and used this knowledge to devise interventions to remove these opportunities.¹⁷² While this work is valuable, our paper extends the SCP and terrorism approach by offering deep understanding of the suicide bombers' pursuit of self-gratifying rewards to maximize their benefits. We assume that understanding the reward system of suicide bombers can inspire intervention policy to cope with this phenomenon.

The research strategy for studying the case of UFAM is to investigate his real-life context, to identify underlying principles behind what drove him personally to become a suicide bomber. UFAM's case offers novel combinations of causative circumstances, leading to conclusions about UFAM's specific context alone. Yet, if rational behavior can be illustrated, particularly among UFAM's pursuit of rewards, one can gain insights into other cases of Jihadist terrorism.

One of the authors prepared a memorandum based on a tremendous amount of material (on behalf of the United States Department of Justice) to provide the court with information for sentencing.¹⁷³ The case study of UFAM is based on this published memorandum. The materials include interviews by the FBI agents, statements submitted to the court by UFAM, and video released by Al Qaeda about UFAM and the circumstances that encouraged him to try to become a martyr.¹⁷⁴

Through his statements and behavior, rather than by interviewing him directly, a great deal can be learned about UFAM and what provoked his attempt to blow up an aircraft. The following section outlines the main supporting elements of the argument that UFAM fits the profile of the classic martyr as described above, and that his decision to become a suicide bomber is a product of the same *jihadist* reward-incentives kit meant to promote such behavior on a national scale.

The Case Study of Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab (UFAM)

UFAM's declared reasoning for his attack emphasizes fundamental jihadist propaganda, masking the true rational choice he made—intrinsically based on anticipated costs, and religious, social, and personal benefits. As in the case of many other martyrs, UFAM might believe at least some of the jihadist propaganda explaining his specific attack, yet this is evidently not his only motivation for martyrdom. For example, in his statement before the court, he claims his attack was an outcome of the American people being “guilty of the sin, and Obama should pay for the crime.”¹⁷⁵ Contrary to his statement made in court, in his previous FBI debriefing,¹⁷⁶ UFAM claims his mission was not to specifically target the U.S. Rather, he expresses his readiness to pursue whatever *jihad* path others directed him to pursue, regardless of the country or target involved. In fact, UFAM even deems it acceptable to conduct attacks against a Muslim country that neither practices nor supports fundamentalist beliefs.

UFAM's Religious Background and Rewards

As mentioned earlier, the typical religious background of the potential *shahid* is characterized by: (a) deep religious feelings, (b) following the Islamic laws, (c) spending a great deal of time at the mosque, and (d) becoming a student of *Shahada* (martyrdom). UFAM personifies all of these characteristics as seen in the following examples:

Deep religious feeling. UFAM is evidently guided by deep religious feelings, as he wrote to his mother¹⁷⁷:

Allah knows what is best. . . . I ask you for the sake of Allah to let me stay here and come closer to him. This is “insha allah” (God's will) what is best for me spiritually in my worldly affairs and in the hereafter (after this

life). . . . Oh mother don't despair or worry and never lose hope in the mercy of Allah. Read the speech of Allah and its meanings as much as you can. May Allah take care of you wherever you are like you took care of me all my life. May Allah also take care of me wherever I am and I put my full trust in him. I will be fine wherever I am and nothing will happen to me except what Allah has written which there is no escape from wherever I may be. . . . I will come back "Insha Allah" and we will have a happy reunion by the mercy of Allah and his favor. But not now, sooner or a little while later.

UFAM espouses Aulaci's lectures, which distinguish between the holy act of martyrdom and suicide,¹⁷⁸ Islam forbids the latter, as previously noted.

UFAM believes that: "If we are patient and put our trust in *Allah* then he will make whatever he has decreed easy for us. And *Allah* has promised . . . hardship ease will definitely come." In what UFAM believes is his last message to his mother ("my phone will be disposed after this message") he writes: "*Allah* guides us and that Allah saves us from the love of this world and our evil desires." He follows the principle: "God guides people in ways they don't always expect. Then when you receive a message from God it is viewed as religious evidence supporting your commitment."¹⁷⁹ "*Allah* would favor this martyrdom path."¹⁸⁰

When the airplane was approaching U.S. territory, UFAM went to the restroom, washed his face, brushed his teeth, put on cologne, and returned to his seat, saying his final prayers, and only then did he push the plunger on the device.¹⁸¹ Through these acts (prior to pushing the plunger), UFAM prepared for martyrdom by purifying himself—body and soul.

Following the Islamic laws. There is no doubt that UFAM is preoccupied with following the theological protocol of Islamic fundamentalism. He believes that one needs to physically travel and participate in *jihad* to fulfill one's religious obligation. UFAM was never given a *Fatwah* (religious ruling) regarding his decision to commit *jihad*. UFAM believes that no *Fatwah* needs to be issued on that topic,¹⁸² as all Muslims already know that *jihad* is authorized. Moreover, he believes a Muslim is equally as religiously obliged to participate in *jihad* as he is to fast and to pray.¹⁸³

UFAM referred to the religious commandment of donation (which is also one of the five pillars of Islam) repeatedly: "It is binding upon everyone to seek knowledge and to constantly make donations." For example, he donated a few hundred pounds to an organization that supports families of prisoners in the UK.¹⁸⁴

Spending a great deal of time in the mosque. UFAM reveals to the agents that he indeed spent a great deal of time at the mosque, attending various mosques¹⁸⁵ wherever he has traveled or resided. UFAM states that at a certain period he began memorizing the Koran, praying at the mosque, and listening to Aulaci's many lectures on *jihad* and other Islamic topics.

