

Master's Thesis

**Female Suicide Bombers:
Performativity and the Gendered Body in
Terrorism**



Student: Priscyll Anctil Avoine

Supervisors: Dr. Aurélie Campana

Dr. María José Gámez Fuentes

Castellón, September 2013

À ma mère et José, avec tout mon amour ...

“Is there a way in which the place of the body, and the way in which it disposes us outside ourselves or sets us beside ourselves, opens up another kind of normative aspiration within the field of politics? The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well. Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own. The body has its invariably public dimension. Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine.”

-Judith Butler; *Violence, Mourning, Politics* (2003)

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and love to my family, which has always been there to assist me through my biggest fears and my craziest dreams. Mom and Dad, I sincerely wish I can pay back this beautiful debt I have with you. Alain, thank you for your smile and positivity; they always accompany me and you are always in my heart. Thank you for teaching me hard work. Brigitte, if only I knew how to thank you, but what you bring to my life is just too much. I am the happiest daughter in the world, without any doubts. I have a mother, a best friend and an empirical model of success and the power of women. Rafaël, you and I know how you are connected to this Thesis. I want to express to you my true gratefulness for your critical and amazing points of view. Thank you for being so profound, for being in this world, I love you so much. Thank you very much to Marlyn and Mamy, you are so precious to me. This Thesis would not have been possible without the continuous, generous and truly sincere support of my boyfriend. I have been redacting this Thesis between two adventures, between Castellón and Bucaramanga; here we are, stronger than before, with a head full of ideas. Thank you for being my friend, for loving me so hard, supporting my intense character; I hope we will undertake a long road together. *Te amo*.

Then, I wish to express my deep gratitude to my many adorable friends, who are always there when I go through an “academic crisis”. To my many life-long friends, I am constantly thinking about you, even from afar: Josée, Vicky, Josiane, Vanessa L., Vanessa R., Stéphanie, and a particular thanks to Dominique for constantly thinking about me wherever I am. To my international friends: Arely, for your fascinating philosophical intelligence and our many conversations; Allison, for the wonderful experience in the Pueblo Mágico; Juan Carlos, for being such a good human; Lida, because of your unconditional love and infinite strengths; Gaby V., for incredible kindness and generosity; Toni, for your comprehension and humor, and above all; Marissa Pothén, for your never-ending sensibility, for letting me enter in your life and for your vibrant funny personality and finally; Iris Mushitsi for your true friendship, for the long, deep and fabulous conversations we had, I admire your brilliance. Thanks also to my friends of Castellón: Javier F., Sonia, Ana, Olga, Javier T., Ángel, Sergio, Carmen, Chus, Blas, Jorge, María, Victoria, Miguel. Sharing a classroom with you guys was a fantastic journey. I hope we will see each other again.

I would like to thank the staff members of Jaume I University, especially all the teachers and personnel of the Master for their support, especially Adela. I also want to express my gratitude to the staff of JEF CAS at University of Bradford for the academic enrichment during my internship. To Sidi O., Fabricio, Paco C., Alberto G., Maximiliano, Stephen Z., and Michael F. for being such good teachers. Thank you Margo for your devoting work in proofreading my Thesis; you are so patient and so quick, despite my “rushing” times. Constantin, thank you for kindly revising my work, I admire your uncommon intelligence and you will always be an academic model to me.

Last, but not least, I wish to thank my supervisors María José Gámez Fuentes and Aurélie Campana. María José, I am very grateful for your comprehension regarding my redaction and for your numerous assertive comments as well as your quick answers. Thank you for your constant feedback regarding my topics of interest. Mme Campana, I wish to thank you for your academic rigor, but also for your constant availability to help me; with you as a mentor, I always feel a constant learning process.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
1. Presentation of the Thesis.....	1
2. Personal motivations.....	2
3. Project relevance and justification.....	4
4. Hypothesis and guiding questions.....	5
5. Objectives.....	5
6. Methodology and theoretical framework.....	6
7. Limitations of the research and conceptual precisions.....	8
8. Historical and geographical context of the investigation.....	11
8.1 Iraq.....	13
8.2 Israel-Palestine.....	14
8.3 North Caucasus.....	15
8.3.1 Russia-Chechnya.....	15
8.3.2 Russia-Dagestan.....	15
9. Outline of the Thesis.....	18
Chapter 1 – Gender and Terrorism within Peace Studies: Where Do We Stand? State of the Art.....	19
1. Philosophy for Peace.....	21
1.1 Philosophy for Peace: What are we talking about?.....	21
1.2 “Epistemological Shift”: Gender as an analytical category.....	24
1.2.1 Performativity, body and emotions.....	26
1.2.1.1 Performativity.....	27
1.2.1.2 The body as socially bounded.....	30
1.2.1.3 Considering emotions in global politics.....	32
1.3 Violent women and war.....	34
2. Studies on Terrorism.....	37
2.1 Preliminary remarks.....	38
2.2 Conceptualizing terrorism.....	39
2.2.1 Definitional problems.....	39
2.2.2 Critical understanding of terrorism.....	41
2.3 Gender and Terrorism.....	43
2.3.1 Understanding gender.....	44
2.3.2 The failure and necessity to include gender (and women) in Terrorism Studies.....	46
2.4 Female suicide bombings.....	49
2.4.1 What is it?.....	50
2.4.2 FSB: interaction of socio-political and personal driving-forces.....	51
3. Summary of the chapter.....	53
Chapter 2 – Violent Narratives, Women’s Narratives, Body Narratives: The Image of FSB.....	57
1. On discursive meanings: why does it matter?.....	60

1.1 On why and how	60
1.2 On narratives and their consequences	62
2. Hegemonic narratives	67
2.1 Female body narratives	68
2.1.1 Beauty: attractiveness of violence	69
2.1.2 Emotions and irrationality: acting solely for personal reasons	73
2.1.3 Motherhood	75
2.1.4 The abject: the monster	79
2.2 Status-related narratives	81
2.2.1 Domestic narratives	82
2.2.2 Victimhood: male domination	85
2.2.3 The unfeminine: the deviated gender	88
2.3 Muslim female body: narratives of cultural fatality	90
2.3.1. “Othering” the body of Muslim FSB	91
2.3.2. FSB: representations of a cultural fatality	93
2.4 Gender emancipation narratives	95
3. Summary of the chapter	98

Chapter 3 – On Bodily Vulnerability, Precariousness and Frames of War: A Philosophical Perspective on FSB 101

1. Philosophical framework of the chapter	103
1.1 The core: Butler’s perspective	104
2. On considering the body of FSB	109
2.1 The body	110
2.1.1 On the body	111
2.1.2 On vulnerability	114
2.1.2.1 Vulnerable bodies	116
2.2 Performativity of the body of FSB	119
2.2.1 FSB’s performativity	119
2.2.2 FSB’s body performances under occupation	123
2.3 Which forms takes the body of a FSB?	126
2.3.1 Veiled and abject body	126
2.3.2 Perversion of the body: disguised and concealed	128
2.3.3 Human bomb, exploded body and body reclaiming	130
2.3.4 On horror and body dismemberment through suicide attack	132
2.4 Body as political statement?	135
2.5 Concluding thoughts	139
3. On precariousness, frames of war and collective responsibility	140
3.1 Frames of war: the formation of precarious and ungrievable lives	141
3.2 Collective responsibility toward FSB	146
4. Further thoughts and critiques	148
4.1 On subversivness	148
4.2 Critical thoughts on Butler’s framework	149
5. Summary of the chapter	151

Conclusions 155

Bibliography	159
Appendices	172
I. Summary of FSB in North Caucasus, Israel-Palestine and Iraq.....	172
II. Epistemological shift	178
III. Picture: Reem Riyashi	179

*Source of the cover image: www.deviantart.com.

Introduction

We read about lives lost and are often given the numbers, but these stories are repeated every day, and the repetition appears endless, irremediable.

-Judith Butler (2009: 13)

1. Presentation of the Thesis

At first glance, it might seem that suicide, individual or collective, has nothing to do with Peace Studies. But suicide is multifaceted and presents direct, structural and cultural forms of violence put forward by Galtung (1969). Self-directed violence that leads to suicide remains something taboo in lots of societies and it is still very difficult to give an account of this type of violence, especially when it comes to dying and killing at the same time. I personally always had some curiosity regarding suicide. It is not really horror, neither fascination. I think I should say it is something I would never see as intelligible for my own life, that I would never endorse, but it is surely an act that I think I can understand as an option or a response to other forms of violence. This may seem a little strange for someone that truly believes in the value of life. But apparently, this has something to do with my own personal and familiar story and I think this Thesis is a tribute to this. And, above all, reducing suicidal violence means trying to apprehend it in the first place.

The topic of this Thesis thus merges from this reflection on suicide and my personal relation to my own body, and by extension, to the body of others. Since I know how to walk, I also learn how to dance, to “speak” with my body, and this has had some large impacts in my life and the understanding of what I want to value in my relationships with others. My body is what makes me believe that peace is possible; it makes me hope that someday, we will “touch” it.

These reflections led me to choose a topic for my Thesis that would encompass the body, the suicidal violence and, one of my academic topic of interest, women. From this point

of departure, I decided to offer an analysis of the Female Suicide Bombers (FSB¹) for this Thesis that will be submitted for the Master's Degree in International Studies in Peace, Conflicts and Development. The Thesis will be consistent with the research line on gender within the framework of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace. It is also sustained by studies on terrorism, particularly drawing from my experience at the Canadian Research Chair on Conflict and Terrorism directed by Dr. Campana (one of my supervisors) which focuses on terrorism as a relational process following the position of Tilly (CRCCT, 2012).

To be more specific, this Thesis aims to construct a framework in order to better understand the role of Muslim women in the different conflicts where they use their own body as a weapon of war through suicidal self-sacrifice. It is first an attempt to deconstruct the dominant narratives regarding FSB using the frameworks offered by the Philosophy for Peace and Gender Studies. Additionally, it aims to make relevant the necessity to use an interdisciplinary approach and finally, to offer some insights on the significance of a philosophical perspective on the phenomenon.

Hence, this introduction will present the following section: my personal motivations in undertaking this investigation, the relevance and justification of the project, the hypothesis, the objectives, the methodology and guiding questions, the limitations of the research, the historical and geographical contextualization and, finally, an outline of the Thesis.

2. Personal motivations

During my studies, my research interests were mostly focused on the Middle East countries and Africa, with a specific attraction to the role of religion and terrorism in conflicts. This Master in International Studies in Peace, Conflict and Development opened my mind to new horizons, giving me the opportunity to meet and get to know excellent teachers

¹ I will use the acronym *FSB* in this thesis to refer to *Female Suicide Bombers* and *Female Suicide Bombings*, depending on the given context.

and colleagues. This permitted me to explore fresh and innovative topics regarding Peace and Conflict Studies. During the last year, I have been actively working in determining the spaces occupied by women both in armed conflict and in peace processes. I have been investigating the role of women in drug trafficking, in peacebuilding, as suicide bombers or as victims of mass rape, a topic on which I organized an Intercultural Seminar together with Iris Mushitsi and Marissa Pothen on January 2012.

Then, following the class *Peace and Gender* given by Fabricio Forastelli and María José Gámez Fuentes (one of my supervisors) in January 2012, I began to have an interest in the role of women in Muslim countries affected by armed conflicts like Chechnya, Palestine, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan. I thus started to investigate deeper on these women and the narratives of war that we are used to in the mass media and global politics. My principal motivation here is thus to foster a space in which I can question the role of women in armed conflict within Islamic societies as well as the hegemonic visions that are still dominating our thoughts regarding violent women. I was also tired of the overall submissive and orientalist view that Western societies have regarding women in general and Muslim women in particular. Actually, I do feel that the motivation of this Thesis is also to investigate deeper what Gender Studies and Terrorism Studies can bring to Peace Studies in general, but particularly to the Philosophy for Peace at Jaume I University.

Then, my last, and possibly my most important motivation has to do with my interest of career for two main reasons. First, I wish to contribute to both the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace and the Canadian Research Chair on Conflict and Terrorism with regards to women and violence by building a bridge between the various forms of knowledge that have left impressions on myself and my academic path. In other words, I hope this Thesis will fulfill my desire of engaging in a deeper academic commitment regarding women, war and peace. Second, I also hope that this Thesis will provide a pathway for me into field work

which I wish to begin in the following months with a women's organization in Colombia that is working with demobilized women. Therefore, this Thesis is helpful for me in the sense that it lays the groundwork for a wider understanding of women and violence which, I hope, will help me profoundly in the future.

