Suicide Terrorism and Psychology of Suicide Bomber

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Abstract

This article reviews suicide terrorism and existing understandings of the psychology of suicide bomber. Suicide attacks that take place in many different parts of the world are one of the most used methods by the terrorist organizations. Suicide terrorism as a type of terrorism carried out by suicide bombers wearing bomb vests or by assembled bomb vehicles attracts a lot of attention globally. Throughout human history, some people may attempt suicide at some point in their lives, and some of these attempts end in death. Suicide is an act of self-punishment and deliberate separation from the world. In other words, suicide is a pathological behavior that a person consciously does with the aim of ending his life and ends with success. The act of killing one's own life, which a person cannot make sense of and regards as abnormal, is such a complex and painful event. In this study, terror, suicide terrorism, suicide bombing will be studied, and the psychology of the suicide bomber will be examined.

Keywords: Psychology, suicide bomber, suicide terrorism, terrorism

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism and especially suicide terrorism is among the most important political events and the one of the dangers for daily life. Suicide terrorism is a mainly deadly expression of political violence that has increased in occurrence since the early 1980s.[1] Besides, suicide attacks are seen as a newsworthy event with a wide scope in terms of media.[2] The suicide attacks, which were initially observed only in some areas, later gained both an international and a global dimension after the terrorist attacks of Al-Qaeda in New York on 9/11.

SUICIDE CONCEPT

The act of killing one's own life, which a person cannot make sense of and regards as abnormal, is such a complex and painful event. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to make a definition of suicide acceptable to everyone. Because, in order to explain a subject related to suicide, a definition based on a solid foundation is required. The emergence of the concept of suicide is relatively recent. Although it consists of Latin words, it is not Latin. The first date of use as suicide in English is in 1662. Different definitions of suicide have been made by psychologists and psychiatrists. Sui, which means "killing oneself" in Latin; and "cedere" to kill, passed from "suicedere" to English as "suicide (killing yourself)."[3] According to the data

of the World Health Organization, suicides are one of the ten leading causes of death in developed countries.

Throughout human history, some people may attempt suicide at some point in their lives, and some of these attempts end in death. Suicidal ideation and behavior are an action that is opposite to the desire to experience.[4] Freud defined suicide as "a fatal attack on an object whose source is intruded." Berman and Jobes[5] defined suicide as a process that takes place at different levels but does not have to follow each other.

Suicide is an act of self-punishment and deliberate separation from the world. In other words, suicide is a pathological behavior that a person consciously does with the aim of ending his life and ends with success.[6] Suicide has been described in the medical language as an attempt to kill oneself resulting in death. However, not every suicide attempt results in death. Therefore, a new concept related to suicide has emerged in the medical language. When the person is reached, the cases

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that have not yet resulted in death are referred to as "suicide attempt" in the medical narration. Problem-solving skills of individuals have also been found to be associated with suicidal behavior.[7] The following concepts about suicide are important:[8]

Suicidal ideation

Suicidal ideation is the formation in the mind of the individual of the images of negative behaviors related to their own life.

Suicide attempt

People who threaten their surroundings to kill themselves to obtain certain demands and fail to respond to these threats, take token attitudes to show that they are not joking and that they can actually kill themselves. For example, the person informs a relative by phone that they have taken drugs and will commit suicide. Thus, it allows him to come and save himself. This is called a "suicide attempt." Nevertheless, this showpiece attitude can sometimes result in suicide.

Real suicide

The most basic condition in the behavior called true suicide is the death of the action. However, as stated, in some cases, although the aim of the person is not to die, his action may result in death.

Suicide is any death event that is the direct or indirect result of a positive or negative action committed by the deceased person, knowing that it will result in death. Suicide attempt, on the other hand, is the verb that is defined in this way but is stopped before death.[9] Durkheim explained that an individual behavior such as suicide, social factors can be found and therefore society should be handled with scientific methods. Durkheim stated that it is not possible to explain suicide with factors such as mental illness, illusion, climate, and air temperature, that social factors are the main cause and tried to prove this argument. Durkheim sociologically categorizes suicide types into four groups:[10]

Egoistic (selfish) suicide

It is suicide that occurs as a result of the individual's inability to integrate with his social environment. In a sense, the weakening or breaking of the social bond of the individual increases the suicidal tendency. For example, he claims that the members of the Catholic Church have less suicidal tendencies because they are more integrated into society. Durkheim argues that weakened family ties increase egoistic suicide rates. Suicidal tendencies are weakened in proportion to the strength of family ties. According to him, the main determinant here is not the personality traits of family members but the strength of family ties. For this reason, the egoistic suicidal tendencies of singles are higher than those of married people.