Becoming a student of Shahada (martyrdom). UFAM makes a point to present himself as a student of *Shahada*, while he differentiates between Muslims who are jihadists and those who are not *jihadists*, such as Sheik Yassir Qudhi. While at UCL, UFAM claimed that he did not want to participate in *jihad* and did not subscribe at that time to religious philosophy that supported *jihad*.¹⁸⁶ It was only later, when UFAM felt that God was guiding him to *jihad*, that he "saw the doors open" before

him. In the summer of 2009, UFAM was nearing a two-month break from his course work in Dubai, and he viewed it as a sign from God that he should take this opportunity to travel to Yemen, seek out Aulaqi, and participate in *jihad*. Later, during the *Ramadan*, his conviction became more intense.¹⁸⁷

UFAM's expressed religious devotion to martyrdom, such as fasting (one of the five pillars of Islam), convinced others such as Abdul Aziz that UFAM was ready to become a martyr.¹⁸⁸ Aulaqi suggested that UFAM pray for religious guidance regarding the right time to schedule the flight, and then to travel when he was ready. The group had to reach a level of trust that the martyr would perform the mission. According to UFAM, this matter of trust was delicate. The members of the group routinely approached this very spiritually, praying for guidance about the individual's reliability, as they did in UFAM's case. They would pray until they received a symbolic indication that the selected individual would actually perform the mission, and only then would they develop the required trust.¹⁸⁹

UFAM argues that he does not believe his family bears religious authority to dissuade him from his decision to commit martyrdom.¹⁹⁰ This would have required a command from a powerful religious authority associated with *jihad*, such as Aulaqi, to prevent him from completing his mission, as Aulaqi held all the power to make this decision. UFAM believed he had decided on a path of *jihad*, and destiny and/or fate would determine whether martyrdom would be his path.¹⁹¹

UFAM believes that martyrdom is already assumed to be part of *jihad* and is just one of several ways in which a person can participate in *jihad*.¹⁹² A martyr works with people he trusts to determine whether that is the appropriate course of *jihad* for him. UFAM prayed for guidance from *Allah* seeking *jihad*, and he wanted *Allah* to make it easy for him.¹⁹³

UFAM's Personal Background and Rewards

Martyr's reward. Islamic fundamentalist *jihadists* preach and emphasize martyrdom's meaningful, personal rewards in the eternal life, in the highest gardens of paradise. Interestingly, UFAM mentions this reward briefly when writing to his mother:¹⁹⁴ "I ask you for the sake of *Allah* to let me stay here and *come closer to him*. . . what is best for me spiritually in my worldly affairs and in the *hereafter* [after this life]. . . I will come back . . . and we will have a happy reunion." Yet UFAM does not propose these reinforcements as his reasoning for becoming a martyr. This phenomenon is also characteristic of other martyrs, who believe that revealing their expectations for rewards belittles their act.

Yet, we maintain that the rewards of martyrdom play a significant part for UFAM; when he talks about Aulaqi's possible martyrdom, he stresses his belief that if Aulaqi were to be killed, he would be entitled to a *martyr's reward*. UFAM explains (again, not in the context of his own martyrdom) that there are different tiers of reward for martyrdom.¹⁹⁵ For example, UFAM believes that if the accusations (of soliciting prostitution) against Aulaqi were true, Aulaqi could repent for these sins—enabling his commitment to *jihad* to override such transgressions. He adds that people are imperfect beings who make mistakes.¹⁹⁶ We can therefore infer that UFAM is both concerned and troubled about accounting before God for his committed sins—which committing martyrdom can repent for. UFAM explains that in *Allah's* sliding scale of forgiveness, a *Muslim's punishment of hell* can be annulled

at any time. In the Islamic faith, several of the Muslim's sins can be repented through displaying religious faith and devotion right before death—as *Allah's* mercy overcomes his anger.¹⁹⁷

UFAM values and lectures on black magic: its origins, preventions, and cures. From this, his preoccupation (to say the least) with the unknown and the mystical can be understood. He speaks about *jinn*s (which are frequently mentioned in the *Koran* and the *Haddith*). *Jinn*s are creatures made from fire, which have the properties of light. UFAM believes that *jinn*s frequently possess people, then use the possessed to do their work by proxy.¹⁹⁸ Martyrdom guarantees Paradise and therefore protects one from such evil forces.

UFAM's writings to his mother¹⁹⁹ portray his beliefs and expectations regarding the afterlife: "May *Allah* reward you with *jannah* (paradise), where no soul is unhappy and have a good life for what you've done for me. He is well aware and never forgets. Amen. May peace, serenity and tranquility of *Allah* descend on you always amen. . . . May *Allah* make it a successful and happy event for you all, amen."

Illusion of empowerment and identity. UFAM tells the investigators that he hardened himself to be someone who would do whatever was asked of him in support of the *jihād*.²⁰⁰ He quoted a verse from the article "Constants of *Jihad*," which states, "*fighting has been prescribed for you but you hate it.*" UFAM viewed this statement as parallel to verses from the *Koran*, suggesting that at times one needs to participate in bad acts, such as "fighting to achieve the greater good."²⁰¹ These statements are a classic expression of empowerment, a declaration that he is strong and in control. The fact that he was appointed through a holy command gave him the power to turn innocent people into "collateral damage." UFAM, on the day of his arrest, when asked by a hospital nurse:²⁰² "About today on the plane, don't you consider that harming yourself or others?" UFAM replied: "No, that is martyrdom." UFAM claims that he was resolved to kill, believing in the righteousness of the attack. He perceives himself as a major vessel transforming cruel terror into a sacred mission. In performing the suicide attack, UFAM could demonstrate control over his victims and his own destiny, establishing a new identity and purpose for himself. UFAM told the agents that his motivation was his religious obligation to conduct *jihād*, not hatred toward the U.S.²⁰³ Rather, he was prepared to fulfill his mission of *jihād* against any enemy.²⁰⁴