But I should say that, following Judith Butler, my principal motivation here is to make "lives more equally grievable, and, hence, more livable" (2009: viii) and provoke a vibrant debate on the value of the body in global politics.

3. Project relevance and justification

This project is relevant because it questions our dominant notions and/or perceptions regarding violent women in order to contribute to the area of Gender Studies within Peace Studies. By questioning the acquired notions regarding women and terrorism, specifically suicide bombers, a path forward can be made in the understanding of violence and thus, in the creation of a more peaceful intervention regarding FSB. Furthermore, this project is also pertinent because it will help to reaffirm and make more complex the importance of studying the performativity of the female body within the Philosophy for Peace. It also engages us in a critical debate on the contemporary violence, and specifically radical suicidal violence by interrogating how it can be possible and what are the conditions that facilitate its emergence.

Moreover, the phenomenon of FSB has clearly been studied under comparative analysis, motivations analysis or directly under the banner of "security threat". That is to say that this project is relevant because it centralizes the question of FSB on the core problem which is the use of the body of a woman in order to commit a violent act. Such a conceptualization counterbalances the flow of information we receive daily regarding FSB due to the fact that they are actually an important media target. The reconceptualization of FSB from a gender and philosophical perspective is evidently relevant since the problem is

“hypervisibilized” (Agra Romero, 2012: 55) and consequently gaining much more importance for terrorist organizations, which perpetuates the cycle of violence. In this regard, it is necessary to critically analyze this phenomenon (within Peace Studies) in order to transform this vicious cycle of violence into a better representation of the role of women in Muslim societies, and maybe ultimately, through this comprehension, foster nonviolent responses and, possibly, gender equality.

4. Hypothesis and guiding questions

Current hegemonic narratives on FSB render women devoid of agency and, in order to better understand the phenomenon, the body as a social entity needs to be brought at the forefront of the analysis.

Accompanying this hypothesis, there are three questions that are guiding this investigation and they are intrinsically related to the chapter of this Thesis:

- (1) How has gender been discussed and portrayed in relation to terrorism and how can we rethink those links within the Philosophy for Peace?
- (2) How is the phenomenon currently debated? What are the underlying hegemonic narratives regarding FSB in the scientific literature?
- (3) What is the importance of the body, its vulnerability and precariousness (Butler, 2009) in the decision to commit a suicide bombing? Do the frames of war possibly explain the emergence of radical suicidal violence?

5. Objectives

The general objective of the Thesis is to analyze and problematize, from a gender perspective, the phenomenon of female suicidal violence in the context of political violence in North Caucasus, Iraq and Palestine by creating a philosophical framework that will allow a

better understanding of women implicated in suicide bombings. This Thesis will have three specific objectives:

- (1) To situate, rethink and enhance the debate on terrorism and gender within the framework of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, and the broader area of Peace Studies, in order to lay the theoretical foundations for this Thesis.
- (2) To contribute to the knowledge on FSB by deconstructing the hegemonic narratives and our own perceptions of their violence with the aim of promoting a “critical and pluralistic thinking” (UNESCO, 2006: 550) on women’s violence within the Philosophy for Peace.
- (3) To investigate, in counter position to the hegemonic narratives, the centrality of the body in the female suicidal violence and its relationship with the precariousness instilled by the frames of war (Butler, 2009).

6. Methodology and theoretical framework

The methodology that will be applied for this Thesis is qualitative since it projects to be using content analysis of descriptions and narratives as well as literature review. The Thesis proposed will follow a deductive approach as it will try to draw conclusions regarding the phenomenon of FSB from a theoretical framework offered by Gender Studies, Philosophy for Peace and Terrorism Studies. The overall methodology will be characterized by a review of the existing literature on the topic together with a critical discussion and confrontation of the authors with the aim of constructing a philosophical framework to analyze the violence of FSB.

The theoretical framework of this Thesis will be constructed around what has been discussed during the seminar *Peace and Gender* in January 2012 at University Jaume I in Spain. It will be organized around three important areas of studies regarding the topic of gender, terrorism and FSB. The first chapter will adopt a literature review insisting on the

centrality of using an interdisciplinary approach to FSB. It will confront bibliography from the Philosophy for Peace, Feminist Theory and Terrorism Studies in order to recover the importance of taking into account the body and the intersubjectivity in the apprehension of violence while critically analyzing the current debates on gender and terrorism. To this end, the principal authors that will be used are the following: Comins Mingol (2001; 2010), Martínez Guzmán (2005; 2010), París Albert (2007; 2009), Gámez Fuentes (2013), Campana (2006; 2010; 2011), Tilly (2004; 2005), Jackson (2008; 2009), Butler (1988; 2007; 2009), Confortini (2006) and Sjoberg & Gentry (2007; 2008), among others.

The method that will be prioritized for the second chapter is the analysis of the different narratives in relation with FSB. Feminist Theory will present itself as a central standpoint for this chapter as it will permit us to tackle the hegemonic narratives regarding these violent women. The principal bibliography will be constituted by the following authors: Sjoberg & Gentry (2007; 2008; 2008a; 2011), Bloom (2005; 2005a; 2007; 2010; 2011), Ahall (2011), Asad (2007), Butler (1988; 2007; 2009), Brunner (2005; 2007; 2007a) and Youzik (2003), among others.

The last chapter of this Thesis will rely on discussions from a critical and philosophical perspective, discussing how we can change the framework within which we understand FSB. The emphasis will be put on the body, highlighting its constitutive vulnerability and precariousness that are exacerbated by the war situation. The argumentation of the chapter will particularly be sustained by Butler's work (1988; 1993; 1997; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2007; 2009; 2010) but also by the following authors: Linos (2010), Asad (2007), McSorley (2013), Cavarero (2009) and Dabashi (2012), among others.

7. Limitations of the research and conceptual precisions

This section is dedicated to the limitations of this research as well as to the conceptual precisions I wish to make before approaching the topic of FSB. There are, obviously, multiple reasons that render this Thesis difficult to conduct at the level of practical investigation. The principal obstacle is that there is no point of carrying out interviews as the death of the perpetrator of the violence is almost certain. Otherwise, the access to the women that tried to commit suicidal violence but failed is also problematic as they are under custody. In any way, and as it will be commented on this Thesis, relying on the narratives of the ‘survivors’ might lead to misconceptions as it must not be forgotten that these women act within a cultural and political context.

In fact, this complicates the investigation as it forces the researcher to rely on second hand data that, most of the time, are difficult to verify (Qazi, 2011: 32). It seems that lots of disconnections appear between the various testimonies: for example, in Palestine, the various testimonies of the family and friends of FSB sometimes do not necessarily corroborate with the political statement made by the bomber herself (Toles Patkin, 2004: 84). Therefore, the real impact of FSB is hard to measure as working with second-hand sources implicates more imprecisions in the analysis. To this difficulty, it should be added that the majority of terrorist organizations are operating under secretiveness, which complicates the transmission of information and definitely blurs the tracks on FSB’s motives. This is partly why I will not focus on the motives of the women bombers as will be argued throughout this Thesis, but on the embodiment of political identities in the framework of the “war on terror” (Repo, 2006: 33).

However, throughout this Thesis, I will try to minimize the negative impacts regarding second-hand data as I will rely on a large and complete variety of articles and books: this will permit a comparative analysis that reduces the risk of reproducing misconceptions about FSB.

Obviously, there is no guarantee that this will tackle all the empirical and practical problems, but it will surely help to portray the phenomenon as fair as possible.

As the second part of this section, I wish to comment on two specific concepts: patriarchy and religion (and by extension the concept of jihad). Patriarchy has long been the main target of feminism, being interpreted as the reason behind oppression. However, I decided not to engage in a specific discussion on patriarchy even though some would argue that it is a central problem to analyze regarding FSB. I consider that it is true that Chechnya, Palestine and Iraq might experience strong traditions of patriarchy, but I contend that the concept is too broad and too “Western” to be applied in this Thesis. It has effectively become easy to accuse the abstract patriarchy of oppressing women and conducting them to violence. It has also become too broad to precisely explain the phenomenon. Finally, I also think that it is a Western view on gender relation. Effectively, as Grewal argues: “Some cultures are understood solely through patriarchy while others are seen to have outgrown it (2013: 2). It seems that Muslim societies are largely understood from this perspective; they are categorized as fundamentally patriarchal and the frames within which honor killings, suicide bombings or terrorism are comprehended are mostly based on this concept of oppression through patriarchy. I will definitely refer to some elements found in patriarchy, but I decided not to employ this term as it fails to explain gender interrelations in my point of view.

Second, I want to clarify why I do not deal precisely with religion in this Thesis considering that a high level of attention is given to faith in analyzing and reporting suicide bombings, male or female. In fact, since 9/11, there are lots of cultural assumptions made towards Muslims all around the world, with few nuances regarding their religion as they are categorized as violent terrorists. There are some reasons why I consider that religion is not essential to my analysis. I do consider that Islam does not determine political violence because the religion in itself does not endorse any violent practices as suicide bombing

(Gonzalez-Perez, 2011: 51). Furthermore, there is “no previous for religiously motivated suicide in Islam” (Gonzalez-Perez, 2011: 51) as “killing non-Muslim” or “avenging a wrong done” for religious motives is strictly prohibited by Islam, even more when the element of suicide is added as it is forbidden in Islam (Tahir Ul-Qadri, 2010: 9-11 & 35). Obviously, it can be used and instrumentalized in order to legitimize political violence, but it is one among many motives that may influence FSB. Religion is sometimes portrayed as the principal reason for suicide bombings, but I will not go in that direction as I agree with Salzkai (2012) when she considers that the phenomenon must be analyzed under the lenses of tradition more than religion as it is the interpretation of religious texts that lead to the legitimization of gender hierarchies and political violence in the name of religion. Finally, I also decided to ward off the term “jihad,” because of the widespread use of the word without any critical observance of the etymology of the word that has nothing to do with “holy war” as it is always translated to in English. It is a fact that “in recent years, militant Islamists have raised *jihad* to the level of an individual religious duty (*fard al-‘ayn*)” but without the agreement and consent of Muslim jurists (Asad, 2007: 12). In fact, the Arabic roots of the word (j.h.d) refer to effort and discipline in the everyday life of Muslims (Al-Gharbi, 2008: 3; Qazi, 2011: 36), even though there is a difference between minor and major jihad². The idea of martyrdom through jihad is a modern idea, as the Quran “does not make explicit use of the word *shahid* to signify someone who dies in God’s cause” (Asad, 2007: 52). Consequently, I will consider FSB as a political strategy as it will be explained in chapter two, avoiding the utilization of the word “jihad” considering that it directly relates suicide operations with religion.

² There is two jihad, one major, one minor. The major one has to do with the spiritual life of each Muslim, the goal being a spiritual purification following the teaching of the Prophet. The minor one is related to the defense of the Muslim community against exterior offensive: this is the branch that has been strongly instrumentalized by political Islam and largely misinterpreted (Aoun, 2007: 48-49).

8. Historical and geographical context of the investigation

While only 8 were successful, 96 Palestinian women tried to commit suicide bombing between 2002 and 2009 (Bloom, 2011: 128). Female attacks occurred in Somalia, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan during the last years (Ahmed Ali, 2005; O'Rourke, 2009: 698; Davis, 2013: 288). In Chechnya, FSB have been perpetrating attacks since 2000 and have been involved in 22 out of 27 suicide attacks³ (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006: 63) while in Iraq, FSB has increased 400% in 2008 (Bloom, 2010: 449) with 35 suicide bombings committed by women that same year (Gonzalez-Perez, 2011: 59). The overall panorama shows that “women carried out approximately 26% of all suicide attacks” between 1981 and 2007, with a notable increase in these acts since 2005 (Brown, 2011: 194). If we can note a significant increase in the number of attacks perpetrated by women, the different countries where suicide bombings occurred present strong variations in the political strategy of armed groups, cultural identities and gender relations. For example, the armed groups in both Chechnya and Palestine have adopted the rhetoric of religion and suicide bombings after their failing attempts at secular nationalism (Standish, 2008) while in Iraq, it began with the American invasion of 2003 (see Appendix I for the summary of the suicide attacks perpetrated by women in North Caucasus, Israel-Palestine and Iraq).

