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STRATEGY OF SUICIDE TERRORISM IN TÜRKİYE

ABSTRACT

Nuriye NİĞDELİOĞLU HAPPANİ*, Fahri ERENEL**

Suicide terrorism is a phenomenon with conventional warfare and conventional targets/tactics. Suicide attacks, which emerged in the latter half of the 20th century, have been on the rise with each passing day. Uncertainties regarding the reasons why an individual would attempt to collectively kill themselves or others for a belief they hold still persist. The complexity of the phenomenon of suicide terrorism arises from the inability to determine when terrorist organizations carried out suicide attacks in response to which political, religious, or ideological events. The occupation of Afghanistan by the USA after the September 11 attacks and the invasion of Iraq in 2003, along with the instability in the Middle East, contributed to the increase in suicide attacks. This article aims to analyze the ideology, target audience, time/space, purpose/method relationship, the periods in which suicide attacks occurred, and their contributions to terrorist organizations, which are used as acts of killing among the most significant political events in the contemporary world. This research consists of three parts, the first part discusses the debate on the concept of suicide terrorism in the literature. In the second part, hypotheses prepared using the CPOST suicide attack database are analyzed. In the conclusion, suicide attacks carried out in Türkiye are evaluated in proportion to the hypotheses.

Keywords: *Suicide Terrorism, Suicide Attacks, Strategy of Suicide Attacks, Motivations, Terrorism.*

TÜRKİYE'DE İNTİHAR TERÖRİZMİNİN STRATEJİSİ

ÖZET

İntihar terörizmi konvansiyonel savaş ve konvansiyonel hedefleri olan karmaşık bir olgudur. 20. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında ortaya çıkan intihar saldırıları her geçen gün artış göstermektedir. Bir insanın, inandığı bir şey için kendisini veya başkalarını kolektif olarak öldürmeye çalışmasının sebebi konusundaki belirsizlikler halen devam etmektedir. İntihar terörizmi olgusunun karmaşıklığı, terör örgütlerinin hangi dönemlerde, hangi siyasi, dini veya ideolojik olaylara karşı intihar saldırısı gerçekleştirdiği belirlenemediğinden kaynaklanmaktadır. 11 Eylül saldırıları sonrasında ABD'nin Afganistan'ı, 2003 yılında Irak'ı işgali ile Ortadoğu'da yaşanan istikrarsızlık intihar saldırılarının artmasına neden olmuştur. Bu makale, günümüz dünyasının en önemli siyasal olayları arasında yer alan bir öldürme eylemi olarak kullanılan intihar saldırılarının ideolojisini, hedef kitlesini, zaman/mekân ve amaç/yöntem ilişkisini, hangi dönemlerde intihar saldırısı gerçekleştirildiğini ve son olarak terör örgütlerine olan katkılarını değerlendirmektedir. Bu araştırma sonuç kısmıyla birlikte üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölümde intihar terörizmi kavramının literatürdeki tartışmasına yer verilmiştir. İkinci bölümde Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST) intihar saldırıları veri tabanı kullanılarak hazırlanan hipotezler analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonuç kısmında ise Türkiye'de gerçekleştirilen intihar saldırıları hipotezlerle doğru orantılı olarak değerlendirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İntihar Terörizmi, İntihar Saldırıları, İntihar Saldırılarının Stratejisi, Motivasyon, Terörizm.*

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INTRODUCTION

Suicide attacks occur worldwide and typically target security forces, political figures, and civilian populations. They often focus on metropolitan cities, tourist destinations, airports, mosques, churches and city squares. These acts of suicide terrorism involve multiple terrorists, and terrorist organizations play a significant role in orchestrating these attacks. This study aims to examine various aspects of suicide attacks, including ideology, dynamics, purpose-strategy-target relationships, the context of time, space, and organization, interactions between the action and activists, and the periods during which organizations increase their use of suicide attacks. Terrorist organizations on the international stage carry out suicide bombings with diverse ideological motivations. The purpose, causes, targets, methods, gender dynamics, timing, preferred locations, and lethality of suicide terrorism vary according to the structure and strategy of these organizations. Understanding the complexity of suicide terrorism is essential for determining when and why terrorist organizations resort to such activities, whether driven by political, religious, or ideological factors. Between 1996 and 2022, there were a total of 64 suicide attacks in Türkiye. This study analyzes these suicide terrorism acts by examining the regions in which they occurred, the identities of the organizations involved, their ideologies, target demographics, types of attacks, geographic locations, and gender dynamics. To conduct this analysis, data from The Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST) were utilized.¹

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Suicide terrorist attacks are acts of political violence executed against non-combatant targets (Hoffman & McCormick, 2010, p.9). A suicide attack, one of the most effective methods of terrorist acts, involves attackers intentionally causing harm or death to others, even though they are aware they won't survive the process (Pape, 1996, p.123). Hafez describes suicide attacks as the 'unprecedented threat method' and defines them as the newest form of terrorism rooted in fear and anxiety. The attacks that occurred in the USA on September 11, 2001, the most well-known and deeply impactful