UFAM's Social Background and Rewards

Glorification, solidarity, and camaraderie. The case of UFAM exemplifies that jihadist sponsors of suicide bombings use a "tool box" of concepts, myths, symbols, ceremonies, and rituals—all of which honor and publicize their "martyrs" and their "heroic" sacrifice. As far as his significant *social* environment is concerned, he is exposed to a culture that provides militant terror propaganda²⁰⁵ via the media, Internet,²⁰⁶ newsletters,²⁰⁷ and other interactions at the mosque and elsewhere.²⁰⁸ UFAM watched propaganda videos²⁰⁹ intended for the *Mujahedeen* community, which glorify martyrs who attacked the secular, corrupt Muslim regimes such as the Yemeni government. The videos were created as propaganda and to provide justification for the attack, as well as to portray the capabilities of Al Qaeda in Yemen.

UFAM found social incentive in joining a terrorist organization, such as the bond to be formed with other group members. He was deeply influenced by a jihadist

who preached in England and elsewhere, and would meet with him intensively (as often as three times a week).²¹⁰ As with other suicide bombers, UFAM found great appeal in social solidarity and camaraderie, as he bonded with other fundamentalists. While residing at Abu Tarak's residence in Sana, Yemen, UFAM spoke regularly with Abu Tarak and with three other individuals who visited him daily, discussing *jihad* and martyrdom with them.²¹¹ UFAM also discussed the concept of *jihad* with Uthmann, who supported *Mujahidin* worldwide as early as 2005. UFAM identified with Aulaqi, who frequently spoke of *jihad* and interacted with other fighters, and while in Yemen, UFAM met with a man from Al Qaeda who further deepened his conviction.²¹²

In this kinship, UFAM forfeited his individual beliefs to enjoy social solidarity and, by his own admission, was highly influenced by leaders that, as we have seen, dictated existential decisions for him. Prior to UFAM's decision to conduct *jihad*, Sheikh Gumi was the most influential person in UFAM's life. Sheikh Aulaqi then replaced Sheikh Gumi for UFAM, as he then became completely committed to Sheikh Aulaqi.²¹³ UFAM claims that if he had been doubtful about conducting *jihad*, he would still have pursued the martyrdom mission. The only way that UFAM would not have done so would be if Aulaqi or Abdul Aziz had for some reason directed him against the mission.²¹⁴ UFAM rationalizes that his exhibiting a submissive and dependent personality constitutes obedience to a religious command—that every Muslim should swear allegiance to a leader.²¹⁵ Manipulated by fundamentalists such as Aulaqi and his internet lectures, UFAM claims that his main motivation for conducting the martyrdom mission included his interpretation of Koranic verses²¹⁶ and his regular attendance at prayers, where he met and interacted with fundamentalist Islamists. UFAM was familiar with all of Aulaqi's lectures, as they were an important motivator, ultimately leading UFAM to decide to participate in *jihad*. In 2005, he began listening to these lectures and reading Aulaqi's writings, motivating him to accept martyrdom as a possibility.²¹⁷

UFAM then participated in the ritual of preparing a martyr's video, after Aulaqi informed him that he would bring down a plane and that he should prepare a video. UFAM spent time thinking about the content of his martyr's video.²¹⁸ On about December 2 or 3, 2009, UFAM made a martyr's video, with the help of two video technicians who provided the equipment. They brought a black flag with Islamic writing for the background, as well as clothing²¹⁹ and other props. It took them approximately 2 or 3 days to film the video.

In terms of his religious and social background, UFAM is a quintessential example of a martyr. The manipulation of Islamic fundamentalist *jihadists* offered UFAM meaningful religious, personal, and social rewards, such as assurance of eternal life in paradise (with all the related benefits), illusion of empowerment, identity, glorification, solidarity, and camaraderie.

UFAM claims that the bomb's failure to explode was mere evidence that it was not his time to die. Insisting that he had not failed to deploy the device properly, he claimed rather that the failed mission could be the result of God wanting to purify him (as he was not ready for martyrdom yet). Since he felt *jihad* was the right decision, nothing could have caused him to reconsider.

Discussion and Conclusions

Contrary to some prior research, we argue that suicide bombing is not mostly motivated by altruism, which favors the goals of one's group/society over pursuing

self-gratifying benefits. Rather, suicide bombing is a result of rational situational choice, based on the decision-making process of evaluating the costs and anticipated benefits of one's actions. UFAM, in his own testimony, claims that the decision to actually pursue *jihad* and become a martyr is an outcome of a decision-making process. Only upon completion of this decision-making process,²²⁰ he argues, could he be certain that martyrdom was the right course of action for him.

Many militant groups structure and package their existing struggle as part of the Islamic tradition of *jihad* and martyrdom. This study presents the extensive socialization and indoctrination mechanisms that promote and breed suicide bombers by building incentives and utilizing ceremonies and rituals for such choices. To better understand suicide terrorism as performed by Islamic extremists, we must realize that whether or not paradise, along with its martyrdom rewards, exists is irrelevant. Rather, what is imperative is the suicide terrorist's belief that it exists. Similar to Pedahzur et al., the findings of this study support the conclusion that: "social structure, together with the individual's subjective point of view, both play a major role in the realm of suicide terrorism."²²¹

To demonstrate that those involved in terrorism base their behavior on rational choice, the study aims to show that even those who kill themselves in suicide attacks, exhibiting seemingly irrational or altruistic behavior, do so while considering future self-gratifying benefits. It is not mostly altruistic motivation that drives individuals to make the ultimate sacrifice; rather, the suicide bombers' self-lethal behavior is rooted in its anticipated costs and benefits. If this reasoning is true, there is no fundamental difference between the motivations of suicide bombers and those of other criminals. Both behaviors are committed to maximizing self-gratifying, beneficial behavior. Therefore, if one can conclude that there is no motivational difference between UFAM as a suicide bomber and other individuals as criminals, one might assume that generally speaking, this motivation can account for that of other suicide bombers as well; however, this will require further research.