Altruistic suicide

This type of suicide is the opposite of egoistic suicide. It is due to the person's strong bond with the society. Here, the individual commits suicide in accordance with group rules and norms. For example, in Indian castes, it is stated that a widow is expected to burn her at the funeral pyre. According to Durkheim, among soldiers who attach great importance to the concept of loyalty, suicide rates are higher than among civilians. Again, the bonds between Japanese families are extremely tight and the suicide rate in Japan is still higher than in other societies. Durkheim argued that both extreme individualism and extreme socialism (or commitment to society) also increase the suicide rates. When the group becomes more important than the individual, individuals can sacrifice their own lives much more easily. The hara kiri tradition among the Japanese is another example of altruistic suicide.

Anomic suicide

For Durkheim, anomic suicide is a form of suicide that results from the dissolution of society's norms. Especially in times of economic crisis, the rules (norms) that hold society together are dissolved. It becomes difficult for people to find criteria that they can use in their behavior. As a matter of fact, a sudden rise in suicide rates is witnessed in times of crisis. A positive or negative interruption in an individual's life is extremely stressful. In a stable society, people more or less predict what might happen and adjust their expectations accordingly. A sudden change in the economic order, positive or negative, removes borders. Standards of what is good and bad become ambiguous, and traditional behavioral patterns are no longer guiding. The line between success and failure gets blurred. It is also stated that the rate of anomic suicide is high in countries where divorce is high or easy.

Fatalist suicide

Durkheim did not clearly identify this type of suicide. It is the opposite of anomic suicide; it results from the strictness of the rules that put pressure on the individual. Durkheim cites slaves as an example. However, Durkheim explained this type of suicide only as a footnote. A suicide incident can resemble more than one type of suicide. For example, Durkheim states that when people divorce, egoism and anomy go hand in hand. To sum up, Durkheim identified three main types of suicide and tried to reveal the underlying sociological factors. Durkheim's work is extremely important for those who advocate the determination of society in the relationship between individual and society. On the other hand, instead of looking at the issue in a narrow deterministic relationship such as "individual or society determines society or individual," it is more correct to think of it as a process of interaction.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF SUICIDE

Suicide is seen in a wide range from normal people in stressful living conditions to abnormal people with mental disorders. When a person encounters a traumatic event, he/she cannot think of different alternatives that will help him/her and ultimately resorts to suicide.[11] Suicide occurs in all age groups but is more common among adolescents.[12]

Approximately 0.9% of all deaths in the world occur as a result of suicide.[13] It is known that there is a close relationship between suicidal ideation and behavior and

psychiatric disorders. It is known that the incidence of suicide in psychiatric patients is 5–40 times higher than the other groups. Studies have shown that 90% of people who kill themselves are depressed. In addition to depression and other mental illnesses, bad life events also increase the risk of suicide. Suicidal ideation is an action against the urge to survive and is considered a psychiatric disorder.[14] Suicide is more common in some diagnosis groups in the psychiatric disorders. The average number of suicide attempts is 2.9 in 100 cases of depression with an average duration of 12 years, an average number of attacks of 3, approximately half of whom attempted suicide, and the other half did not. Suicide attempts mostly occur at the beginning of the illness period. Therefore, it can be considered that suicide attempts are not caused by hopelessness due to the recurrence of the disease.[15] It has been previously described that psychiatric disorders are a risk factor for suicidal behavior.[16] Genetic aspects of suicidal attempt behavior have also been shown, and suicidal behavior and psychiatric diseases were found to be higher than the population average in families of those with suicidal behavior.[17] Suicide attempts and suicide probability are also high in antisocial personality. Depending on the basic personality traits of these people, getting into trouble, going to jail, unemployment, and divorce are common situations. These strengthen the suicidal tendencies. In borderline personality disorder, destructive tendencies toward himself are observed more frequently.[15]

On the other hand, it is observed that people with high levels of depression and anxiety have poor problem-solving skills and ability to cope with stressful situations, and individuals with depression are less successful in implementing problem-solving plans than other individuals.[18] Freud dealt with suicide mostly with the mourning and depression process. While the mourning process is experienced with the loss of a real object, the depression process begins with the loss of the love object that is fed with ambivalent feelings and taken.[19] Freud redefined suicide as "the sacrifice of the self by a sadistic superego."[19] Schneidman argues that psychological pain is the cause of suicide. Stating that suicide will occur when psychological pain is accepted as unbearable by a person, Schneidman[20] defined the behavior of a person who feels guilty or depressed or has an overwhelming subconscious anger as suicide.[21] Disregarding all of biology and genetics, Professor Shneidman stated that suicide is essentially psychological pain.[22]