¹ CPOST, with the short name "Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism", Project group was founded by Prof. Dr. Robert Pape. It is the organization with the most comprehensive database covering all suicide attacks in the world since 1982. (https://cpost.uchicago.edu/research/suicide_attacks/database_on_suicide_attacks/)

suicide attacks, continue to have lasting effects today due to the losses, psychological damage they caused, and their influence on shaping the global agenda. In the literature, the terminology used to describe suicide attacks often depends on the perspective of the descriptor, but it does not alter the fundamental nature of the action. Instead of the term 'suicide attack,' various terms such as 'martyrdom operation,' 'freedom fighter,' 'suicide commando,' 'suicide terrorism,' and 'suicide bomber' are used (Hafez, 2007, p.XXX). In the literature, the terminology used to describe suicide attacks often depends on the perspective of the descriptor, but it does not alter the fundamental nature of the action. Instead of the term 'suicide attack,' various terms such as 'martyrdom operation,' 'freedom fighter,' 'suicide commando,' 'suicide terrorism,' and 'suicide bomber' are used (Cronin, 2003, p.3). Assassinations, armed attacks, and kidnappings are among the most common types of actions used by terrorists. In particular, bombings stand out as one of the frequently used methods, with vehicle bombings being a prevalent form of suicide attack. These suicide attacks typically involve self-sacrifice and mass killings through the use of materials such as explosive-laden vehicles, bags, or suicide vests. It's noteworthy that during the 1980s, while traditional terrorist attacks resulted in an average of one fatality per incident, suicide attacks in the same period led to an average of twelve deaths per incident. Those who seek to coerce their opponents through the methods of suicide terrorism can inflict human and material losses in target countries that are, on average, twelve times more deadly than conventional terrorism (Hafez, 2007, p. XXV). The primary aim of suicide attacks is typically to apply pressure on a target government, seeking to compel a change in its policies. This strategy turns suicide attacks into acts of terrorism, aiming to either force the government to surrender or provoke rebellion against it, often by inflicting suffering on civilians. Suicide attacks are used as a weapon of the weak against a stronger enemy, when other methods of warfare have proven ineffective, regardless of the specific organization involved (Pape, 2003, p. 33).

Bloom, using the concept of suicide terrorism, defines suicide attacks as actions driven by political motives, characterized by violence, where the attacker deliberately detonates a target with their own body. He views suicide attacks as a component of asymmetrical warfare and asserts that the planned death of the activist is a prerequisite for the attack's success. According to Pedahzur, who use the term 'suicide terrorism,' these attacks

represent a contemporary form of terrorism that differs from the methods and tactics used by classical terrorism (Pedahzur, 2006, p.7).

The successful completion of a suicide attack hinges on the determination of a suicide bomber to both kill and die. Consequently, research aimed at understanding the lethality of suicide attacks examines the motivational and structural factors within terrorist organizations. Some of the most prominent explanations for the deadly outcomes include factors such as being driven by religious or political ideology, socio-economic conditions, financial support, and loyalty to the organization or its leader. Ideology, whether religious or political, stands out as the most significant motivator for suicide bombers. With the rise of Islamist extremism, researchers have attributed the deadly consequences of suicide attacks to the religious ideologies of terrorist organizations. The belief among religious groups that they will be rewarded with martyrdom and paradise in the afterlife has led to more suicide attacks compared to secular terrorist organizations. As argued by Asal and Rethmeyer, terrorist organizations whose primary motivation is otherworldly have been responsible for a greater number of casualties than secular terrorist organizations (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008, p.5).

The impact of religious differences on incidents of communal violence, terrorism, or war has been a topic of enduring debate. The global terrorism landscape, notably heightened after the September 11, 2001 attacks, has seen an increase in acts of terrorism where religion is used as a pretext. This begs the question: Do religious differences exacerbate tensions brought about by terrorism, or can they facilitate a more tolerant and peaceful society? Suicide terrorism is a growing phenomenon, and its expansion is attributed to its increased use by religiously motivated terrorist organizations. While a majority of the 315 suicide attacks carried out between 1980 and 2001 were orchestrated by non-religious organizations, a significant shift occurred in the period between 2000 and 2004, where 70% of over 400 suicide attacks were executed by religiously motivated groups. The direct relationship between religion and suicide terrorism plays a pivotal role in garnering support from the communities these terrorist organizations represent (Atran, 2004, p. 69). Virtually all terrorist groups, whether actively or passively, rely on public support to sustain their operations. Many of these organizations use terrorism as a means to bolster their popularity and

influence over future generations within the communities they represent (Kasfir, 2002, p.4).

The proportional relationship between religion and support for suicide terrorism centers on the regulatory aspects inherent in religious beliefs. Individuals demonstrate their endorsement of suicide terrorism by expressing their commitment to their collective community through participation in religious rituals. Communal religious rituals serve as a unifying force, enabling communities to address their challenges through collective action strategies. However, these very rituals can be manipulated by organizations seeking individuals willing to sacrifice themselves as a demonstration of their commitment to both society and a political cause. Within this framework, individuals who support suicide terrorism are expected, due to their specific religious beliefs, to engage in collective religious rituals as a way to display their dedication to society. The extremist group legitimizes the use of violence by invoking religious feelings in the society, adding religious interpretations to the feeling of alienation and isolation, and also works to eliminate the group defined as their enemy. Religion, although it does not contain violence, is used to legitimize the ideology that defends political and ethnocultural issues. In countries with ethno-nationalist conflicts, as seen in Sri Lanka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, Sudan, Uganda, Kashmir, and the Former Yugoslavia, the enemy has been portrayed as “evil” (Hudson, 1999, p.33).