Therefore, in this Thesis, I do not contend to cover in depth the conflicts in which FSB are involved: this would be a huge task, beyond the scope of the analysis I wish to conduct. My unit of analysis will not be the different conflicts, but the women; Muslim women, in three war-torn regions. As I wanted to insist on the rising use of female subjects in the perpetration of those acts, I chose to incorporate three conflictive regions: Iraq, Israel and Palestine and the North Caucasus. I am clearly conscious that all of these conflicts are complex as most of them implicate a wide range of actors and present a long duration in time.

³ Suicide bombings and suicide attacks are used indifferently throughout this thesis.

However, my intention in this section is to situate the reader on the areas I will refer to during the Thesis but my analysis will focus on the *gender perspective* on FSB. Thus, this brief section will rely on the most recent reports made by the *Escola de Cultura de Pau* (ECP) from Barcelona as it provides the reader with a quick, simple and assertive overview on these conflicts. These reports are: *Alerta! – Informe sobre conflictos, derechos humanos y construcción de paz* and *Barómetro 30 sobre conflictos y construcción de paz – Julio-Septiembre 2012*. However, the reader must be conscious that this is a general overview regarding these conflicts, that many other authors must be consulted in order to better understand them and that this section serves only as a starting point for the analysis on women I propose to elaborate.

First of all, before explaining briefly each conflict, there is a need to point out which definition of armed conflict will be used in this Thesis. Since most of the analysis is based on the discussions regarding peace and conflicts within the Spanish context, I will borrow the definition of Fisas (2004: 14):

In this study by armed conflict, we understand any confrontation led by groups of diverse nature, such as regular or irregular military forces, armed opposition groups, paramilitary groups or ethnic or religious communities, with weapon or other means of destruction, and organized, which provoke more than a hundred victims in one year through meaningful acts, whatever their justification. The number of a hundred deaths is, certainly an indicator that must be relativized depending on other elements, such as the total population of the country and the geographical scope of the armed conflict, as well as the level of destruction generated and the forced displacements of the population involved⁴.

As such, all the regions I chose to talk about are considered as armed conflicts following the classification of the ECP. Regarding that definition, the only conflict with major intensity in

⁴ Original: “En este estudio entendemos por conflicto armado todo enfrentamiento protagonizado por grupos de diversa índole, tales como fuerzas militares regulares o irregulares, grupos armados de oposición, grupos paramilitares o comunidades étnicas o religiosas que, con armas u otros medios de destrucción, y organizados, provocan más de cien víctimas en un año a través de actos intencionados, sea cuál sea su justificación. La cifra de cien muertes es, por supuesto, un indicador que debe relativizarse en función de otros elementos, como la población total del país y el alcance geográfico del conflicto armado, así como el nivel de destrucción generado y los desplazamientos forzados de población que conlleva.” (Personal translation)

2012 that will be discussed here is Iraq (Fisas & others, 2012: 17). However, the number of deaths is not necessarily an exhaustive data: human rights abuses and gender inequalities (Fisas & others, 2012: 26) have been a recurrent pattern in all of the areas in question here. Thus, the reader must be aware of this while reading this Thesis. As a matter of introducing the reader to the conflict, here is a table based on the *Resumen de los conflictos armados en el año 2011* of the *Alerta!* report (2012: 30-32). It portrays the key points of each conflict:

Table 1: Summary of the related conflicts

Country	Actors	Intensity	Type
Iraq Beginning: 2003	Government, International Coalition led by the USA & UK, opposition groups (internal & external), Al-Qaeda in Iraq	High	Internal - Internationalized
Israel-Palestine Beginning: 2000 (Second Intifada)	Israel Government, colonists militias, Palestine National Authority, Fatah (Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, Hamas (Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, PFLP, DFLP, Popular Resistance Committees	Low with violence increasing in 2011	International*
Russia-Chechnya Beginning: 1999	Russian Federal Government, Chechen Republic Government, armed opposition groups	Low with no significant changes in 2011	Internal
Russia-Dagestan Beginning: 2010 (with increasing violence since 2003)	Russian Federal Government, Dagestan Republic Government, armed opposition groups	Medium/High with violence increasing in 2011	Internal

*Both the *Barómetro* and *Alerta!* consider the armed conflict between Israel and Palestine as international in the sense that Palestine has its own government over a territory occupied illegally by Israel. Those reports also consider it as internationalized since neither International Law nor United Nations recognizes Palestine as belonging to Israel (2012: 45; 2012: 32).

8.1 Iraq

The Iraq war began in 2003 when the USA, affirming some links between Saddam Hussein, the 9/11 events and weapon of mass destruction, invaded the country with the support of an international coalition with a predominance of the UK. As shown in the table,

the conflict rapidly showed a multitude of actors involved in a complex situation. The various groups, the Sunnis, the Kurds and the Shiites, were affected by the changing regime and manifested their discontent violently. Thus, the sectarian element coupled with the invasion complicated the situation, especially since 2006. As it is the case for Afghanistan, the withdrawal announced by Washington did not improve the crisis in Iraq as the security was still volatile and numerous attacks were perpetrated killing a lot of civilians. It has been recognized that the majority of violent acts, even if not all, have been conducted by groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda, Shiite groups or unknown insurgents (Fisas & others, 2012: 74-75; Fisas & others, 2012a: 44).

8.2 Israel-Palestine

The long-standing conflict between Israel and Palestine is complex, involves multiple internal and external actors and has been discussed from various points of view. The numerous attempts of peace have never borne fruit and one of the major fiascos has been the Oslo Accord in 1993-1994. Even if the conflict between Israel and Palestine began in 1947 with the UN division of the territory, followed by the formation of the state of Israel in 1948, I will focus here on the events that took place after the Second Intifada in 2000.

Recently, Israel constantly intensified the installation of new settlements in Palestinian territory while completely ignoring the Palestinian requests. The recent years have been marked by offensive from both parts of the conflict, between air strikes, forced displacements and explosive attacks. The international community failed again during the last two years in positively contributing to the transformation of the conflict; it seems that the United States constantly uses its veto to prevent any progress towards peace. Obviously, civilians from both parts are still suffering from indiscriminate attacks, human rights abuses and/or forced displacements. Even more shocking, Palestinians' housing has been destroyed near Hebron with the aim of constructing training camps for Israeli soldiers. Lastly, it should be added that

Gaza is confronting several urgent problems regarding health, education and water supply (Fisas & others, 2012: 75; Fisas & others, 2012a: 45).

8.3 North Caucasus

8.3.1 Russia-Chechnya

The end of the Cold War changed the balance of power and the Soviet Republics got their independence from Moscow. Things were not that easy for the Chechens as the independence was self-claimed in 1991 but Boris Yeltsin's Russia violently reacted to this declaration sending troops in 1994. The first Chechen war lasted until 1996 with peace agreements that did not really resolve the Chechen issue.

The second Chechen war started with both the attacks by Chechens in Russian cities and by the incursion in Dagestan of Chechen rebels. The elections context favored the decision of Putin to enter again in Chechnya and fight the moderate regime established after the first war. Officially, the war ended in 2001 with the implementation of a pro-Russian administration in Chechnya. However, confrontations have continued since then, Chechen rebels slowly began to radicalize their struggle legitimizing it through religion while the conflict seemed to have regionalized, above all to Dagestan. Moreover, attacks have persisted, civilians are still the first targets (both in Russia and North Caucasus) and there are massive human right abuses, forced disappearances as well as illegal detentions and kidnappings (Fisas & others, 2012: 66; Fisas & others, 2012a: 36).

8.3.2 Russia-Dagestan

The conflict in Dagestan is the most recent one as it intensified in 2010. In the report *Alerta!*, it is specified that Dagestan is confronted by increasing violence since the 90s, but mostly since 2002-2003. The principal insurgency, which claimed to be Islamist, is looking to establish an Islamic state in the North Caucasus. In fact, the conflict is the result of various factors, of which we can identify the proximity of the Chechen insurgency and its

regionalization, the massive human rights abuses in Dagestan as well as the existent interethnic tensions and criminality. Since 2010, suicide bombings increased in Dagestan in the meantime the number of civilians victims increased 40%. The situation got worse in the last two years, with an important impact on the civil population that publicly complained about human rights violations committed by the security forces (Fisas & others, 2012: 66-67; Fisas & others, 2012a: 37).

To conclude, I want to insist on the fact that the phenomenon of FSB is quite new in some countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, one specific case occurred in 2010 (NCTC, 2013: 13) but the gender-oppressive society favored the use of women's clothes by men to perpetrate suicide bombings, which is particularly interesting for our argument (Fardanews, 2013⁵) but not relevant enough to include the country in our analysis. In Iraq, most of the FSB have been used by the affiliated branch of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2011: 15); it is also relevant to our argumentation since Al-Qaeda has always been recognized as a patriarchal organization. We witnessed more cases in the Dagestan since 2010. However, most of the cases that will be addressed here happened in Palestine and Chechnya, since these regions presented the majority of the cases. I am aware that the LTTE from Sri Lanka is an important case regarding FSB as a relevant part of its armed combatants was composed of women. Nevertheless, I want to insist on the geographical, cultural and religious resemblance of the above cases and for that reason I discarded the LTTE. Then, some cases have been found recently in Somalia, but I will not look into that conflict since there is no serious database that compiled explicitly FSB in that country. I also thought that the countries I chose were pertinent in the sense that I do want to emphasize on *gender* and I think gender is an intrinsic component of the struggle in all of these regions.

⁵ Translated from Persian to English with the help of Lida Ahmad.

9. Outline of the Thesis

As described above regarding objective and theoretical framework, this Thesis will be interdisciplinary and thus divided in five parts: the introduction, three chapters and the conclusions. The first chapter will offer an overview to the reader regarding how terrorism and gender have been discussed in Peace Studies in general and Philosophy for Peace specifically. It will also reach one of the goals of the UNESCO Chairs which is to “foster respect on the basis of knowledge of other cultures and realities” by opening the way to new debates regarding Islamic Feminism (UNESCO, 2006: 550). The second chapter will serve as a conceptual framework in order to understand the case of FSB through the analysis of the hegemonic narratives that have been dominating large fringes of the academic literature. Finally, the third chapter, will present the philosophical perspective on FSB by giving special attention to the body, its vulnerability and precariousness analyzed in the frames of war initiated by the ‘war on terror’.

Chapter 1

Gender and Terrorism within Peace Studies: Where Do We Stand? State of the Art

My human condition, the condition of this people, the freedom of the human being, and the freedom of peoples. It's an important struggle, a good struggle, that gives you hope, that structures your psychology. Because everyone comes from somewhere, and on top of eating and sleeping you have to have something inside, something that makes you get up, live, dream, love, and that means, unfortunately, unfortunately, shooting.
**-Woman member of the ETA
(Narrator 1 in Hamilton, 2007: 916)**

Can we figure out any relation between Terrorism Studies and Gender Studies? Can Peace Studies provide a favorable ground to analyze this relationship? At first glance, the three areas look incompatible to one another. It seems that Peace Studies and Gender Studies have been developing a growing connection with regards to the condemnation of the patriarchal system of domination and its link with the perpetuation of war system (Comins Mingol, 2001: 193). However, Terrorism Studies has been largely dominated by International Relations theorists and the term terrorism in itself “remains a controversial and loosely defined term, often used in sensationalist ways, and applied to diverse and even unrelated phenomena” (Hamilton, 2010: 95). Consequently, this Thesis is arguing that these three fields of study may not only be considered interrelated, but *need* to contribute to one another in an interdisciplinary way.

With that being said, while the objective of this Thesis is to problematize the phenomenon of female suicidal violence, the purpose of this chapter is to situate, rethink and enhance the debate on terrorism and gender within the framework of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, and the broader area of Peace Studies, in order to lay the theoretical foundations for this Thesis. This chapter does not aim to make a complete account of what

has been discussed on the topic of gender, terrorism and suicide attacks, but rather it tries to initiate a dialogue within Peace Studies regarding these subjects.