Another psychological factor is despair. Hopelessness is a cognitive state that includes low expectation that the individual will reach his goals, low motivation accompanied by a feeling of personal emptiness, and the belief that the future will only produce negative consequences.[23] Major depression is one of the mental disorders in which suicide is most common. According to studies, the rate of suicide with major depression was found to be 6%–15%.[24] Immediate stressful life events, such as the death of a spouse or loss of a job, falling into prison, suffering from a serious general medical illness also increase the risk of suicide.

SUICIDE TERRORISM

Most of the scholars explain suicide terrorism as politically motivated violence that necessarily requires the death of the perpetrator along with his or her target/s in order for the attack to be successful.[25] In environments with civilians, such as in a plane, a bus, a shopping mall, a restaurant, suicide attacks have been very effective and watched by the media, as they cause civilian casualties and create a very serious atmosphere of fear in the society. Nevertheless, even though most part of the World met suicide attacks during 9/11 attack in New York, it has been a very long phenomenon in different parts, especially in the Middle East.

Considering the effects of acts of terrorist organizations that disrupt and threaten the security of the society, such as intimidation, creating chaos in the society, and killing, suicide bombing and suicide terrorism have always been the most monitored events. Suicide attacks that take place in many different parts of the world are one of the most used methods by terrorist organizations. Suicide terrorism as a type of terrorism, carried out by suicide bombers wearing bomb vests or by assembled bomb vehicles, attracts a lot of attention globally.[26] The purpose of this is to create a very serious atmosphere of fear in the society by terrorizing the society more. As in all terrorist acts, it is not clear where, when and by whom, states and security officials always try to take necessary security measures and try to protect their citizens from terrorist acts.

It is important to better understand the phenomenon of suicide bombing and to make more efficient analyses on the subject. Besides, it is very valuable for terrorist organizations in terms of the mood and psychological state of people who give up their lives. In most of the studies on suicide terrorism and suicide bombers, issues such as the terrorist organizations that the bombers are affiliated with, the socio-economic structure of the bombers have been studied, but there are also studies on the psychological conditions of the bomber, although not in a small number. Most researchers and intelligence analysts lean toward to outline the biographies of dead suicide bombers by portraying on media reports and journalists' interviews with relatives and friends, by interviewing the terrorists' surviving victims, and by conducting analyses of the terrorists' public statements.[27]

Modern history has been no less influenced by the use of suicide tactics, the most well-known example being the Japanese Kamikaze pilots of World War II. Regardless of the wide variety of tactics each individual suicide attacker engaged, one noteworthy similarity can be differentiated: Suicide tactics tend to be used when a weaker force believes that less drastic measures will be ineffective against a materialistically superior opponent.[28] Suicide terrorism has struck across the globe; attacks have been carried out in both North and South America, in the Middle East, in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia basically every part of the world. More than any other terrorist tactic, suicide assaults are the ones most likely to result in fatalities among the terrorist's targets,

and they are also the assaults most difficult for security and government authorities to defend against.[20]

One of the oldest terrorist organizations is the "Assasins"[29] and founder of the group was Hasan Sabbah. Assassin's has created an effective organization based on being successful in suicide missions.[27] Modern age terrorist groups are somehow still using the same tactics as Assassins.

Following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the ethnic and sectarian discrimination in Iraq and the consequences of the Syrian civil war from 2011 to this time led to the emergence of terrorist organizations such as ISIS in the region, and the terrorist acts of these terrorist organizations are already in the Western world. It caused their ambivalent attitudes to reinforce and caused them to use Islam and terror together at every opportunity. With the declaration of the so-called caliphate by ISIS, many radical groups called foreign terrorist fighters from the various regions of the world led to the departure of the region and the terrorist acts of IS mostly damaged Islam, Muslims, and the images of Muslims.[30] Contrary to the widespread belief in the West, terror, corruption, and killing are regarded as crimes in Islam, and there are many verses in the Quran related to this. 74th Verse of the Araf Surah, "So remember the Blessings of Allah and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief," Verse 205 of Baqarah, "Whenever he attains authority, he goes about the earth spreading mischief and laying to waste crops and human life, even though Allah (whose testimony he invokes) does not love mischief," 42nd Verse of Shura Surah, "The way of punishment is only for those who oppress people and those who are wrongfully in the world. There is a painful torment for them," and it is seen that Islam prohibits violence, aggression, and terror. As a matter of fact, killing oneself is forbidden in Islam, and taking the life given by Allah is considered as a great sin. The clearest verse about this, the 29th Verse of Surat an-Nisa, is stated as "… Do not destroy yourself (and each other) (do not kill, do not commit suicide)" and prohibits a person from killing himself for whatever reason. In addition, it is stated in many Hadith Sharif that committing suicide is haram. One issue should be underlined here. Although suicide attacks are frequently used by terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda or Daesh who misinterpret Islam to legitimize their terrorist acts, and the perception that suicide acts are generally used only by such terrorist organizations in the West, this terrorist tactic is the PKK terrorist organization. Is also used very often by. PKK has carried out so many suicide missions and killed so many innocent people.