Other researchers argue that poverty (Krueger, 2007, p.2), economic inequality, high unemployment (Krueger & Maleckova, 2002, p.127), and unstable political and economic conditions that restrict rights and freedoms can be used to justify large-scale acts of political violence (Krueger & Laitin, 2010, p. 150) In this framework, the absence of social, political, and economic opportunities causes conflict between societies in general and mobilizes them against injustices. Although there is mixed evidence of the link between poverty and participation in terrorism, the lack of rights and freedoms has a strong impact on participation in terrorist organizations (Krueger & Maleckova, 2002, p.142). Nations seeking self-determination, and political independence, terrorist groups aiming to eradicate social and economic injustices defend their right by resorting to their violent attacks for the common social good. These reasons lead to more people willing to commit suicide attacks. Therefore, a strong commitment to a political cause or a religious ideology can increase the number of mentally and physically

committed people available. In addition to ideology, the organizational structures of these groups can also have an impact on the deadly consequences of terrorist attacks (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008, p.438) The way power is distributed in an organization is the most important factor for demonstrating loyalty to those at the bottom of the organizational pyramid. Although there is not enough information about the nature, motivation, causes, and consequences of the terrorist's psychology, the emerging common concepts focus on ideology, religion, politics, leader-follower relations, organization, and efforts to show themselves. People who prefer to be terrorists are generally unemployed, alienated from their social relations, and separated from society. Less educated people may try to join a terrorist group out of boredom and a desire to pursue a cause they see as just. While educated people may be motivated by political or religious reasons, some individuals may become militants in terrorist organizations with the desire to use their bomb-making skills. People born and raised in Western countries who choose to be terrorists are often both intellectuals and idealists. While the reasons vary, individuals often turn to terrorism with the help of a family member or friend with terrorist connections. Membership in a terrorist group is highly selective with novices lasting for a year or more gradually progressing towards full membership in the terrorist group. It is not enough for those who will become militants in the terrorist organization to have a personality or character suitable for the organization, they must also have a certain ability needed by the members of the organization (Hudson, 1999, p.22). Hypotheses were derived, believing that this research is an important step towards confirming the uniqueness of suicide attacks used by terrorist organizations and informing current counter-terrorism policies:

H1. As long as terrorist organizations are militarily helpless (defeated), they carry out more suicide attacks. The Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK) and ISIS/DAESH (also known as Daesh, ISIL, or so-called Islamic State) was militarily defeated and helpless, it resorted to suicide attacks.

H2. The acts of suicide terrorism in Türkiye differ according to religious motives, and ethnic/nationalist-separatist and Marxist-Leninist ideologies.

H3. Suicide attacks in Türkiye are executed by targeting the security forces, the political, and the civilian population.

H4. Whether the target is an indoor or outdoor area in suicide attacks affects the number of victims.

H5. The lethality of suicide attacks differs according to the gender of the perpetrator.

H6. Suicide attacks by more than one perpetrator cause more people to be victims involving attacks carried out by a single perpetrator.

H7. Suicide attackers do not carry out the actions alone, the influence of terrorist organizations in the attack is high.

2. DATA AND METHODS

This study focuses on suicide attacks in Türkiye between 1996 and 2022. The analysis is not limited to PKK because the suicide attack tactic has been used by various groups. The research includes suicide attacks by Ethno-Nationalist/Separatist, Religious, and Marxist-Leninist groups. As a result, this article categorizes suicide bombers as including the perpetrators of bombings or attempted criminals. Two different inclusion criteria were applied for all terrorist incidents examined in this study. First, a violent suicide attack crime must have been committed in Türkiye since 1996. Second, the perpetrators of the crime must be affiliated with a terrorist organization. For all incidents included in the research, the terrorists must have been convicted of this crime or remain unprosecuted.

The CPOST² collected information on multiple units of analysis, including death toll, casualties, location, gender, bomb type, target, and organization name. CPOST's incident identification and coding encompasses many different processes. Extensively cross-referenced and verified with English and Turkish official sources from June 1996 to November 2022 to reexamine the data and maximize the reliability of the data. In addition, this database has been proven in the international arena to be a valid source of data on deadly suicide attacks in the world. CPOST's incident identification and coding encompasses many different processes. Furthermore, this database has been proven in the international arena to be a valid source of data on deadly suicide attacks in the world.