We believe that a better understanding of the motivations of suicide bombers can help decision-makers devise organizational and conceptual solutions to defuse the threat of such martyrdom.

Those who differentiate between crime and terrorism heavily base their claim on a major difference existing between the motivations for crime and those for terrorism. Criminals, they argue, are committed to self-gratification, whereas terrorists seek a higher cause.²²² The present article challenges this approach, joining the growing body of knowledge which perceives terrorism in general and suicide bombing in particular to be a crime triggered by egotistical/hedonistic motivations, like that of ordinary criminals.²²³ It is also important to emphasize that we do not deny the centrality of feelings of anger and frustration in triggering acts of terrorism; it is reasonable to assume that these negative sentiments are fertile ground for terrorism and political violence. Yet, these strong sentiments are also common among wider audiences and are not unique to terrorists. In our opinion, it is explicitly the martyrdom reward system that encourages terrorists choosing to commit acts of terror in general, and suicide in particular.

Our study is based especially on a case study of UFAM, and statements of other individuals engaged in suicide terrorist acts. It is important to emphasize that this case provided insight into our argument; however, this is not enough to enable a definitive conclusion. The methodological obstacles posed by this sort of research (in the area of suicide terrorism) make it challenging to reach a wider sample

population. Therefore it is important to encourage further studies (including case studies) to be conducted in this area, so that the “rational choice” perspective of suicide terrorists can be further examined and broader understandings can be reached.

Notes

1. Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (New York: The Free Press, 1951).
2. Antoon Leenaars and Susanne Wenckstern, “Altruistic Suicides: Are They the Same or Different from Other Suicides?,” *Archives of Suicide Research* 8, no. 1 (2004): 131–136; J. W. Reimer, “Durkheim’s ‘Heroic Suicide’ in Military Combat,” *Armed Forces and Society* 25, no. 1 (1998): 103–120; Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005); Ami Pedahzur, Arie Perliger, and Leonard Weinberg, “Altruism and Fatalism: The Characteristics of Palestinian Suicide Terrorists,” *Deviant Behavior* 24 (2003): 405–423.
3. Antoon Leenaars, “Altruistic Suicide: A Few Reflections,” *Archives of Suicide Research* 8, no. 1 (2004): 1–7. Also, see Pedahzur et al., “Altruism and Fatalism” (note 2 above).
4. Bryan Caplan, “Terrorism: The Relevance of the Rational Choice Model,” *Public Choice* 128 (2006): 91–107; Ronald Clarke and Graeme Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006).
5. See also Caplan, “Terrorism: The Relevance of the Rational Choice Model” (note 4 above); also see Clarke and Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (note 4 above).
6. Ronald Clarke and Derek B. Cornish, “Rational Choice,” in R. Paternoster and R. Bachman, eds., *Explaining Criminals and Crime: Essays in Contemporary Criminology Theory* (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 2001), 23–42.
7. The role of handlers is important, maybe as important as the suicide bomber himself. In this article we focus on the motivation of the suicide bomber and how it is influenced by the handlers and the Islamic fundamentalist subculture’s manipulations which promote their goals by building a reward system.
8. A. Margalit, “The Suicide Bombers (Israeli/Palestinian Conflict),” *New York Review of Books* 50, no. 1 (2003): 36–39.
9. Mohammed Hafez, “Rationality, Culture and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers: A Preliminary Theoretical Synthesis and Illustrative Case Study,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 2 (2006): 165–185.
10. Clarke and Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (see note 4 above).
11. *Ibid.*, viii.
12. Clarke and Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (see note 4 above).
13. Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University, 2005), 39; Diego Gambetta, ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); See Hafez, “Rationality, Culture and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers” (note 9 above); see also Pape, *Dying to Win* (note 4 above).
14. Clarke and Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (see note 4 above).
15. *Ibid.*, 11.
16. This in turn will affect the general motivation, since successful attacks have an epidemiological effect while field attacks have a deterrent effect.
17. Joshua D. Freilich and Graeme R. Newman, eds., *Reducing Terrorism Through Situational Crime Prevention*, Crime Prevention Studies (Rockville, MD: National Criminal Justice Reference Service [NCJRS], 2009), 25.
18. Altruism might not be the opposite of self-interest, since feeling morally superior empowers one’s sense of self-identity and could be considered a personal reward (see section entitled “Feeling Morally Superior” under “Personal Rewards”).
19. Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab, 25, of Kaduna, Nigeria, the so-called “underwear bomber,” was sentenced to life in prison as a result of his guilty plea to all eight counts of a federal indictment charging him for his role, on behalf of al-Qaeda, in the attempted Christmas Day 2009 bombing of Northwest Airlines flight 253 over Detroit (See Department of Justice, *Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab Sentenced to Life in Prison for Attempted Bombing of Flight 253 on Christmas Day 2009*, February 16, 2012, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2012/February/12-ag-227.html>).