To concretize this, I propose a literature review to contrast and compare the recent research within the areas of peace, gender and terrorism. The present chapter concentrates on three specific objectives:

- (1) To stress the importance of taking into account the body and the intersubjectivity in the apprehension of terrorist violence;
- (2) To investigate the contribution of the Spanish conceptualization of Philosophy for Peace to the understanding of gender and armed conflict, and;
- (3) To critically analyze the debate regarding gender within Terrorism Studies.

As a result, this chapter will be divided in two sections. The first one aims to position the debate of gender and violence within the discussion that has been taking place in the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace at Jaume I University. More specifically, it also attempts to establish a stronger link between the Feminist Theory and the Philosophy for Peace in order to better comprehend the dynamics around women's violence, specifically suicide bombers.

The second section will be grounded in the field of Terrorism Studies. For the purpose of this study, and due to the fact that this field of investigation is as broad as it is diverse, I will focus on the discussions that were initiated by the Critical Studies on Terrorism (Jackson, Smyth & Gunning, 2009) and the constant dialogue I had with Dr. Campana within the Canadian Research Chair on Conflict and Terrorism. The section aims to portray the current trends on terrorism and gender as well as the necessity to build the bridge with Peace Studies.

In sum, this is the pathway I propose to follow as a point of departure to this Master's Thesis. It will help the reader to understand the overall debates on gender and terrorism, and more specifically women and terrorism, as well as it will build the foundations for a better understanding of violent women within the framework of Peace Studies. It will thus assist us in summarizing some key points in our field of study, that is to say Peace Studies, with the aim of contributing to the ongoing discussion on violence and gender.

1. Philosophy for Peace

The first section of this chapter aims to recover the centrality of the Philosophy for Peace to the study of FSB. In fact, from my point of view, the Philosophy for Peace provides the groundwork for the actual state of the question in which gender, women, body and terrorism are discussed within the UNESCO Chair at Jaume I University, and more broadly, within Peace Studies. In order to effectively make an account of the interrelation of the investigations on peace, gender and terrorism, this section will be divided as follows: a conceptual examination of the Philosophy for Peace, the analysis of the “epistemological shift” (Martínez Guzmán, 2005: 66) and the relevance of a gender perspective within Peace Studies, the contribution of the Philosophy for Peace to the study of body and emotions and, finally, the state of the question on the dialogue between Feminist Theory and Peace Studies *vis-à-vis* violent women.

1.1 Philosophy for Peace: What are we talking about?

As explained in the introduction of this Thesis, the present investigation is based on what has been discussed since 1999 within the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace created by Dr. Martínez Guzmán with the aim of promoting a culture of peace (UJI, 2013). The Philosophy for Peace enables us to incorporate new thoughts within Peace Studies as an interdisciplinary area and, provides the path forward to make relevant contributions to the study of terrorism, particularly FSB. Conscious that the vast area of Philosophy for Peace

cannot be covered here, the idea of this section is to make a portrait of the basic concepts that nurture this branch of Peace Studies.

The Philosophy for Peace is a philosophical approach to the Investigation for Peace under the wider field of Peace Studies. Within the framework of the UNESCO Chair, it conceives its own mission as trying to alleviate human suffering (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 184) finding other alternatives to respond to conflicts and marginalization with a deep belief in the fact that we can change the way we react and respond to one another (Martínez Guzmán, 2007: 179-180). It is a commitment to change our relation to violence into a more comprehensive and constructive approach by retaking the “human competencies⁶” that foster peace (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 189).

The Philosophy for Peace, inspired by Kant’s philosophy (Martínez Guzmán, 2005: 89), explores new venues in the field of peace and conflict. It deliberately moves away from the traditional conceptualization of war and peace (Ahmed Ali, 2005; Alcañiz Moscardó, 2009: 44), trying to give visibility to other forms of violence that are less apparent than others. Framing the violence as the rupture of the communicative power and intersubjectivity (Martínez Guzmán, 2005: 91), the Philosophy for Peace follows Johan Galtung in its conceptualization of the three forms of violence: direct, structural and cultural (París Albert, 2009: 173). Those forms of violence are not necessarily visible and might be difficult to manage, as I will argue throughout my analysis of the FSB. In the case of this study, all the manifestations of violence examined by Galtung are present. Directly, terrorism is a physical and psychological threat to its victims (and in our case, to its perpetrators); structurally, women are also victims of a war context where state violence is omnipresent and, culturally, masculine domination is instituted following cultural norms. All of these forms of violence perpetuate violence against women and contribute to marginalize other forms of bodily

⁶ Original: “*competencias humanas*” (personal translation).

interpretations that fall outside the established gender norms (Butler, 1988: 522). As one of the main goals of the Philosophy for Peace, and Peace Studies in general, is to denounce violence and make it more visible (Martínez Guzmán, Comins Mingol & París Albert: 2009: 97), this offers us the perfect foundation to initiate an analysis of the different forms of violence, visible and invisible, regarding women and suicide bombings.

For the purpose of this study, what interests us is the recognition by the Philosophy for Peace that we, human beings, are inherently vulnerable and fragile (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 37; París Albert, 2009: 25). We are living in a constant interrelation with others: the experience of living is thus everything except private (Pintos Peñaranda, 2010: 55). This led the theorists of the Philosophy for Peace to begin to incorporate the Feminist Theory to their investigations (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 42), more precisely the feminism issued through the Critical Theory that retakes the discursive philosophy as a way to reach emancipation (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 181). The investigations carried out by the UNESCO Chair have been constructing and contributing to the gender perspective within Peace Studies by incorporating the works of Elise Boulding, Betty Reardon, Judith Butler, Seyla Benhabib, Carmen Magallón and many others (SIP, 2009: 388; Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 42). Throughout the years, the Philosophy for Peace has developed a critique of the masculine domination of the world and the relation between the war system and the oppression of women (Comins Mingol, 2001: 193). Therefore, the Philosophy for Peace serves here as a starting point to our analysis since it takes gender into account, and more importantly women, in the study of conflicts (Ahmed Ali, 2005; Comins Mingol, 2007: 93). It puts into question the traditional dichotomies peace/women and war/men that have been dominating the literature on terrorism, international relations, and to a certain extent feminism, for so long (Ahmed Ali, 2005; Gámez Fuentes, 2010: 151).

1.2 “Epistemological shift⁷”: Gender as an analytical category

As I mentioned in the above section, the Philosophy for Peace insists on human fragility as a factor that can contribute to violence if we do not recognize it. From there, Martínez Guzmán proposed an “epistemological shift” in our understanding of violence (see Appendix II for the whole conceptual framework), moving from an objective comprehension of reality to an intersubjective one (2005: 91-94).

The epistemological shift consists of an innovative approach to violence: it changes the conception of conflicts from an objective one towards a performative attitude. Hence, it questions the masculine conception of reality from which we have been interpreting the world in order to move forward an intersubjective perspective of human relations (Martínez Guzmán, 2005: 91). From there, the relation between the subjects and the power relations between them became a priority. It not only opens the path to consider the suffering of the injustices in the world, but it also inserts the importance of Feminist Studies for the field of Peace Studies. Indeed, the epistemological shift introduces two substantial inputs for this research: the necessity to incorporate the gender perspective to our study of violent and/or intrapersonal conflicts as well as the significance of the body recognition. It tries to go beyond the androcentric comprehension of the world by including a gender category to its analyses and thus creates new manners of understanding masculinities and femininities (Martínez Guzmán, 2005: 94). The Philosophy for Peace recognizes that the whole tradition of Western philosophy has been influenced by a vision of the woman as a “mere receptor of a new being,” following Platonist perception of the mother (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 38-39) and that this perception needs to be challenged in order to counter violence.

The centrality of the analysis regarding gender is focused around the fact that gender is socially constructed and thus, that gender roles are also socially established and have

⁷ Original: “*giro epistemológico*” (personal translation).

nothing to do with biological determinism (Comins Mingol, 2007: 96). Judith Butler has had a great influence on the theorization of gender within the Philosophy for Peace (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 42) and in the conceptualization, together with Merleau-Ponty, of the subject as a sexed body (Butler, 1988: 520; Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 178). In the Philosophy for Peace, we are not abstract subjects or entities: we are concrete, sexed subjects, moving from one identity to another (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 126). This will be of primary importance in the analysis of FSB since, even though our approach is from a gender perspective, we need to be conscious that these violent women have multiple identities. However, the gender perspective helps us to recognize how these identities are interrelated and how our perception of gender roles also contributes to the perpetuation of violence. To recognize gender as a category is thus essential to our understanding of cultural and social violence; it gives visibility to the gendered character of violence in almost all societies (Forastelli, 2012: 120).

The recognition of gender perspective within Peace Studies is, as I will argue in the section on terrorism, also a prerogative for the study of violent women, and particularly of FSB in the case that interests us. It underscores the relevance of overcoming the gendered dichotomies that inhabit us daily (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 171): our collective imaginaries are drawn upon a perception that a warrior is a male, that the mother is nurturing and that no transsexuals are ever involved in violence. Violent women do not fit the gendered norms, they are socially not known as “normal” while violent men are expected to show their physical force.

Moreover, the acceptance of gender perspective as an analytical category allows us to go further: it criticizes the gender neutral perspective on the study of violence and permits a “construction of a more complex approach to women’s violence” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 22). In fact, as Confortini argued criticizing Galtung’s theory of being gender blind, “violence

produces and defines gender identities and, in turn, is produced and defined by them” (2006: 333). In such a manner, the world is molded by gender meanings (Confortini, 2006: 342) and avoiding its consideration within Peace Studies will impede gender equity (Gámez Fuentes, 2010: 154). In our analysis of FSB, this will be central as I postulate that the terrorism phenomenon cannot be understood without the gender perspective in this case.

Summarizing, the epistemological shift is serving as a basis to our argumentation. To acknowledge a distinct vision on violence, the Philosophy for Peace suggests accepting the human fragility and to put forward a performative attitude which has been first theorized by Austin (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 164), and later taken into the Feminist Theory by Judith Butler following Bourdieu and Derrida (Martínez Guzmán, 2007: 181). We can argue that this has been one of the biggest contributions of the Philosophy for Peace to gendered violence (Comins Mingol, 2010: 80). It permits us to link it with symbolic violence (Gámez Fuentes, 2010: 147) and better understand the performativity of the body of FSB. It also gives a way to understand terrorism from a gender perspective as well as within Peace Studies. Moreover, it opens our thoughts on what regulates our social relations, on how our body is a social entity and how we can question the hegemonic discourses on gender and especially on FSB as will be defended in the second chapter. But before this, and returning to the performativity, the next section aims to portray a picture of the relevance of studying bodies and emotions while analyzing FSB.

1.2.1 Performativity, body and emotions

However, nobody as yet has determined the limits of the body's capabilities:

that is, nobody as yet has learned from experience what the body can

and cannot do, without being determined by mind, solely from

the laws of its nature in so far as it is considered as corporeal.

-Spinoza, *The Ethics* (1992)

The Philosophy for Peace enables us to understand the primacy of a gender perspective on conflict. However, it also induces us to think about the performativity of the acts, how it shapes our conception of gender and how we socially learn gender subordination. This section tries to put Philosophy for Peace in dialogue with Feminist theory to contend that in the present research, Peace, Gender and Terrorism Studies need to walk hand in hand as to correctly analyze the phenomenon of FSB. As argued by Confortini, “feminism and peace studies have much in common and should not disregard the contributions they can each make to the other’s field” (2006: 334). For this reason, this section will address three particular reciprocal contributions between Feminist Theory and Peace Studies that give us some tools for this Thesis: the performativity, the body and the consideration of emotions within international relations.

1.2.1.1 Performativity

The epistemological shift leads me to deeper analyze the notion of performativity. These reflections on the necessity of studying the performativity together with FSB came up specifically from the seminar *Paz y Género* within the Master in Peace, Conflicts and Development where I started interrogating myself on the *self* and the *others*; on how we choose to conform and what is restricted to our prescribed gender. This section further explains the state of the art on performativity.