² CPOST, with the short name "Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism", Project group was founded by Prof. Dr. Robert Pape. It is the organization with the most comprehensive database covering all suicide attacks in the world since 1982. (https://cpost.uchicago.edu/research/suicide_attacks/database_on_suicide_attacks/)

Table 1. Suicide Bomb Attacks In Türkiye Over Time (The Data Was Created By The Authors Using CPOST Data)

Months	1996	1998	1999	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2019	2022	Total
January				1											1	1	1			4
February													2			1				3
March			3			1		1								2				7
April			2													1				3
May			2		1		1		1			1				2	1			9
June	1								1							3	1			6
July			1												1			1		3
August												1			1	3				5

The first hypothesis is that the PKK and ISIS/DAESH were militarily defeated and helpless, it resorted to suicide attacks (H1) (Cronin, 2003, p.9). In this regard, numerical data on suicide attacks performed in Türkiye were examined. Our data show that although the PKK executed its first terrorist attack in 1984, it realized its first suicide attack in 1996 (CRS, 2019, p.2). Indeed, from 2004 to 2015, the PKK averaged less than one suicide operation per month. Although it envisaged the organization of rural areas and mountainous areas by using traditional terror methods in the first stages of PKK's operations, it also envisaged urban organization as its second part. Instead of resorting to asymmetric suicide bombing tactics, the PKK waged conventional warfare to survive during these periods. Indeed, from 2004 to 2015, the PKK averaged less than one suicide operation per month. With the end of the "solution process" defined as the "Kurdish Problem" between 2013 and 2015, it was observed that the number of suicide attacks increased significantly. While suicide belts accounted for half of the deaths caused by the PKK, this type of weapon was followed by the Handmade Explosives (EYP). An increase has been observed in the Trench (Hendek) Operations (UNHCR, 2017) and 15th July Coup Attempt (Uluçakar, 2020, p. 7) suicide attacks carried out between July 2015 and 2016 in the southeast of Türkiye (Esen, 2022, p. 2). With the strengthening of ISIS/DAESH in the region, the suicide attacks in Türkiye reached the highest level. The

deportation operations initiated by Türkiye after 2016 and the effective use of the F-16 and the Armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) had a positive impact on the fight against terrorism. The first warm contact of the ISIS/DAESH organization with Türkiye performed actions against the security forces and civilians to establish a caliphate state in Iraq and Syria, started on July 23, 2015. After ISIS/DAESH used weapons against Turkish soldiers, Turkish warplanes starting to bombard ISIS positions. The USA started to use Incirlik Air Base on 12 August 2015 to fight against ISIS/DAESH, and both US and Turkish planes started air strikes. After the airstrikes, ISIS/DAESH started to carry out suicide attacks both in metropolises such as Istanbul, Ankara, Paris, and Brussels (Mills, 2017, p.29).

Suicide attacks, which have been executed for 26 years, have been performed by aggressors affiliated with four different terrorist organizations. In the attacks executed by PKK, Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), Al-Qaeda, and ISIS/DAESH organization members in different regions on different dates, a total of 879 people were killed and 2818 people were injured.

Figure 1. Number Of People Killed In Suicide Attacks Between 1996-2022 (The Data Was Created By The Authors Using CPOST Data)

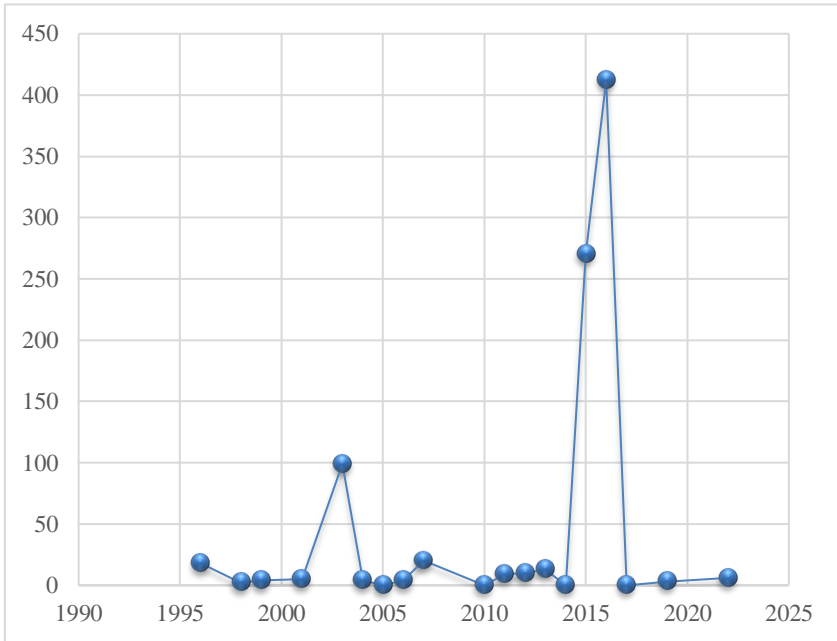
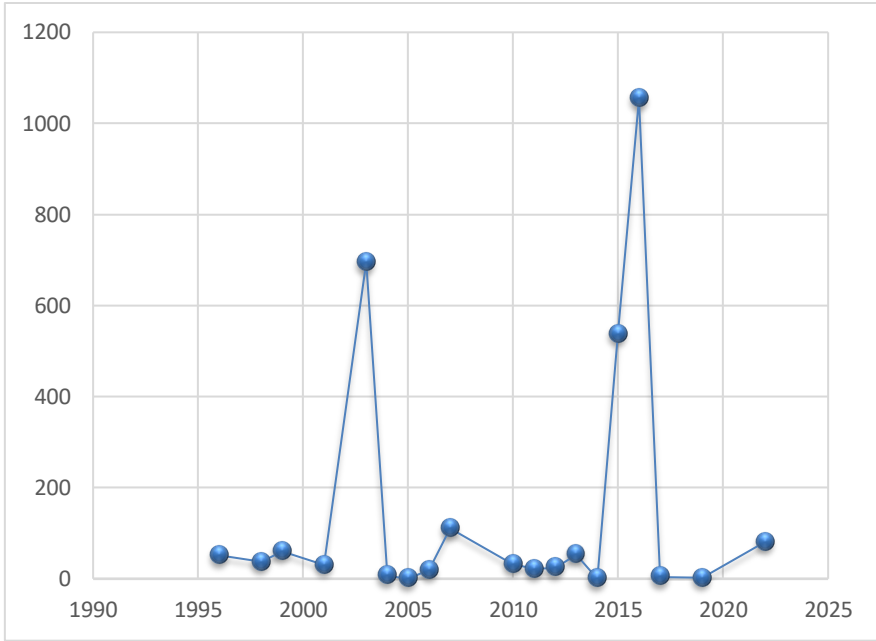