20. Derek B. Cornish and Ronald Clarke, *The Reasoning Criminal: Rational Choice Perspectives on Offending* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1986).
21. Clarke and Cornish, "Rational Choice" (see note 6 above).
22. John Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1–26.
23. Ronald Clarke, ed., *Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harrow and Heston, 1997).
24. Travis Hirschi, "On the Compatibility of Rational Choice and Social Control Theories of Crime," in D. B. Cornish and R. V. Clarke, eds., *The Reasoning Criminal: Rational Choice Perspectives on Offending* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1986), 105–117.
25. Marcus Felson and Ronald V. G. Clarke, *Opportunity Makes the Thief: Practical Theory for Crime Prevention*, Police Research Series, Paper 98 (London: Home Office, Policing and Reducing Crime Unit, Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, 1998).
26. Clarke and Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (see note 4 above), 5.
27. See also Laura Dugan, Gary LaFree, Alex R. Piquero, "Testing a Rational Choice Model of Airline Hijackings," in Paul Kantor et al., eds., *Intelligence and Security Informatics* (Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2005), 340–361, who used the Rational Choice Theory of crime to show how the use of metal detectors in American airports reduced airline hijacking dramatically.
28. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers" (see note 9 above).
29. Debra Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (Carlisle, PA: The Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2004), 7.
30. We emphasize that in this article we are referring only to Islamic jihadists and not other forms of suicide terrorism like LTTE.
31. Ahmed M. Abdul-Khalek, "Neither Altruistic Suicide, nor Terrorism but Martyrdom: A Muslim Perspective," *Archives of Suicide Research* 8, no. 1 (2004): 99–113; Anat Berko, Yuval Wolf, and Moshe Addad, "The Moral Infrastructure of Chief Perpetrators of Suicidal Terrorism," *ICT Papers* (2004): 1–17, <http://www.ict.org.il/Article/903/The%20Moral%20Infrastructure%20of%20Chief%20Perpetrators%20of%20Suicidal%20Terrorism>; Boaz Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview," *ICT Papers* (2000): 1–6; Mohammed Hafez, "Martyrdom Mythology in Iraq: How Jihadists Frame Suicide Terrorism in Videos and Biographies," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19 (2007): 95–115, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/>; Yoram Schweitzer, "Suicide and the September 11 Attacks," *ICT Papers* (2003): 1–9.
32. Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview" (see note 31 above); Bradley Thayer and Valerie Hudson, "Sex and the Shaheed: Insights from the Life Sciences on Islamic Suicide Terrorism," *International Security* 34, no. 4 (2010): 37–62.
33. Jerrold Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-Cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism," *Political Psychology* 26, no. 4 (2005): 615–636, 627.
34. Steven Stalinsky, *Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000–2003*, The Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Report No. 24 (2003), <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/1027.htm>.
35. Ibid.
36. Scott Atran, "The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 127–147; Berko, Wolf, and Addad, "The Moral Infrastructure of Chief Perpetrators of Suicidal Terrorism" (see note 31 above); Anat Berko and Edna Erez, "'Ordinary People' and 'Death Work': Palestinian Suicide Bombers as Victimizers and Victims," *Violence and Victims* 20, no. 6 (2005): 603–623; see Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview" (note 31 above); Hafez, "Rationality, Culture and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers" (see note 9 above); Hafez, "Martyrdom Mythology in Iraq" (see note 31 above).
37. Adam Lankford, "Could Suicide Terrorists Actually Be Suicidal?," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 4 (2011): 337–366, 340.
38. Peter Warren Singer, "The New Children of Terror," in J. J. F. Forest, ed., *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training, and Root Causes* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 105–119; Scott Atran, "Genesis of Suicide Terrorism," *Science (New York, N.Y.)* 299, no. 5612 (2003): 1534–1539.

39. Atran, "Genesis of Suicide Terrorism" (see note 38 above); see also Ariel Merari, "Suicide Terrorism in the Context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" (paper presented at the National Institute of Justice Suicide Terrorism Conference, October, 2004), 25–26; Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone" (see note 33 above).
40. Atran, "Genesis of Suicide Terrorism" (see note 38 above), 1536.
41. Unlike those who commit suicide to fulfill their personal desire to die, as explained by a Palestinian prisoner, martyrdom "is not suicide. Suicide is selfish, it is weak, it is mentally disturbed, this is *istishad*" (A. Silke, "The Role of Suicide in Politics, Conflict, and Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, no. 1 (2006): 35–46, 43).
42. Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (see note 29 above).
43. <http://www.danielpipes.org/blog/2005/08/can-infidels-be-innocents>
44. Berko, Wolf, and Addad, "The Moral Infrastructure of Chief Perpetrators of Suicidal Terrorism" (see note 31 above); Pedahzur et al., "Altruism and Fatalism" (see note 2 above).
45. Nasra Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers: Talking to the Human Bombs," *The New Yorker*, November 19, 2001, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/11/19/an-arsenal-of-believers>.
46. Berko and Erez, "'Ordinary People' and 'Death Work': Palestinian Suicide Bombers as Victimizers and Victims" (see note 36 above); Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview" (see note 31 above); Assaf Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivations and Organizational Aspects," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 26 (2003): 65–92.
47. Laurence Miller, "The Terrorist Mind: I. A Psychological and Political Analysis," *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 50, no. 2 (2006): 121–138.
48. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above).
49. Ibid.
50. Clara Beyler, "Chronology of Suicide Bombings Carried out by Women," *ICT Papers* (2003), 1–3.
51. Lankford, "Could Suicide Terrorists Actually Be Suicidal?" (see note 37 above), 341.
52. Thayer and Hudson, "Sex and the Shaheed" (see note 32 above).
53. Ibid., 42.
54. Beyler, "Chronology of Suicide Bombings Carried out by Women" (see note 50 above); Thayer and Hudson, "Sex and the Shaheed" (see note 32 above).
55. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above).
56. Arie W. Kruglanski and Agnieszka Golec, "Individual Motivations, the Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism," in E. M. Meyersson Milgrom, ed., *Suicide Missions and the Market for Martyrs: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~hannahk/Terrorism_files/GroupProcess.pdf.
57. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above).
58. Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview" (see note 31 above), 3.
59. Israeli Security Service (Shabak), *Female Involvement in Palestinian Terrorism* [in Hebrew] (Israel: Author, September 2007), 12–18, <http://www.shabak.gov.il/publications/study/Pages/women-terror.aspx?webid=a3db3c16-25d8-423d-98df-eb1b9253ab93>.
60. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imx0ANxUmY>
61. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above); Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada" (see note 46 above); Singer, "The New Children of Terror" (see note 38 above); Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (see note 29 above).
62. Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada" (see note 46 above); Stalinsky, *Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000–2003* (see note 34 above); Thayer and Hudson, "Sex and the Shaheed" (see note 32 above).
63. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above).
64. http://www.palwatch.org.il/main.aspx?fi=111&fld_id=111&doc_id=4390
65. Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada" (see note 46 above).
66. Berko and Erez, "'Ordinary People' and 'Death Work'" (see note 36 above).
67. Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview" (see note 31 above); Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above); Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (see note 29 above); Hafez, "Rationality, Culture and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers" (see note 9 above); Singer, "The New Children of Terror" (see note 38 above).