As mentioned above, the Philosophy for Peace draws upon various authors regarding performativity such as Derrida, Bourdieu and more repeatedly to Austin (Martínez Guzmán, 2007). Austin has first attributed the word “performativity” to such utterances that are not only “saying” or “observing” something, but which constitute an action *per se* (Austin, 1962). The Philosophy for Peace has taken Austin’s theorization of performativity as a foundation for the comprehension of symbolic language, as a possibility to generate other forms of talking and acting with others and as a responsibility to each other (Martínez Guzmán, 2007).

In this sense, “the ‘self’ is no longer an isolated thing⁸” and the performative attitude commits us to our interrelation with others (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 43 & 45).

I will not discuss further the philosophy of Austin (see chapter 3 for further discussion on the topic), and by extension on the conflict transformation dimension theorized by the Philosophy for Peace. Rather, I will focus on the performativity as reinterpreted by Butler as she defined the performativity of gender as a social construction. I am interested in the theorization of performativity of Butler because it focuses on the body and its multiple possibilities of engaging in political actions. Butler theorized gender performativity from the idea of linguistic performativity of Austin, the interpretation and critique of the work of Austin by Derrida but also by actualizing Bourdieu’s work on the topic (Martínez Guzmán, 2007: 181; Brady & Schirato, 2010: 45). Butler adopted a genealogical method as she refused to rely on the origins of gender but rather focus on the underlying political interests of the gender category of identity (Martínez Guzmán, 2007: 182).

Henceforth, gender is performative in the sense that it is not bounded by a stable identity, “rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time —an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (Butler, 1988: 519). Butler retakes the iterative theorization from Derrida as she insists in that “gender performativity operates through precisely the same logic of repetition and citation” (Brady & Schirato, 2010: 46) and constitutes a sequence of acts from where “the body comes to bear cultural meanings” (Butler, 1988: 520). Consequently, gender is not an essence but it is constituted through certain acts (Butler, 2007: 17) and this takes on its full meaning when considering FSB, the gender roles in which they are inscribed and how they become violent. In fact, if gender permits us to understand how gender is constructed through performance, it also allows us to perform subversive gender construction

⁸ Original: “*el “yo” deja de ser una cosa aislada*” (personal translation).

(Butler, 2007: 275) that enables us to analyze gender categories outside the established norms, which means to comprehend better how a woman can perform violent acts.

The notion of performativity has been taken here to articulate the argumentation about how the “norms of gender through which I come to understand myself or my survivability are not made by me alone” (Butler, 2009: 53), but they are socially bounded. Thus, the performativity helps us to understand that through a repetition of acts, we learn the way our gender needs to perform: we learn the heteronormative gender roles in society. This is from where we acquire how to act in society as prescribed by our gender. From a repetition of acts, we learn that a woman needs to be nurturing, that a man needs to maintain his virility by being a protector but at the same time stronger and more disposed to violence. These collective actions of acquiring established gender norms are very useful at the time of analyzing suicide bombers, in particular female ones: a FSB does not fit in any of the categories from where we usually analyze women. But more importantly, if the performativity of the body assists us in the understanding of the phenomenon of FSB, it also opens the way to a deeper comprehension of women’s violence and thus, permits us to consider other human capabilities to change these violent and repetitive actions (Martínez Guzmán, 2005a: 16-17)

In the end, as I will argue in this Thesis, it appears that women are “theoretically” included in global politics, but the reality is that there is still a lot of work ahead concerning gender equity. As Sjoberg and Gentry maintain, the “discursive and performative elements of gender subordination” (2007: 10) would help us to better understand the hegemonic narratives on violent women but also the phenomenon of FSB in itself. Specially, we will see that the acts, discourses, practices and institutions are of primary importance when it is time to analyze terrorism in general and FSB in particular, overall after 9/11. Nevertheless, there is a need to specify the centrality of the body in this notion of performativity and I will clarify it in the next section.

1.2.1.2 The body as socially bounded

“The construction of my body as a violent body was not merely my project. It was, in addition, a national project carried out in multiple formal and informal ways alike” (Bar-On, 2002: 150): the body is socially bounded. Obviously, if we cannot reduce our social relations, our actions and inactions to body movements (Martínez Guzmán, 2007: 192), the Philosophy for Peace recognizes that there is a need to recuperate “the value of the body⁹” within peace research as the body is our vehicle through which we can contact the world (París Albert, 2009: 111). The understanding of the body as socially and interdependently constituted (Butler, 2009: 31) is central to the notion of performativity commented above. The body is the one which acts, talks, absorbs and reflects social meanings: “the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time” (Butler, 1988: 523). This section will explore how the body comes to bear meaning in the analysis of FSB.

Until now, and within Philosophy for Peace, the body has been discussed as intrinsically linked to recognition and human identity (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 38-39). The authors of this academic stream stressed the need to adopt a “philosophy of the body¹⁰” that considers both the body as a sexed entity, following the idea put forward by Merleau-Ponty, and as the basis of intersubjectivity and performativity (Butler, 1988: 522; Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 44; Forastelli, 2012: 122).

Within the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, it has been argued that it is impossible to separate our body from the social world we are living in: we are aware of our body because of the world, a world that we know because of the body (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 43). Following that, and from a Kantian perspective, the body is the

⁹ Original: “*el valor del cuerpo*” (personal translation).

¹⁰ Original: “*filosofía del cuerpo*” (personal translation).

incarnation of our fragility and vulnerability (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 56; París Albert, 2009: 25; Agra Romero, 2012: 73). By taking into account the “fragile character of the social bound” (Butler, 2009: viii), the comprehension of the performativity of the body will be considered as essential to how the body is ontologically social and therefore, cannot exist without the consideration of the political organization and frame of interpretation (Butler, 2009: 2-3). This will be further discussed in the third chapter of this Thesis.

Of course, in the case of suicide bombing, the body is physically central to the act (Linos, 2010: 8) and “directly involved in a political field¹¹” (Foucault, 1976: 32). The body becomes political, ideologically marked; it converts itself into a weapon, it carries a message and suggests a wider political or social problem. But in the act of suicide with the aim of killing, the body also has a history and it is a human being, a gendered body that is bounded by a social context.

Evidently, if a body is used as a weapon, it provokes a shock wave. It goes beyond our understanding of life and death, and it may appear more absurd for one culture than for another. Dying for a cause, no matter what it is, is something difficult to comprehend, especially in places where political rights are already acquired. When we hear that a body served as a weapon, it seems easier to find other reasons for the act, like brainwashing, despair or religious extremism (Bauman, 2006: 57). Besides, when that body is a female one, the shock is even higher (Agra Romero, 2012: 57), the incomprehension is greater and the speculation about the motives goes along emotional lines while occulting agency. In other words, the body is a fundamental element at the time of considering both the motivations and the impacts of a suicide attack committed by a woman. It is of a central interest in our investigation because suicide bombing has a finality that goes beyond the “finitude of life”

¹¹ Original: “*el cuerpo está directamente inmerso en un campo político*” (personal translation).

(Butler, 2009: 13-14) which is the destruction of the unity of the body (Agra Romero, 2012: 56), this body that is socially bounded.

Taking into account the body also reminds us that we are all vulnerable, fragile and subject to destruction (Butler, 2009: 43; París Albert, 2009: 25): it brings us back to a deeper comprehension of the relation victim/perpetrator. Besides, an analysis of the body gives us the opportunity to critique the influence of the physical body of women onto our understanding of their violence. It permits us to go beyond the common social association of the female body with reproduction and sexuality (París Albert, 2007: 107 & 109) as it will be discussed in the second chapter. This questions the hegemonic thoughts about what is a violent body (usually associated with men) and what is a vulnerable body (usually associated with women), on how we came to connect women's violence to their capacity of motherhood, on how horrific it is to see a pregnant woman using her body as a weapon and on how it became almost habitual to consider that a man's body serves as a human bomb. To understand this and to deconstruct dichotomies, I suggest that we should follow the proposition of both the Philosophy for Peace and the Feminist Theory and consider emotions as key to human violence.

1.2.1.3 Considering emotions in global politics

For the last part of this section, I wish to emphasize on what I consider an important link between the Philosophy for Peace and Feminist Theory: emotions. I think that it is essential to our understanding both female and male suicide bombers, even though I aspire here to focus solely on female ones.

Throughout their investigation regarding pacific ways of transforming conflicts, the researchers within the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace came to the conclusion that emotions are indispensable to the comprehension of human conflicts, especially within the ethics of care, mostly elaborated by Comins Mingol (2007). What I am specifically interested in here is the importance of emotions in the political sphere of international relations. The

Philosophy for Peace tries to recover the emotions both as a manner to complicate our understanding of violence and as a way to apprehend the suffering of the other (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 161). Viewed in this light, the dichotomy between rationality and emotions is superfluous. In fact, both the investigation for peace and the Feminist Theory assert that choosing between one and the other does not portray political violence exhaustively. Both try to overcome the dichotomy rationality/emotions in order to reflect the complexity of the world, of each human being (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 185; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 7-9). This allows us to adopt lenses through which the pain, trauma or frustrations of FSB can be understood. From that point, a violent woman stops being seen exclusively as a human bomb, but we can shed light on how she is a victim while in the meantime she is a participant within a violent conflict (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 10)

In effect, emotions are part of human lives; they are also part of the lives of suicide bombers. As Saleh (2005) argues in his study conducted in Palestine, most of the time the reasons behind the suicide bombings are explained in terms of lack of education and economic means. However, according to Saleh, grievances, trauma and frustrations also need to be taken into account, for both men and women that are politically engaged. He claims that: “the evidence presented suggests that personal grievances have a considerable weight in motivating attacks” (2005) without of course denying the political motives behind the decisions.

This has led mostly to “essentialize women” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 2) as taking part of political struggle solely for political reasons, diminishing both the agency of women and the possibility for men to engage for emotional reasons. This brings us back to the epistemological shift: an objective understanding of the contemporary conflict, here under the model of rational actor, is false. As Sjoberg and Gentry claim, emotions cannot be removed from the political arena and thus, a feminist perspective on suicide terrorism is vital to make a

more exhaustive account of political violence and, in the case that interests us here, suicide bombing (2008: 5).

As such, emotions as interpreted by the Philosophy for Peace and the Feminist Theory will serve as a basis for chapter two as I will deconstruct the dominant narratives that appear in a large part of the literature on terrorism and the newspapers to depict FSB. But first, some clarifications need to be made with respect to how violent women have been commonly portrayed and represented.

1.3 Violent women and war

La paz ha sido representada a lo largo de nuestra historia occidental como mujer. La paz nació con cuerpo y atributos femeninos en la antigua Grecia, encarnada en la diosa Eirene [...]"

-Cándida Martínez López (2000: 255)

This last part, included in the state of the art within Philosophy for Peace, is focusing on what has been discussed in the Chair regarding women and war, especially to open the debate regarding the link between violence, women and terrorism that will lead us to the following section on terrorism.

Talking about violent women and their role in war is a slippery field because it can be portrayed as a way to legitimize their violence while portraying their agency. This Thesis is by no means an attempt to legitimize any kind of violence. On the contrary, I want to come up with a better understanding of these violent women, the FSB, that were or are living in war context in order to rightfully address this violence. I assume that to develop peaceful responses to terrorism, and suicide attacks in particular, it is a prerequisite to apprehend violence from a gender perspective.

This being said, the task of making a state of the art on violent women and war is enormous so I will concentrate myself on a few authors that I consider relevant for the purpose of this investigation as the whole Thesis will be dealing with the problem of violent women as suicide bombers.

To name the violence perpetrated by women in Muslim countries affected by armed conflicts is a greater task than it may seem. First because women's violence goes against the normativity and second, because women commit double transgression by carrying out a violent act: they morally act against humankind (to be violent) and they go against their prescribed gender (to be a peaceful woman) (Agra Romero, 2012: 54, 55 & 60).

This idea has led to the consideration of women as mere victims of conflict if not completely ignored (Ahmed Ali, 2005). Nevertheless, women are far from being absent of violent politics though literature has mainly depicted "a largely gender-blind" (Moser & Clark, 2001: 3) approach on the phenomenon. Thus, Peace Studies would fail to comprehend multiple dimensions of violence if this issue is not carefully considered together with feminism (Confortini, 2006: 356). Women have taken part in multiple conflicts, either as pacifists' activists or armed combatants: "they need to be recognized for the complexity of roles they play¹²" in conflicts (Ahmed Ali, 2005), especially since we can observe that their active participation as combatants has increased since the end of the Cold War (Poza, 2010: 131).