Figure 2. Number Of People Wounded In Suicide Attacks Between 1996-2022 (The Data Was Created By The Authors Using CPOST Data)

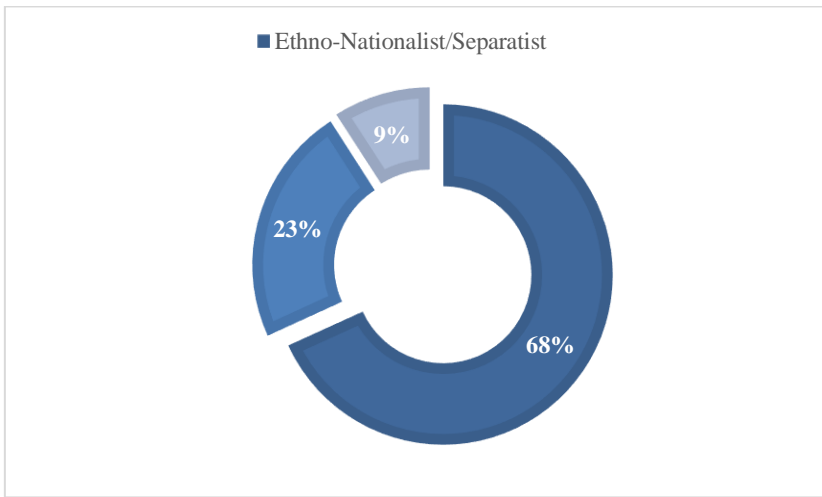


The terrorist acts that cause the most victims to suffer are as follows;

In the vehicle-laden bomb attacks on the British Embassy in Istanbul and HSBC Bank on November 20, 2003, 31 people died and 393 people were injured. The terrorist organization Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attack (Cline, 2004, p. 322). “Labor, Peace, Democracy Meeting” was held in front of Ankara Train Station on October 10, 2015. Yunus Emre Alagoz and Omer Deniz Dundar, who were university students affiliated with the ISIS/DAESH terrorist organization, detonated the bomb on them, killing 102 people and injuring 400 others (Reuters, 2015). On March 13, 2016, a total of 37 people were killed and 125 people were injured in the terrorist attack against civilians waiting at the bus stop with a moving bomb-laden vehicle in Guvenpark. The attack was performed by university students Seher Çağla Demir and Ozgür Unsal affiliated with the PKK organization (BBC, 2016). Rakim Bulgarov and Vadim Osmanov who are affiliated with the ISIS/DAESH terrorist organization opened fire on the passengers with long-barrelled weapons and detonated the explosives on them at Atatürk Airport. In the attack, 41 civilians were killed and 231 people were injured (CNN, 2016). On December 10, 2016, in front of the

Beşiktaş stadium, Kadri Kılınç and Burak Yavuz, affiliated with the PKK organization, detonated their suicide belts and bomb-laden vehicles, 39 police officers died, 7 civilians died, and 235 people were (Guardian, 2016). The terrorist attack on the most famous nightclub in Istanbul on New Year's Eve on January 01, 2017, was organized by Uzbek Abdulkadir Masharipov, a university graduate affiliated with the ISIS/DAESH organization. A total of 39 people died and 79 were injured in the terrorist attack carried out with long-barrelled weapons on New Year's Eve (BBC, 2017).