Materials and Methods

The study is a qualitative study. Within the framework of the subject, the information obtained based on the examination of the printed books, researches and articles were evaluated. A simple analytical approach has been adopted to examine suicide concept, psychology of suicide bomber and terrorism. For the source materials, contemporary and current literature in the form of documents, books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and content from official and unofficial websites were widely consulted to collect the relevant materials and analyses them in an objective and scientific manner.

Summary and Recommendations

When the current literature on suicide bombing and suicide is reviewed, it is seen that individuals who attempt suicide are inadequate in coping with anger and aggression, impulsive behavior, and problem solving. The presence of deep feelings of depression, pessimism, anger, and loneliness is observed in these individuals. These issues are also exploited by terrorist organizations, often forcing the individual to take this action. In addition, it is seen that people knowingly and willingly committed suicide terrorism acts, and they explain this sometimes with religious issues and sometimes in line with the organization's political statements.

It is observed that people with high levels of depression and anxiety have poor problem solving skills and ability to cope with stressful situations, and individuals with depression are less successful in implementing problem-solving plans than other individuals. Schneidman[20] argues that psychological pain is the cause of suicide. Stating that suicide will occur when psychological pain is accepted as unbearable by a person, Schneidman[20] defined the behavior of a person who feels guilty or depressed or has an overwhelming subconscious anger as suicide.[23]

Terrorist organizations fighting for political purposes use suicide attacks as a strategy to achieve their goals. It is seen that the suicide attacks that take place today have become a strategy. Because suicide actions are planned in advance by the organizations, the people who will attack are specially trained, the possible results are calculated in detail, the messages to be given are determined in advance, and the religious and ideological values that will legitimize the action are applied. When the religious references on the subject are examined, it can be easily seen that suicide is strictly prohibited, human life is sacred and killing is a great sin. Although suicide attacks are frequently used by terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda or Daesh who misinterpret Islam to legitimize their terrorist acts, and the perception that suicide acts are generally used only by such terrorist organizations in the West, this terrorist tactic is the PKK terrorist organization is also used very often by. PKK has carried out so many suicide missions and killed so many innocent people.

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ملخص المقال باللغة العربية

الإرهاب الانتحاري وعلم النفس الانتحاري

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يستعرض هذا المقال الإرهاب الانتحاري والمفاهيم الحالية لعلم نفس الانتحاري. تعتبر الهجمات الانتحارية التي تحدث في أجزاء مختلفة من العالم من أكثر الأساليب استخداماً من قبل المنظمات الإرهابية. إن الإرهاب الانتحاري كنوع من الإرهاب يقوم به انتحاريون يرتدون سترات مفخخة أو بواسطة سيارات مفخخة يجذب الكثير من الاهتمام على مستوى العالم. على مدار تاريخ البشرية، قد يحاول بعض الأشخاص الانتحار في مرحلة ما من حياتهم، وتنتهي بعض هذه المحاولات بالموت. الانتحار هو فعل من أفعال العقاب الذاتي والانفصال المتعمد عن العالم. بمعنى آخر، الانتحار هو سلوك مرضي يقوم به الشخص بوعي بهدف إنهاء حياته وينتهي بالنجاح. إن فعل قتل المرء لحياته، والذي لا يستطيع المرء فهمه ويعتبره أمرًا غير طبيعي، هو حدث معقد ومؤلم. في هذه الدراسة سيتم دراسة الإرهاب والإرهاب الانتحاري والتفجير الانتحاري ودراسة نفسية المفجر الانتحاري.

الكلمات المفتاحية: علم النفس، انتحاري، إرهاب انتحاري