Still, the study of women and war is not new, and a vast range of feminist theorists have been interested in the relation between the fact that women take arms and the possibility (or not) of diminishing gender subordination, as it is the case of Enloe (2000), Sjoberg and E. Gentry (2007) as well as Allison (2009) just to name a few. They tried to fill the gap in the literature and contest the hegemonic views on violent women as I will strongly argue in the second chapter.

Yet, we can say that a wide range of studies have been concentrated on violence against women during war and armed conflicts. This is partly due to the fact that it is the most apparent form of gender-based violence, but it is also because it responds to the feminist main

¹² Original: "*deben ser reconocida por la complejidad de los roles que desempeñan*" (personal translation).

claim that masculine domination is oppressing women. In fact, societies generally proscribe violent behavior of women while there is a tendency to recognize certain aggressive behaviors as a masculine manifestation, as a characteristic of masculinity (Comins Mingol, 2001: 197). On the contrary, women's violence "is often discussed in terms of violent women's gender: women are not supposed to be violent" (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 2).

Therefore, it should be understood that the very relationship between women and war has generally been portrayed and reified under their condition of women following the lines of gender subordination (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 4-5; Agra Romero, 2012: 52). Their violence is not considered under the line of political implication or as a result of a war context, but most of the time, interpreted under gendered explanations.

Unfortunately, "[w]omen have bloodstained hands" (Moser & Clark, 2001: 21). In the region that interests us, i.e. Muslim countries with armed conflicts and presenting cases of FSB, they have been implicated in both pacific and armed struggles. They have been part of nationalism struggles like in Palestine and Chechnya but also, more recently, in countries under military occupation as it is the case of Afghanistan and Iraq (Alcañiz Moscardó, 2009: 46). For that particular reason, I am interested in participating in the ongoing debate on FSB because I contend that talking about it is the first step toward apprehending the violence and further proposing new responses that would include nonviolent forms of intervention regarding the phenomenon.

As a matter of conclusion, and before moving on to the next section of this chapter on Terrorism Studies, I want to reiterate some of the salient points of this first section in what concern the contribution of the Philosophy for the Peace to the theoretical framework of this research:

- (1) The Philosophy for Peace allows us to make visible certain forms of violence that are not necessarily apparent;
- (2) The epistemological shift permits us to consider gender as a category of analysis at the same time that it foments a reflection on performativity and intersubjectivity regarding FSB;
- (3) It also enables us to consider the study of the body as central to this research on FSB as well as the incorporation of the emotions in the investigation of global politics and;
- (4) Finally, the Philosophy for Peace gives us the tools to consider violent women as worthy of serious investigation.

In the end, the reflections raised by the Philosophy for Peace gave us the theoretical and philosophical background necessary to initiate our journey into understanding the gendered body of FSB. The next step ahead is to interrogate what has been talked over in the field of Terrorism Studies.

2. Studies on Terrorism

Violence needs to be seen as a process rather than as a system or structure.

-Catia Confortini (2006: 341)

In the introduction of this chapter, I argue that this research relies on the fact that it is not only possible but also necessary to consider Gender, Terrorism and Peace Studies as interconnected disciplines that can contribute to one another. If the first part of this chapter was concentrated on the contribution brought by the Philosophy for Peace to the study of gender and conflicts in general and FSB in particular, this part attempts to emphasize the state of the art concerning terrorism.

This section has two specific objectives: first, it attempts to critically analyze what has been discussed with regards to terrorism and gender and second, it lays the theoretical foundations for the following chapters in order to situate the debate on FSB. To this end, this

chapter is divided in three sections: I first examine what is terrorism and what are the implications for Peace Studies. Then, I evaluate the place of gender in the discussion on terrorism and, finally, I precisely talk about female suicide bombers as a matter of introduction to the topic.

2.1 Preliminary remarks

Generally speaking, terrorism within Peace Studies has been debated more in terms of international terrorism in order to comprehend the impacts of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the links between different groups and sub-groups or with the aim of understanding the African groups using terror as a tactic like Al-Shabaab or Boko Haram (SIPRI, 2012; Fisas & others, 2012; Fisas and others, 2012a). Within the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, terrorism has been investigated in the larger frame of armed conflict and in order to denounce the indiscriminate deaths caused both by terrorists and state bombing in the name of the “war on terror” (Martínez Guzmán, 2005: 95; París Albert, 2009). Furthermore, FSB has not been studied deeply in the Chair which has been focusing on the role of women in peace processes. Nevertheless, Pozo has conducted a relevant investigation regarding suicide bombings in the Chair by dedicating a section on the phenomenon, although not insisting particularly on FSB (2010: 240-253).

Having said that, this subheading particularly leans on two lines of investigation. Firstly, it will be supported by the various discussions I had with Dr. Campana within the Canadian Research Chair on Conflict and Terrorism, which focuses on terrorism as a relational process following the position of Tilly (CRCCT, 2012). Secondly, and connected with the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, it will also be sustained by the Critical Studies on Terrorism, mainly taking Jackson, Gunning and Breen Smyth’s perspective on creating “a new analytical approach to the study of political terrorism” (2009: 17).

2.2 Conceptualizing terrorism

En un mot, si on est terroriste, c'est presque toujours sous le regard de l'autre¹³.
-Michel Wieviorka, 1988 (Crettiez, 2000)

Trying to talk about terror is a complicated task, especially in the post 9/11 context as it seems that everything said is politically charged, especially within Peace Studies, as violence is seen as “embedded in language and in all social institutions” (Confortini, 2006: 357-358). In the academic arena, the terms *terror*, *terrorism* and *terrorist* are widely contested concepts as they have been associated with political discourses that focus on misconceptions such as irrationality or religion. Moreover, it seems that the 9/11 events started an academic period called by some specialists as the “golden age” of Terrorism Studies because of the “explosion of academic and other literature addressing terrorism” in various parts of the world (Ranstorp, 2009: 17). Much that has been written, from a wide range of disciplines and thus also with a vast quantity of different methodologies (Campana, 2010), is not necessarily increasing the quality of the analyses. This section tries to portray the definitional problems at the heart of the debates on Terrorism Studies while it also demonstrates, in the second part, the importance of naming terrorism violence and critically understanding it in order to apprehend the phenomenon of FSB.

2.2.1 Definitional problems

The concept of terror first appears in the Western vocabulary with the actions conducted by the French revolutionaries in 1793-1794 against their domestic enemies (Tilly, 2004: 8). Even so, the term is still very controversial and no common and unanimous definition of terror or terrorism has ever been established. Besides the fact that most studies have “event-driven” or “policy-driven character” (Ranstorp, 2009: 25), Terrorism Studies also faces multiple definitional problems as there is no real consensus in the academic arena

¹³ Original: “*In one word, if we are a terrorist, it is almost always under the sight of the other.*” (Personal translation)

(Campana, 2010). In addition, a lot of studies on terrorism are conducted without really defining terrorism, which is untenable since there are a lot of examples where the word is instrumentalized for political gain or even to legitimize war like it has been the case in Chechnya or Afghanistan. In this sense, and even more since 9/11, terrorism has been conceptualized as “primarily as a form of illegitimate non-state political violence” and thus, leaving aside state actors which are perpetrating most terror acts (Jackson, 2009: 75). There is thus a need to better think what we will understand here as terrorism.

Much of the post-9/11 literature stipulate that there are new dynamics regarding terrorism, a large part of it speculating on the “new” terrorism, of a global reach, that would mostly be associated with Al-Qaeda and its affiliated states and groups. If it is true that Al-Qaeda has had the propaganda strength to mobilize people virtually, the reality is quite different as it seems that there is more continuity than ruptures in the different uses and forms of terrorism (Campana, 2010). Indeed, it seems that there is no line between “old” and “new” terrorism. It would be better to argue that “[t]errorism is continually changing and evolves according to many factors including states’ actions and responses to it and the local and global socio-political environments” (Campana, 2011: 17).

Hence, terrorism must be seen as a “social fact” that also evolves within a given society along with a historical materiality and that is “constructed through speech-acts” (Jackson, 2009: 75). Therefore, one must be aware of the use of the term “terrorism” as with the “war on terror,” as it has been depicted as one solely dangerous enemy. In fact, it needs to be understood that terrorism does not appear by itself; it is part of a wider political process (Tilly, 2005: 21) as I will comment in the following part. The perpetrators of terrorist violence might also have been victims of a conflict or other terrorist acts; the “individuals both shape and are shaped by larger communities, social processes, and group dynamics, economic and political structures, and ideologies” (Toros & Gunning, 2009: 97).

As a result, and drawing upon various readings on gender and terrorism, I came up with a series of concepts that I consider relevant for the apprehension of *what* is terrorism. For the purpose of this study, I chose to formulate the following definition of terrorism that I consider to be inclusive of the necessary elements to conduct my research. Hence, based on the definitions given by Tilly (2004), Campana (2010), Jackson, Breen Smyth & Gunning (2009) and Sjoberg & Gentry (2008), *terrorism* will be understood here as a particular type of premeditated violence which is understood as a political strategy, coupled with other forms of political actions and military actions in times of war, that implicates a great variety of individuals (men, women and kids), groups or networks. It has the following characteristics:

- (1) It can be perpetrated by men, women, kids, irregular groups, well-organized groups or states;
- (2) It is more or less organized and structured;
- (3) It aims at achieving intimidation and creates fear, sometimes using propaganda;
- (4) It principally targets civilians, but not solely; however, the target is not always the victims of a terrorist act and;
- (5) Its targets are chosen for symbolic reasons, which give a particular dimension to emotions.

In this sense, terrorism is a strategy that makes it clear “that the target is vulnerable, that the perpetrators exist, that the perpetrators have the capacity to strike again” (Tilly, 2005: 22). But defining terrorism is not enough; we need a critical view on the topic which I will try to explore briefly in the next section.

2.2.2 Critical understanding of terrorism

Since the “definition of terrorism is extremely subjective” (Jackson, 2008), I will use this section to point out the necessity to have a critical approach to the studies of terrorism. I effectively contend here that terrorism should be understood in all its complexities: a

“terrorist” is not “just a terrorist”; he or she is a human being who possesses “multiple identities” (Toros & Gunning, 2009: 96) and who is surrounded by a social and political environment that is also inherently fluid. Otherwise, we must be aware that the attribution of the term “terrorist” to an individual or a group needs to be taken with extreme caution: the meaning is “decided through symbolic labelling (*sic*), social agreement and a range of inter-subjective practices” (Jackson, 2008).

Therefore, I assume in this Thesis a relational approach to terrorism as proposed by Tilly in the sense that I consider it useful for the integration of the gender perspective as an analytical category within Terrorism Studies. Effectively, as I will argue in the next section, terrorism from a relational approach helps us to explain the socio-political arena in which FSB, and male suicide bombers, evolve. It also permits us to critically analyze the relationships between the different actors implicated in terrorist violence. I equally think it fits within the field of Peace Studies as it looks to better explain the phenomenon of terror, conscious that this would contribute to alleviate human suffering (Tilly, 2005: 28).

As such, terrorism as a relational process can be explained as the focus on “interactions among social sites [...] treating both events at those sites and durable characteristics of those sites as outcomes of interactions” (Tilly, 2005: 19). From that perspective, individuals and their actions are not taken in isolation to one another; neither are they taken out of their political and social context. This approach tries to demonstrate the constant interactions and “changes in connections among persons and groups” (Tilly, 2005: 19). It also permits us to see that the individual or group that chose to participate in a terror act may be engaged in other political organizations or that the act in itself involves a fringe of the society that might have or might not have politico-social demands.

Moreover, and this is what I am interested in here, the relational accounts on terrorism allow us to better understand the gender dynamics of terrorism. Even if I understand that there is an urgent need to make a gendered account of male terrorism and particularly male suicide bombers, I will concentrate myself here on FSB to propose that the relational approach helps me to consider the wider frame in which these women evolve. Effectively, Tilly gives the example of the pictures of Abu Ghraib¹⁴ showing that the sight of female soldiers humiliating Iraqi captives first suggests a horrible perversion of these women. However, a deeper analysis on the event shows that the “farther the discussion goes, the more relational processes involving the whole military and civilian hierarchy become central to the explanation” (Tilly, 2005: 20-21).