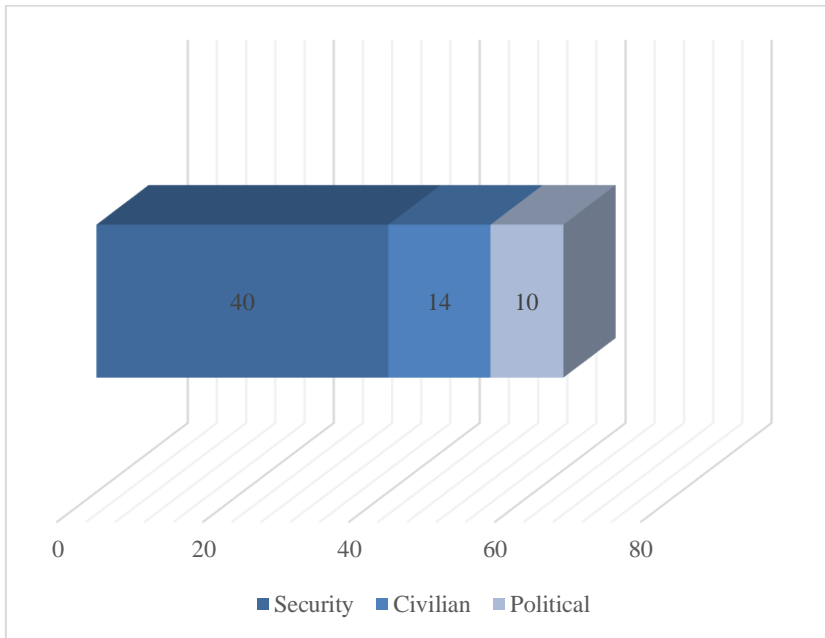
Figure 3. The Ideology of Suicide Terrorism Acts in Türkiye (The data was created by the authors using CPOST data)



For the second hypothesis, the acts of suicide terrorism in Türkiye differ according to religious motives, and ethnic/nationalist-separatist and Marxist-Leninist ideologies. (H2). In the figures, PKK organization is coded as Ethno-Nationalist, (DHKP-C) organization as Marxist-Leninist, ISIS and Al Qaeda as religious motivated organizations. Within this framework, 68% of the attacks were performed with Ethno-Nationalist/Separatist, 23% religious, and 9% Marxist-Leninist ideological motivations. Considering these ideological elements, terrorist organizations tried to establish a legitimate basis for acts of violence to achieve systematic, planned, and ideological goals. There is an absolute enemy element determined by the organization. Ideology is one of the most important tools of terrorist organizations and it is a concept that brings together people who form the organized structure of the organization, who have adopted the same view, and who are advancing towards the same goal. They carry out suicide attacks

to realize the targeted ideological elements, to announce them to the public, and to justify the aims they defend in the eyes of society. Through these actions, they give a message to society motivate the members of the organization, and lay the groundwork for the recruitment of new militants. According to Paul Wilkinson, whatever their ideological colour, terrorists in democratic societies are defined as helpless people who are alienated from all liberal-democratic values, who reign, and who strongly oppose the (Wilkinson, 1977, p.94). Vamık Volkan depicts the ideology of suicide terrorism by analogy with tent's canvas. People have "two identities" from childhood. The first is the individual's own identity (individual identity), and the second is a broader identity that encompasses many people like a large tent (large group or ethnic identity). Historical, cultural, and religious ideologies are the reason for the existence of communities. Selected traumas, chosen victories, and victimization psychology are inside the tent and the pole that keeps the tent up is in the hands of the group leader (Volkan, 2019, p.144).

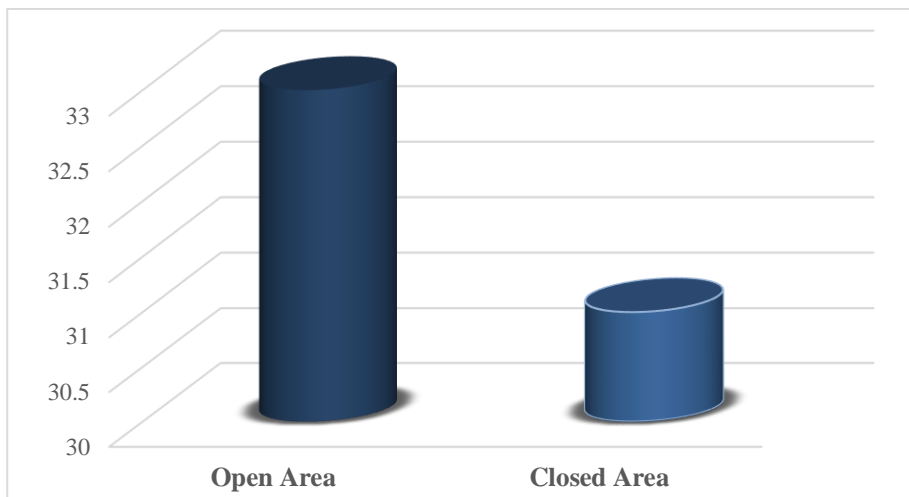
Figure 4. Suicide Actions by Target Types in Suicide Attacks in Türkiye Between 1996-2022 (The data was created by the authors using CPOST data)



The third hypothesis suggests that suicide attacks in Türkiye are

executed by targeting the security forces, the political personal, and the civilian population (H3). A total of 40 suicide attacks were performed between 1996 and 2022 targeting the security forces with a rate of 62%. In the same years, 14 suicide attacks were realized against civilians with a rate of 22% and a suicide attack on 10 different politicians with a rate of 16%. While the majority of the attacks targeted security forces, the highest number of casualties occurred among civilians. Considering the attacks of the terrorist organization PKK which carries out the most suicide attacks in Türkiye, it is seen that the organization has no hesitation in resorting to suicide attacks against the security forces and civilians. In a broadcast on MED TV, which supported the PKK in 1996, Abdullah Ocalan made the following statements encouraging the members of the organization to commit suicide attacks: *“Nobody should think that we are incapable of organizing suicide attacks. Zeynep Kınacı’s heroism has shown the strength of our suicidal guerrillas. Actually, each PKK member is a suicide guerilla. I believe we have too many female supporters in our people who can blow up their bodies like this young girl* (Sarı & Tınas, 2018, p. 17). Religiously motivated terrorist organizations such as ISIS/DAESH and Al-Qaeda have performed suicide attacks targeting civilians. It has been observed that the left-wing DHKP-C organization which defends the Marxist/Leninist ideology, executed a terrorist act mainly by targeting the security forces.