68. Singer, "The New Children of Terror" (see note 38 above), 111.
69. Stalinsky, *Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000–2003* (see note 34 above).
70. Kanan Makiya and Hassan Mneimneh, "Manual for a 'Raid,'" *New York Review of Books*, January 17, 2002, 1–13, 9.
71. Jack Kelley, "The Sickening World of Suicide Terrorists," *USA Today*, June 26, 2001, 1.
72. *Ibid.*, 1.
73. Hafez, "Martyrdom Mythology in Iraq" (see note 31 above), 109.
74. *Ibid.*, 105.
75. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZADVmQLEW8>
76. Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada" (see note 46 above).
77. Singer, "The New Children of Terror" (see note 38 above).
78. Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations, the Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism" (see note 56 above).
79. Kelley, "The Sickening World of Suicide Terrorists" (see note 71 above).
80. Berko and Erez, "'Ordinary People' and 'Death Work'" (see note 36 above).
81. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3-kY7J3c4c>
82. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS5j-PLY3TU>
83. Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations, the Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism" (see note 56 above), 7–9.
84. A. Kruglanski, X. Chen, M. Dechesne, S. Fishman, and E. Orehek, "Fully Committed: Suicide Bombers' Motivation and the Quest for Personal Significance," *Political Psychology* 30, no. 3 (2009): 331–357.
85. Singer, "The New Children of Terror" (see note 38 above).
86. Stalinsky, *Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000–2003* (see note 34 above).
87. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers" (see note 9 above).
88. *Ibid.*, 8.
89. Berko et al., "The Moral Infrastructure of Chief Perpetrators of Suicidal Terrorism" (see note 31 above), 18.
90. Israeli Secret Service, *Female Involvement in Palestinian Terrorism* (see note 59 above).
91. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/>
92. Hafez, "Martyrdom Mythology in Iraq" (see note 31 above).
93. Ann Aly and Jason Striegher, "Examining the Role of Religion in Radicalization to Violent Islamist Extremism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 35, no. 12 (2012): 849–862; see also Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada" (note 46 above); see also Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone" (note 33 above).
94. Jerrold Post, "Reframing of Martyrdom and Jihad and the Socialization of Suicide Terrorists," *Political Psychology* 30, no. 3 (2009): 381–385, 382.
95. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above).
96. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jan/12/books.guardianreview5/print>
97. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers" (see note 9 above), 12.
98. Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone" (see note 33 above), 624.
99. Atran, "The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism" (see note 32), 6.
100. Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations, the Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism" (see note 56 above).
101. *Ibid.*
102. Kruglanski et al., "Fully Committed" (see note 84 above).
103. Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada" (note 46 above); Richardson, *What Terrorists Want* (Vienna, Austria: Renner Institute, 2007); see also Singer, "The New Children of Terror" (see note 38 above).
104. Martha Crenshaw, "Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A Review Essay," *Security Studies* 16, no. 1 (January–March 2007): 133–162.
105. Singer, "The New Children of Terror" (see note 38 above), 113.
106. Anna Schbley, "Torn Between God, Family, and Money: The Changing Profile of Lebanon's Religious Terrorists," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 23, no. 3 (2010): 175–196.