To sum up, a relational approach to terrorism permits us to comprehend the interrelation among actors, but also the interaction among these actors and their moral, political, cultural and social contexts. Hence, nothing is isolated and individuals, groups or networks are influenced by social dynamics and interactions as well as by the “political settings” in which they are evolving (Alimi, 2011: 96). In the meantime, it opens up the path to our next section: gender and terrorism.

2.3 Gender and terrorism

Following the idea that terrorism must be contextualized and put in relation with its social context and a wider political strategy, I propose, in this section, to look at the necessity of studying gender and terrorism together. As Sjoberg, Cooke and Neal argue:

[...] gender relations are not power relations that just happen between men and women
[...] gender relations happen among members of terrorist organizations, between terrorist

¹⁴ The events known as “Abu Ghraib” happened in Iraq. In fact, American soldiers were accused of abusing prisoners in the center of Abu Ghraib. Among these soldiers, women have been found guilty of abusing prisoners and taking pictures of them in compromising sexual positions. When the pictures came out in the newspaper in the USA, and published all around the world, it provoked a shock wave of scandal as the public could not believe the perpetrator were women soldiers.

organizations and their target audiences, between terrorist organizations and states, and between states (2011: 7).

Therefore, the gender perspective is relevant in the sense that it serves to explain the multilevel dynamics of terrorism. It is of primary importance to comprehend the internal dynamics as well as the external representations (Fisas & others, 2012: 195) of the terrorists' organizations, networks or individuals. As such, instead of conceptualizing gender as a subfield of Terrorism Studies, it should be considered as the backbone of a critical and more complete analysis of terror as a political act. Thus, as we live in a "gendered world," (Sjoberg, Cooke & Neal, 2011: 7) the first step is to understand what gender means.

2.3.1 Understanding gender

As a matter of clarifying what I mean by gender, this section is dedicated to a deeper apprehension of the notion, drawing upon some recent feminist productions on the topic. I effectively assume here that "gender is central to understanding international processes" (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 11) and by extension, terrorism. Even more important, I would in fact argue that gender permits us to figure out what are the real and tangible "differentiated impacts of armed conflicts on women and men¹⁵" (Fisas & others, 2012: 26) and how they are implicated in violence and peace processes.

As we come to the world, each of us receives a sex following the binary distinction man/woman. Few people enter a category of "other" and they are usually seen as "abnormal". Then, our collective imaginary is marked and programmed in a way that everything is sexed. Most of the feminists are also using the distinction between sex and gender, assuming that sex has to see with the biological formation of the subject while gender is the social construction of it (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2011: 6; Confortini, 2006: 342). On the one hand, these feminists argue that sex should be understood as the biological differences between men and women,

¹⁵ Original: "*impactos diferenciados de los conflictos armados sobre las mujeres y sobre los hombres*" (personal translation).

acknowledging that there are a lot of nuances, subtle and less subtle, regarding biological sex (i.e.: transgender, intersex (Sjoberg, Cooke & Neal, 2011: 25). On the other hand, they consider gender has “an intersubjective social construction that constantly evolves with changing social perceptions and intentional manipulation” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 5). To sum-up, feminists portray gender as the social constructions and power relations produced on the basis of sex differences. It thus insists on the structural violence and the power relations that legitimize its cultural application (Forastelli, 2007: 53): “[i]n other words, genders are the characteristics associated with expectations of “being a man” or “being a woman”” (Sjoberg, Cooke & Neal, 2011: 6).

With that being said, this Thesis understands the structural violence that derives from sex and gender as essential to the analysis of FSB. However, it is convenient to go further in the deconstruction of gender. Butler offers us an important contribution in that sense; she refuses the very distinction between sex and gender as “biology itself does not escape discursive formation” (Lennon, 2010). With the aim of comprehending better the “existing complexity of gender” (Butler, 1988: 530), she contends that “[i]n distinguishing sex from gender, feminist theorists have disputed causal explanations that assume that sex dictates or necessitates certain social meanings for women’s experience” (Butler, 1988: 520). In fact, the category of sex would also be constructed and “materialized through time” (Butler, 1993: 1) as Butler, following Foucault, declines that gender differences come from the biological ones and interpreting sex as normative (Lennon, 2010).

From that point of departure, Butler understands gender identities largely produced through discourses and repetitions of acts. Throughout time, some behaviors come to be repeatedly associated to men or women, and then, they are further related to gender: the “body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised and consolidated through time” (Butler, 1988: 523). She thus explains gender through performance; as I will

analyzed deeper in the chapter three, it is the repetition of acts and speeches that form bodily expression of gender (Butler, 1988: 519). Butler's analysis become important to the study of FSB because it signifies that there is "no necessary link between gender and any particular bodily shape" (Lennon, 2010). Precisely for that, because it is driven by the changing utterances, gender is open to changes, which help Butler confirm that body can use its intrinsic possibility of subversiveness to challenge the established norms. This comprehension of gender through performativity permits us to understand gender widely as it is not produce alone (Repo, 2006: 9) but in intersubjectivity with others, which brings us back to our purpose in Peace Studies that is to apprehend our constitutive interdependency.

Accordingly, gender is thoroughly essential to:

In short, none of the questions related to the areas of division of labor, domination, exploitation, ideology, politics, law, religion, morality, sexuality, body-senses, language, etc., can be studied in a sensible way without investigating how gender relations shape it and are shaped in turn by it¹⁶ (Haug, 2006: 328).

Therefore, gender is also central to the study of terrorism violence as the latter is normally pictured as masculine; a female figure does not fit within our comprehension of gender roles which "portray women as naturally nurturing" (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 7). Still, it seems that Terrorism Studies still struggles to include gender, and women, in their global analysis on terrorism; this is what I will explore in the next section.

2.3.2 The failure and necessity to include gender (and women) in Terrorism Studies

The visibility acquired by women in global politics in recent years gives the impression that women have been achieving more equality (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 8). It also seems that the moment has come for Terrorism Studies to adopt a gender-blind agenda. However, it appears that it is not the case and, on the contrary, a gender perspective is

¹⁶ Original: "*En breve, ningún preguntas referidas a la división laboral, dominación, explotación, ideología, política, ley, religión, moral, sexualidad, cuerpos-sentidos, lenguaje, etc., área podrá ser estudiada de manera sensata sin investigar cómo las relaciones de género la moldean y son a su vez moldeadas por ella*" (personal translation).

required for two principal reasons. First, most of the time, “the study of terrorism provides an example of the risks of conflating ‘gender’ with ‘women’” (Hamilton, 2010: 104) leaving aside the militarized masculinities and their gender dimensions. Second, without a gender-sensitive approach, women are “nearly absent from investigations of terrorist participation and wherever visible are marginalized from agency” (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 179). These two problematic considerations lead me to affirm that gender lenses are truly necessary to this study. Obviously, the analysis of masculinities within terrorism studies cannot be covered as they go beyond the scope of this research. I will thus concentrate myself on the second consideration.

Currently, and even if Critical Studies on Terrorism give us the tool to explore gender and terrorism, the voices of women are fairly absent from the field (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 181). Moreover, the picture made of the female combatants or terrorists is marked by a tendency to refer to the biological sex in the accounts of their violence. As the male gender represents the normativity, it seems that the label “woman” needs to be added to “terrorist” in order to really comprehend that we are talking about a violent woman.

In fact, very “few researchers actually depict violent women as rational actors” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 14) and usually portray the integration of women in terrorist organizations as outside of their own agency. Toles Patkin, quoting Talbot, shows that most of the time we perceive and conceive the motivations of women to integrate a terrorist organization as bounded by irrationality, extreme feminist ideas, passivity or because they have been forced into it by a man (2004: 82). These categorizations of women have a lot of consequences, the first one being the perpetuation of gender subordination and the reproduction of stereotypes that lead to the creation of even more violence (Confortini, 2006: 333 & 355; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 21). Evidently, for these very reasons, there is a need to

consider gender and terrorism and, more importantly, a necessity to deeper analyze those field interactions within Peace Studies.

On the one hand, I want to retake the argument that terrorism needs to be understood in a wider political process that involves a multitude of individuals with different objectives and who are bounded by different social dynamics. Sjoberg and Gentry propose a similar reflection, within the framework of Feminist Theory with regards to the concept of choice. They claim that there is a need to reformulate our conception of choice regarding violent women in general, and FSB in particular. They suggest a “relational autonomy” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 16) model which implicates the consideration of the fact that, in a world bounded by gender relations and power disparities, choices and decisions are “never entirely free or entirely constrained” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 9). Thus, social dynamics, as in the model of Tilly, are at the basis of the comprehension of motivations to perpetrate such terrorist acts. This affects both men and women’s choices and “the level of control they have over their “choices” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 9). Furthermore, it brings us back to the Philosophy for Peace and recover the importance of considering the fact that intersubjectivity is what characterizes human relations and that our choices, decisions and behaviors are socially bounded (2008: 9).

On the other hand, “gender-conscious” (Confortini, 2006: 355) analysis of terrorism challenges the dominant narratives on suicide bombers. It suggests that we could go beyond the traditional “rational model,” largely publicized by Pape (2003, 2005), that perpetuates the former conceptualization of war as objective and masculine. In fact, Sjoberg & Gentry argue that adopting a gender-blind approach to terrorism in general, and suicide terrorism in particular, “privileges characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity,” such as objectivity or rationality (2008: 1). Taking that into consideration, the rational model leaves aside the important category of analysis represented by emotions and social interactions to

reduce every action to a calculation. I already sustained the centrality of emotions for both Peace Studies and Feminist Theory and I want to reiterate my position here. A position of neutrality that focuses solely on rationality erases the possibility to understand all the underlying complexities of conflicts and motivations to take up arms or to commit a suicide attack (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 1-5). Thus, a gender-sensitive approach to terrorism will thus reveal the multiple levels of power domination, taking into account the state discourses that perpetuate images of violent women (as it has been the case with Chechen women, see chapter 2), and finally better apprehend the context in which these women evolve, as observed by Tilly's contribution.

To sum-up, the incorporation of gender analysis within Terrorism Studies permits us to go beyond the “apparent gender neutrality of work on suicide bombing” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 2) and account for the unheard voices in international politics. It also opens the path to better understanding the power relations within society as well as the dimensions of language, symbolism (Hamilton, 2010: 96) and the political “character of representations¹⁷” (Gámez Fuentes, 2012: 186-187). This being said, some clarifications are needed regarding the particular case that interests us, the FSB.

2.4 Female suicide bombings

When healthy, beautiful, and intelligent young men and women set out to kill and be killed, something is basically wrong in a world that has not heard their anguished cry for justice.

-Naim Ateek (2002: 5)

So much has been said, so much has been written, and so much has been distorted. Arguably, suicide terrorism implies certain visions of vulnerability, horror, and fear, especially if it is accompanied by the image of a woman. This section wishes to explore what exactly suicide terrorism means and what has been discussed regarding FSB.

¹⁷ Original: “*cáriter político de las representaciones*” (personal translation).

2.4.1 What is it?

From a Peace Studies perspective, a suicide bombing reminds us of our fragility and vulnerability as a human being (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 37; Beck, 2003: 31): everyone, without any consideration of time and space might be a victim of a suicide attack. Suicide terrorism is particular: it is one form that terrorism can take (Campana, 2010) and it implicates that the perpetrators will renounce their lives, understanding that they cannot commit the attack twice while no political entity or state can find them guilty (Beck, 2003: 30). Furthermore, the person who carries out a suicide attack also does not have the certitude that the act will serve the wider community (Bauman, 2006: 60). But there is one thing that we can be sure of: the act of suicide bombing responds to a logic and has a finality (Martínez, 2008: 133).

Suicide attacks are not a new phenomenon: they did not appear with the 9/11 events (Campana, 2010; Pozo, 2010: 240 & 242). It surely has increased within the geopolitical context of the recent years, but generalizations on the character of suicide bombings need to be tackled: it is not a mere contemporary problem, it is not Islamic by essence, it is not a manifestation of irrationality or dementia and it is used by a wide range of political actors, including women (Pozo, 2010: 240). However, it is cheap, simple and the psychological effects are guaranteed (Pavey, 2006). Also, terrorists' organizations obviously learned that "it pays" in the meantime it almost assures destruction (Pape, 2003: 2 & 4).