Figure 5. Targeted Areas of Suicide Attacks in Türkiye (The data was created by the authors using CPOST data)



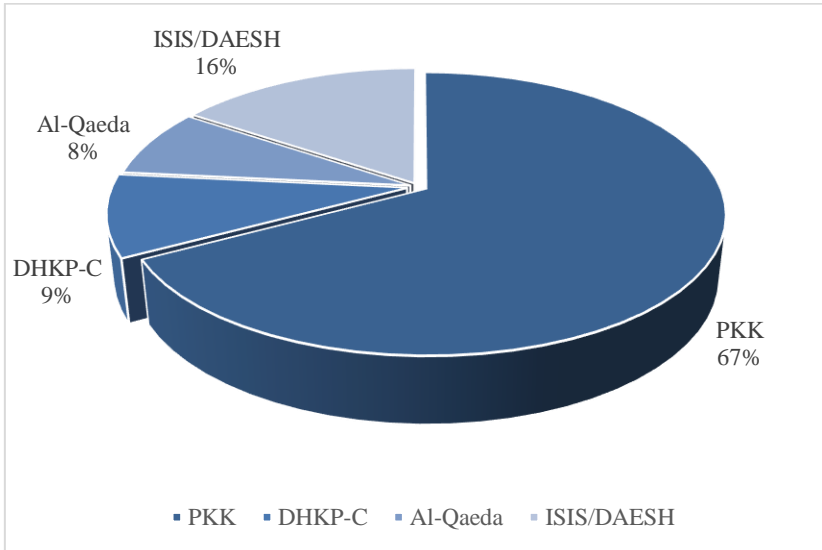
The fourth hypothesis (H4) suggests that the choice between indoor

and outdoor targets in suicide attacks impacts the number of victims. The acts of suicide attacks performed in closed areas increases the fatality by causing more people to die or be injured. Originally the bomb was more effective in closed areas, as the limited space and potential stampede following the explosion contribute to more severe consequences, with victims suffering injuries or fatalities. In contrast, suicide attacks carried out in open areas lead to a greater dispersion of blast waves, reducing the overall harm to individuals. However, if the attackers detonate the bomb in a closed area such as a bus, airport, or building, it destroys everything in the immediate vicinity (10-15 meters) of the (HDL Patel, 2012, p. 316). In explosions that occur in a closed area, the victims are thrown to the wall or hard surfaces such as concrete floors with the impact of the explosion with nails or pieces of shrapnel entering their bodies, causing more serious injuries. Another effect of the explosion in closed places is explosion trauma. The victim's bodies shiver with the effect of the sound waves from the explosion. The body is damaged by excessive pressure, causing internal damage to internal (Almogly & Mintz, 2006, p.53).

The fifth hypothesis is that the lethality of suicide attacks differs according to the gender of the perpetrator (H5). As of the second half of the 19th century Participation of women in terrorism and violent activities gained momentum (Schweitzer, 2006, p.7). As the year's terrorist activities in Türkiye began to take place, female militants began to take active roles in the PKK organization and were a part of the terrorist organizations with the highest female terrorist rate in the world (Haner, 2019, p. 2). Although the number of female terrorists is high, male militants stand out in the lethality of suicide attacks in Türkiye. Out of a total of 64 suicide attacks between 1996 and 2022, 54 were male and 10 were female attackers. The woman named Zeynep Kınacı, code name Zilan, who executed the first suicide attack in Türkiye in 1996, was also a graduate of the Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling (Akbar, 2013, p.126). Despite the high rate of male suicide bombers, the first six suicide attacks in Türkiye were performed by female terrorists. It is observed that the number of male attackers has increased, especially when the suicide acts performed after the 2000s are examined. However, although the age range and marital status statistics could not be obtained due to the lack of data, in general, the attackers were single people between the ages of 17-25.

The sixth hypothesis is that suicide attacks by more than one perpetrator cause more people to be victims compared to attacks carried out by a single perpetrator (H6). If suicide attacks are performed by more than one perpetrator in a row, the second attack which is carried out especially by targeting the crowded groups who came to the scene to help the survivors after the first attack, completes the task of the first attack. The suicide attacks in Türkiye are examined, and it is seen that the actions in which more than one perpetrator participates cause more casualties compared to the suicide attacks executed by a single perpetrator. For this reason, statistical data are examined, suicide attacks carried out by more than one attacker; Bet Israel Synagogue-Neve Shalom Synagogue on November 15, 2003, November 20, 2003, United Kingdom Consulate General in Istanbul-HSBC Headquarters (Falk & Morgenstern, 2009, p. 270) October 10, 2015, Labor, Peace, and Democracy Meeting held in Ankara (Elmasry & El-Nawawy, 2020, p. 3) June 28, 2016, Atatürk Airport International Terminal (BBC, 2016) December 10, 2016, Beşiktaş Stadium (Reuters, 2019) March 13, 2016, Ankara Kızılay Square (NYTimes, 2016).