107. Simon Cottee and Keith Hayward, "Terrorist (E) motives: The Existential Attractions of Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 12 (2011): 963–986, 977.
108. Cottee and Hayward, "Terrorist (E) motives" (see note 107 above), 979.
109. Post, "Reframing of Martyrdom and Jihad and the Socialization of Suicide Terrorists" (see note 94 above), 382.
110. Laura Trevelyan: "Shoe-bomber Supergrass Saajid Badat Testifies in US," *BBC News*, April 23, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-17820810>.
111. Singer, "The New Children of Terror" (see note 38 above), 8).
112. Trevelyan, "Shoe-bomber Supergrass Saajid Badat Testifies in US" (see note 110 above).
113. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7XUN3H2hSk&playnext=1&list=PL7C586018A4EE9C86&feature=results_main.
114. Berko et al., "The Moral Infrastructure of Chief Perpetrators of Suicidal Terrorism" (see note 31 above); Crenshaw, "Explaining Suicide Terrorism" (see note 104 above); Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada" (note 46 above); Israeli Secret Service, *Female Involvement in Palestinian Terrorism* (see note 59 above).
115. Max Abrahams, "What Terrorists Really Want," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (2008): 78–105; Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations, the Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism" (see note 56 above); Michael Taarnby, Profiling Islamic Suicide Terrorists (Aarhus: Center for Cultural Research, University of Aarhus, November 27, 2003), 8; Pedahzur et al., "Altruism and Fatalism" (see note 2 above).
116. Don Van Natta, Jr., "Big Bang Theory: The Terror Industry Fields Its Ultimate Weapon," *The New York Times*, August 24, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/24/weekinreview/big-bang-theory-the-terror-industry-fields-its-ultimate-weapon.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>.
117. Cottee and Hayward, "Terrorist (E) motives" (see note 107 above), 976; Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above).
118. Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations, the Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism" (see note 56 above); Taarnby, "Profiling Islamic Suicide Terrorists" (see note 115 above).
119. Cottee and Hayward, "Terrorist (E) motives" (see note 107 above); Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations" (see note 56 above).
120. Cottee and Hayward, "Terrorist (E) motives" (see note 107 above).
121. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers" (note 9 above); Thayer and Hudson, "Sex and the Shaheed" (see note 32 above).
122. Merari, *Suicide Terror in the Context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (see note 39 above).
123. Kruglanski et al., "Fully Committed" (see note 84 above); Singer, "The New Children of Terror" (see note 38 above).
124. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above).
125. Nichole Argo, *Human Bombs: Rethinking Religion and Terror*, MIT Center for International Studies Audit of the Conventional Wisdom, 06-07, April 2006, http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/argo_audit_4.06.pdf.
126. Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone" (see note 33 above), 623.
127. Hafez, "Martyrdom Mythology in Iraq" (see note 31 above).
128. Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview" (see note 31 above); Mohammed Hafez, *Manufacturing Human Bombs: Strategy, Culture, and Conflict in the Making of Palestinian Suicide Terrorism* (Washington DC: National Institute of Justice, 2004); Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada" (note 46 above); Berko and Erez, "'Ordinary People' and 'Death Work'" (see note 36 above); Richardson, *What Terrorists Want* (see note 103 above); Silke, "The Role of Suicide in Politics, Conflict, and Terrorism" (see note 41 above).
129. Richardson, *What Terrorists Want* (see note 103 above); Pedahzur et al., "Altruism and Fatalism" (see note 2 above).
130. Israeli Secret Service, *Female Involvement in Palestinian Terrorism* (see note 59 above).
131. Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview" (see note 31 above), 3.
132. Phil Hirschhorn, "Najibullah Zazi's Martyrdom Video," *CBS News*, April 19, 2012. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/would-be-subway-suicide-bomber-najibullah-zazi-speaks/>.

133. Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (see note 29 above).
134. Pedahzur et al., "Altruism and Fatalism" (see note 2 above).
135. *Ibid.*, 410.
136. Taarnby, "Profiling Islamic Suicide Terrorists" (see note 115 above).
137. Hafez, "Martyrdom Mythology in Iraq" (see note 31 above); Taarnby, "Profiling Islamic Suicide Terrorists" (see note 115 above); Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (see note 29 above).
138. Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations" (see note 56 above).
139. Merari, *Suicide Terror in the Context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (see note 39 above), 6.
140. Jerrold Post, Ehud Sprinzak, and Laurita Denny, "The Terrorists in Their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 171–184.
141. Kruglanski et al., "Fully Committed" (see note 84 above).
142. Argo, "Human Bombs: Rethinking Religion and Terror" (see note 125 above); Cottee and Hayward, "Terrorist (E) motives" (see note 107 above).
143. Hafez, "Martyrdom Mythology in Iraq" (see note 31 above).
144. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above); Merari, *Suicide Terror* (see note 39 above).
145. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above); Kelley, "The Sickening World of Suicide Terrorists" (see note 71 above).
146. Cottee and Hayward, "Terrorist (E) motives" (see note 107 above); Hafez, "Martyrdom Mythology in Iraq" (see note 31 above); Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above).
147. Cottee and Hayward, "Terrorist (E) motives" (see note 107 above); Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations, the Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism" (see note 56 above).
148. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above).
149. Kelley, "The Sickening World of Suicide Terrorists" (see note 71 above); Dominic Rohner and Bruno Frey, "Blood and Ink! The Common-Interest-Game Between Terrorists and the Media," *Public Choice* 133 (2007): 129–145; Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (see note 29 above).
150. Cottee and Hayward, "Terrorist (E) motives" (see note 107 above); Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations, the Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism" (see note 56 above); Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (see note 29 above).
151. Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers" (see note 45 above); Kelley, "The Sickening World of Terrorists" (see note 71 above); Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations" (see note 56 above); Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone" (see note 33 above).
152. Hafez, "Martyrdom Mythology in Iraq" (see note 31 above); Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations" (see note 56 above); Taarnby, "Profiling Islamic Suicide Terrorists" (see note 115 above).
153. Eli Berman and David Laitin, *Rational Martyrs vs. Hard Targets: Evidence on the Tactical Use of Suicide Attacks* (Paper presented at conference at the University of Chicago, October 26, 2004); see also Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations" (see note 56 above); Taarnby, "Profiling Islamic Suicide Terrorists" (see note 115 above); Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone" (see note 33 above); Arie Kruglanski and S. Fishman, "The Psychology of Terrorism: 'Syndrome' Versus 'Tool' Perspectives," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, (2006): 193–215; Kruglanski et al., "Fully Committed" (see note 84 above).
154. Phil Davis and Kim Cragin, *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together* (Santa Monica, CA: National Defense Research Institute, 2009); Argo, "Human Bombs" (see note 125 above).
155. Berman and Laitin, *Rational Martyrs vs. Hard Targets* (see note 153 above).
156. Kruglanski et al., "Fully Committed" (see note 84 above).
157. Caplan, "Terrorism: The Relevance of the Rational Choice Model" (see note 4 above); Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview" (see note 31 above); Kelley, "The Sickening World of Suicide Terrorists" (see note 71 above); Kruglanski and Golec, "Individual Motivations" (see note 56 above); Kruglanski and Fishman, "The Psychology of Terrorism" (see note 153 above); Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada" (see

note 46 above); Post, Sprinzak, and Denny, “The Terrorists in Their Own Words” (see note 140 above); Post, “When Hatred is Bred in the Bone” (see note 33 above), 623; Schbley, “Torn Between God, Family, and Money” (see note 106 above); Singer, “The New Children of Terror” (see note 38 above); Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (see note 29 above).