Figure 6. Terrorist Organizations Performing Suicide Attacks Between 1996-2022 (The data was created by the authors using CPOST data)



The seventh hypothesis is that suicide attackers do not carry out the actions alone, the influence of terrorist organizations in the attack is high (H7). The suicide attacks performed between 1996-2022 are examined and

it can be seen that the organization with the highest rate (67%) is the PKK organization. The PKK organization has executed 43 suicide attacks over the years. While the terrorist organization ISIS/DEAS ranks second with 16%, after 2015, the organization fulfilled 10 suicide attacks. Although this organization started its activities in Türkiye in 2015, it caused many more deaths and injuries than the attacks executed by the PKK organization. DHKP-C organization which is in the third place with a rate of 9%, performed 6 suicide attacks, while Al-Qaeda organization carried out a total of 5 suicide attacks with a rate of 8%. In this regard, although the number of militants who committed terrorist acts is limited, the number of people who prepared, planned, and fulfilled the act is quite high. The organization is important in the realization of the suicide attack, its planning, the procurement of weapons, the selection of the attacker, targeting, and realization of them. Indeed, terrorism experts argue that the role of the organizations' is a much stronger factor than the individual role. Because the individual has surrendered his identity to the group. Suicide attacks in the modern age involve a professional organization. There is a chilling logic in terrorist organizations choice of suicide operations. From an organizational perspective, such attacks are used as part of a terror campaign. On the other hand, from the perspective of the victims and their sympathizers, the news that is a natural part of the tragedy helps to publicize the terrorist's cause. A suicide attacker is declared a martyr in religiously motivated organizations, and a hero in left-wing groups (Cronin, 2003, p.12).

CONCLUSION

This article aims to investigate the strategy, target audience, aim-method relationship, reasons, and the periods in which suicide attacks are carried out in terrorist organizations. Suicidal terrorism is a manifestation of the situation that occurs when the perpetrator sacrifices. Contrary to traditional acts of terrorism, the death of the suicide attacker is essential and inevitable for the act to be successful. It aims to instil a sense of helplessness in the state by generating panic, fear, and anxiety within society by frequently using the suicide attack method of terrorist organizations and guerrilla groups.

Suicide attacks are carried out by targeting security forces, political and civilian populations. The suicide attacks in Türkiye are based on religious motives, ethnic/nationalist separatist and Marxist-Leninist ideologies. Although there is not enough information about the motivation,

causes, and consequences of the suicide bombing, the common concepts that emerged focus on ideology, religion, politics, organization, and the effort to prove oneself. There is an absolute enemy element determined by the organization. Ideology and religion, which are one of the most important tools of terrorist organizations, bring together the people who make up the organized structure of the organization and who are advancing towards the same goal under the same group identity.

With the end of the "solution process" defined as the "Kurdish Problem" in Türkiye between 2013 and 2015, it was observed that there was a significant increase in the number of suicide attacks. Suicide attacks increased with the military dismissals of the Trench Operations³ and the July 15 Coup Attempt. With the strengthening of ISIS/DEAS in the region, suicide attacks in Türkiye reached the highest level.

Women are preferred by terrorist organizations in suicide attacks. Although research has shown that suicide attacks carried out by women cause more harm than those carried out by men, in Türkiye, male militants stand out in terms of the lethality of suicide attacks.

Suicide attacks being carried out by more than one perpetrator in a row, especially the second attack against the group that came to the scene and helped the survivors after the first attack, completes the incomplete task of the first attacker. When suicide attacks in Türkiye are evaluated, it is seen that actions involving more than one perpetrator cause more casualties than suicide attacks carried out by a single perpetrator.

Although the number of militants carrying out terrorist acts is limited, the number of individuals involved in preparing, planning, and executing the attacks is quite high. The organization plays a crucial role in the preparation, planning, weapon procurement, selection of the attacker, targeting, and execution of suicide attacks.

In addition to all these, terrorist acts carried out in residential areas in rural areas until the 2000s, both in the world and in Türkiye, started to move to the metropolises after the 2000s. After the 9/11 attacks, metropolises have become centers of attraction for suicide attacks. Large crowds, business centers, airports, indoor and outdoor areas, and tourist places are preferred in

terms of civilian casualties. Suicide attacks in Türkiye are carried out by targeting big cities. However, the axis of the place where the suicide attacks took place varies according to the losses experienced after the action. The fact that the attacks are carried out in closed or open areas affects the number of victims. The fact that the bomb is more effective in closed areas, the narrower areas, and the stampede that may occur after the explosion caused more people to be harmed. Suicide attacks carried out in the open area, causes the blast waves to disappear more in the open air.

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