158. Hafez, “Rationality, Culture and Structure” (see note 9 above); Moghadam, “Palestinian Suicide Terrorism” (see note 46 above); Singer, “The New Children of Terror” (see note 38 above); Taarnby, “Profiling Islamic Suicide Terrorists” (see note 115 above); Zedalis, *Female Suicide Bombers* (see note 29 above).

159. Hassan, “An Arsenal of Believers” (see note 45 above); Singer, “The New Children of Terror” (see note 38 above).

160. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OsfXwlqpJI>

161. Stalinsky, *Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000–2003* (see note 34 above), 2.

162. Singer, “The New Children of Terror” (see note 38 above), 113.

163. Post, Sprinzak, and Denny, “The Terrorists in Their Own Words” (see note 140 above).

164. Caplan, “Terrorism” (see note 4 above); Singer, “The New Children of Terror” (see note 38 above), 113.

165. John Yang, “Saddam Rewards Suicide Bombers’ Families,” *ABC News*, January 2, <http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/story?id=129914&page=1>.

166. *Ibid.*

167. Schbley, “Torn Between God, Family, and Money” (see note 106 above).

168. Singer, “The New Children of Terror” (see note 38 above), 113.

169. Singer, “The New Children of Terror” (see note 38 above).

170. Berman and Laitin, *Rational Martyrs vs. Hard Targets* (see note 153 above); Hafez, “Rationality, Culture, Structure” (see note 9 above); Schbley, “Torn Between God, Family, and Money” (see note 106 above); Singer, “The New Children of Terror” (see note 38 above).

171. Contrarily, the quantitative research methods (such as surveys, for example) focus on describing: “who,” “what,” “where,” “how many,” and “how much.”

172. Clarke and Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (see note 4 above); Freilich and Newman, *Reducing Terrorism* (see note 17 above).

173. Simon Perry, Memorandum for the Court: “The Level of Danger Posed by Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab” (the Defendant). U. S. DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN SOUTHERN DIVISION, CASE NO. 2:10-cr-20005, HONORABLE NANCY G. EDMUNDS, 2012, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/documents/umar-farouk-abdul-mutallab-sentence-brief.pdf>.

174. References in this memorandum to UFAM’s statements refer to the reports of interviews during his debriefings, unless otherwise indicated. The data includes materials from interviews by FBI agents, statements to the court by Mr. Abdul Mutallab, and video of Mr. Abdul Mutallab released by Al Qaeda about him and the circumstances that encouraged him to try to commit martyrdom.

175. References in this memorandum to UFAM’s statements refer to the reports of interviews of his debriefings conducted by the FBI (unless otherwise indicated).

176. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on February 15, 2010, 2.

177. A copy of a text message sent by UFAM to his family approximately three months before his mission.

178. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on February 8, 2010, 10.

179. *Ibid.*

180. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on January 29, 2010, 10.

181. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on January 30, 2010, 11–12; February 12, 2010, 8.

182. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on February 5, 2010, 4.

183. *Ibid.*, 2.

184. *Ibid.*, 7–8.

185. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on December 25, 2009, 2; February 9, 2010, 8; February 23, 2010, 2.

186. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on February 8, 2010, 7.

187. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on January 31, 2010, 11.

188. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on February 9, 2009, 5.

189. UFAM’s debriefing by the FBI on February 2, 2010, 3.

190. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 8, 2010, 9.
191. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 9, 2010, 3.
192. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 5, 2010.
193. *Ibid.*, 3, 6.
194. A copy of a text message sent by UFAM to his family approximately three months before his mission.
195. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on April 16, 2010, 2.
196. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 15, 2010, 3; February 19, 2010, 3.
197. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 5, 2010.
198. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on January 31, 2010, 7.
199. From a copy of a text message sent by UFAM to his family approximately three months before his mission.
200. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on January 31, 2010, 5.
201. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 15, 2010, 1.
202. Julia Longnecker's interview by the FBI on December 29, 2009, 1–2.
203. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 23, 2010, 4.
204. Once again as explained above (p. 15 of this memorandum), what UFAM said when interviewed by FBI agents is a direct contradiction of a later statement in court upon the entry of his guilty plea.
205. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on January 30, 2010, 6.
206. See note 204 above, 1–2.
207. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on January 29, 2010.
208. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on December 25, 2009, 2.
209. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 2, 2010, 4.
210. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on January 31, 2010, 6.
211. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on December 25, 2009.
212. *Ibid.*, 3.
213. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 8, 2010.
214. *Ibid.*
215. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 9, 2010, 4.
216. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on January 29, 2010, 10.
217. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 5, 2010, 3.
218. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on January 29, 2010, 15; February 9, 2010, 7.
219. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on January 29, 2010, 16.
220. UFAM's debriefing by the FBI on February 15, 2010.
221. Pedahzur et al. (see note 2 above), 420.
222. Clarke and Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (see note 4 above).
223. Consistent with this perspective on the martyr's cost-benefit calculation, Shughart (2011 p. 130) argues that: "an individual's decision to engage in terrorist activity, alone or in an organized group, requires a weighing of the probable benefits and costs to himself or herself personally"; see W. F. Shughart, II, "Terrorism in Rational Choice Perspective," in C. J. Coyne and R. L. Mathers, eds., *The Handbook on the Political Economy of War* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011), 126–153.