Throughout this study, I understand *suicide bombing* (or suicide attack) as the perpetration of an attack in which the perpetrator, women, men or children, is almost certain to die in the conduction of the act; where the act in itself represents a strategy within a wider political strategy of individuals, groups or networks with the aim of killing as well as having a psychological impact on a population and/or government.

Suicide bombing might be an indication that a group is radicalizing its position but always needs to be seen and “considered in light of a larger strategy” (Campana, 2006: 106). But suicide bombing also has its own gendered dimensions which will be explored in the next section.

2.4.2 FSB: interaction of socio-political and personal driving-forces

Generally, suicide terrorism has been discussed regarding individual and collective motivations, organization of strategic perspectives or from a religious point of view. Within these analyses, the gender perspective has been only superficially regarded until the phenomenon of FSB became more prominent and more extended; mostly with the women using their own bodies as human bombs within their nationalist fight in Sri Lanka, Palestine and Chechnya. FSB is currently increasing: even Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which was reluctant in using women, has finally accepted recruiting women to commit bombings (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 185). However, as Bloom argues, the recent increase in the perpetration of suicide attacks by females has been accompanied by plenty of misconceptions on what is really going on (2011: ix). For this reason, there is a need to specify how this Thesis proposes to approach this issue.

Even if I understand that “[a]cknowledging terrorist women and analyzing their power in a detailed way might be dangerously close to endorsing their methods” (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 187), I do believe that in order to tackle gender subordination, violent women also need to be studied, with the overall aim to find other means of dealing with this violence. As a result, apprehending FSB becomes central.

What is particularly shocking with FSB is that it goes against our conception of what a woman is, what a woman should be and what her social role entail, particularly nowadays as the debate regarding women’s rights in the Muslim world is currently fervent. It seems that

we pay more attention to violent women (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 2) as they are not fitting into our normal conception of violence; a female body that kills, that explodes and murders innocent people is always portrayed as a maternal body in our minds (Agra Romero, 2012: 72). Hence, the woman that commits a suicide bombing is seen as having a “flaw” within her humanity (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 11). This provokes a mixture between scandal and fascination (Agra Romero, 2012: 52 & 69) and complicates the task of explaining the phenomenon.

I take the fact that we all live in a “complex gendered world” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 7) as a point of departure to explain the phenomenon of FSB in this Thesis. In fact, as argued in the section on Philosophy for Peace, an exhaustive analysis of violence must take into account the very inseparability of rationality and emotions in the decision of a FSB to perpetrate a suicide attack. As Saleh argues, we need a “more holistic approach to studying suicide attacks” (2005: 12), which implicates comprehending FSB from a gender perspective with the aim of avoiding violence to perpetuate itself. Then, this Thesis will consider the female and male suicide bombing as “a manifestation of personal, social, and political motivations reliant on human social and political contexts” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 15). This is in the hope of making the reader able to understand both the underlying political signification of discourses on terrorism, but also the centrality of the performed body as a social entity. This will challenge the dominant way in which suicide terrorism is discussed regarding women, it will contribute to the field of Peace Studies and, more importantly, it will foster a dialogue to include other views than the Western one (which will be discussed in chapter two).

To conclude the second part of the chapter, I wish to reiterate my belief that gender needs to be incorporated into the analysis of female and male suicide bombings as I think it is

a key to giving visibility to violence. The debate regarding gender and terrorism exposed in this chapter could be resumed in the following:

- (1) Gender Studies, and more accurately Feminist Studies, are essential to understanding the complexity of terrorism in general and suicide bombings in particular;
- (2) Terrorism needs to be understood as a relational process;
- (3) Relational autonomy is a useful approach to comprehend agency, emotions and rationality in the decision of perpetrating a suicide attacks, both for male and female;
- (4) Following Philosophy for Peace and Feminist Theory, emotions are central in politics and thus, must be included in both male and female decisions to take part in a terrorist organization or to commit a suicide bombing and, finally;
- (5) This leads us to acknowledge Terrorism Studies, coupled with Gender Studies, as a necessary field of Peace Studies.

In order to conclude this part, I should add that the Terrorism field of study has been recently observing more and more the importance of challenging the traditional view on terror by integrating gender perspective. However, there is still a long way to really challenging the dominant literature and, above all, the popular perception on FSB.

3. Summary of the chapter

I began this chapter with the aim of situating, rethinking and enhancing the debate between peace, gender and terrorism within the framework of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace. The objective was to establish the state of literature and to lay the theoretical as well as the philosophical foundations for this Thesis.

In the first section of this Thesis, I stipulated the necessity to consider that Peace, Gender and Terrorism Studies are interrelated. Then, I argued that there is a need to use an interdisciplinary method between these areas in order to comprehend the phenomenon of FSB. I engaged the discussion by situating the debate on gender, conflict and terrorism within

the Philosophy for Peace. This led me to better appreciate, through the epistemological shift, the link between the intersubjective and the performative character of human life. This different perspective on violence permits us to switch from an apparently objective and masculine interpretation of the world to an intersubjective one which implies that we can go beyond the traditional dichotomies associating men with violence and women with peace.

I also looked at performativity and the necessity to study body as to better apprehend the phenomenon of FSB. In fact, as I will argue throughout the Thesis, the body is central to the analysis of FSB as well as the mechanisms from which women can become violent through performed acts. In this section, two more debates have been discussed: the recognition of gender perspective as an indispensable category of analysis and the consideration of emotions in global politics. This led us to measure the necessity to consider rationality and emotions as inseparable in the analysis of terrorist acts. Finally, this section also portrayed the difficulty of trying to give a voice to violent women in Peace Studies: it is by no means an attempt to legitimize their violence. More accurately, it is a manner of showing the complexity of their roles in conflicts and the perpetuation of gender subordination in public arena.

The second section was focusing on Terrorism Studies. It tried to highlight what has been discussed regarding gender, women, terrorism and more specifically FSB. I claimed that terrorism has been approached within Peace Studies, but above all by examining it as an international phenomenon. Then, I emphasize the need of being aware of the difficulties of investigating terrorism as the definition of the term itself is problematic. Nevertheless, the chapter offers its own definition of terrorism that insists on the fact that it is a relational process; that human beings are in constant interaction between each other and their socio-political environment. Equally, this section particularly looked at gender and terrorism, evaluating what we mean when we talk about FSB. I sustained that FSB remind us of our

human fragility and I stressed the need to challenge the dominant perceptions with this in mind. Finally, I claimed that the relational autonomy, approach adopted by Sjoberg and Gentry, is an excellent starting point to comprehend the personal, social, political and psychological motivations of FSB.

In conclusion, the contribution of this chapter to the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, and in a broader perspective to Peace Studies, is the insistence on the human fragility and the importance of considering us in our social interactions in order to comprehend terrorist acts like FSB. The state of the art permitted us to open the path to a critical analysis of the dominant narratives on FSB that will take place in the following chapter: it grounded our discussion within Peace, Terrorism and Gender Studies with the aim of beginning a dialogue that can foster a better apprehension of violent women and the underlying discourses about them.

Chapter 2

Violent Narratives, Women's Narratives, Body Narratives: the Image of FSB

“Our only desire is to be able to live in peace, to wear a scarf if we want,
to study whatever we want, including the Koran, and to perpetuate our families.
But here, it is impossible. And if today they accuse us of terrorism and Wahhabism,
there is only one culprit—Akhmad Kadyrov!”

**-Tamara, friend of a Chechen FSB
(Nivat, 2005: 417)**

A few days ago, as I was investigating the recent suicide attacks perpetrated by women and their media coverage, I found that the latest bombing occurred on May 25, 2013 in Dagestan, Russia (AP, 2013). It was the first bombing since the Boston ones that had been planned by two young men born in Kirghizstan from a Chechen father and a Dagestani mother (Reitman, 2013). Obviously, even if the Boston attacks have nothing to do with regular terrorism in Dagestan, there has been a huge difference in the media coverage of the events. Since one of the events took place within the US territory, the media coverage was particularly important for it revives the spectrum of the events of 9/11. But the covering of the FSB in Dagestan was business as usual: “The attacker was later identified as a widow of two Islamic radicals killed by security forces” (AP, 2013). She was *just* a widow of Islamic radicals which is sufficient for the public to acknowledge her deed. Then everybody forgot what happened, because it happened *out there*.

In fact, the media coverage of the FSB has always been problematic in the sense that they openly insist on the biography of the women, while the political agenda seems more important in the case of MSB (Szalkai, 2012). As we will argue in this chapter, the main reason is that these women go beyond their “natural states of being in the world”; they do not act along the line of their expected gender performances (Naaman, 2007: 934). Unfortunately,

some well-known sources in academia also perpetuate certain stereotypes regarding violent women in general and FSB in particular as I will argue in this chapter (see for instance: Bloom, 2005, 2005a, 2007, 2010, 2011; Victor, 2003; Davis, 2003). Therefore, there is a necessity of deconstructing these dominant notions/perceptions regarding FSB as the first step towards a more comprehensive and peaceful approach to the phenomenon, including deep questioning of our conceptions of *the other* and his/her suffering.

In the first chapter, we have seen that women's violence falls outside of the cultural norms of femininity and we concluded by arguing in favor of an interdisciplinary approach to understand the phenomenon. This second chapter is committed to understanding how narratives are constructed in academia in order to give answers to what seems culturally inexplicable. Thus, its objective is the following: to contribute to the knowledge on FSB by deconstructing the hegemonic narratives and our own perceptions of their violence with the aim of promoting a "critical and pluralistic thinking" (UNESCO, 2006: 550) on women's violence within Peace Studies. The idea is "to question, complicate, and critique these essentialist (and often culture-insensitive) understandings of women's participation" (Sjoberg, Cooke & Reiter Neal, 2011: 13) in suicide attacks because it remains an underdeveloped area of studies, even within Peace Studies.

To fulfill this objective, I suggest analyzing the different narratives regarding FSB in the mainstream literature, from where we receive, as social scientists daily information, more often than not, distorted. Hence, the specific objectives of this chapter are the following:

- (1) To question the hegemonic narratives regarding the violence perpetrated by women as FSB;
- (2) To criticize the raced and gendered "othering" put forward by the mainstream literature with respect to FSB and;

(3) To denounce the gender subordination that is perpetuated on the basis of these hegemonic narratives.

In this chapter, I rely on a poststructuralist method as I give a specific importance to language as a builder of meaning (Ahall, 2011: 15-16), particularly political meaning. I take up the argument of Butler when she states that “[l]anguage and materiality are fully embedded in each other” (1993: 69). In the case of FSB, I sustain that the language used to describe them through hegemonic narratives permit us to attribute them a social meaning within the rhetoric of the “war on terror”. Also, this chapter is based on the work of Feminist Theory with regards to the comprehension of women’s violence in global politics. Sure enough, the Feminist Theory is essential to understand the problem of FSB: these theorists have been initiating a series of questions regarding the representation of FSB both in the media and academia while alerting scholars on the dangers of overgeneralizing the topic of women’s violence in the field of International Relations. Feminist Theory gives us the pathway to understand the “social constructions of heroism, masculinity, and Islamic womanhood” as “core parts of the gender politics of September 11” (Lorber, 2002: 378-379).

In fact, my intention is more of “shedding light” on hegemonic narratives: I do not pretend to construct an entirely new “narrative” or “representation” of what is a FSB, nor do I try to design another meaning to their violence or find the real motives behind their acts. The purpose is more discursive and normative: I wish that the reader questions his/her own perceptions and comprehends the underlying gender subordination coming from these narratives.

To this end, this chapter is divided in three parts: a justification regarding the decision of analyzing narratives, the presentation of the dominant narratives found in the mainstream literature, coupled with an analysis of the distorted portray of FSB with brief concluding remarks.

Of course, this is a difficult topic, between horror and fascination, and I include myself within those who are curious about it. However, I do believe that, without falling into cultural reification, it is possible to avoid generalizations and critically analyze the assumptions and perceptions we have regarding FSB, especially when we talk about Islamic insurgency groups. With that being said, I consider this chapter as a sort of bridge between the tools offered by Peace and Terrorism Studies in chapter one and the philosophical perspective I will adopt in the third one following Butler. More accurately, it is an attempt to explore the silences and distortions in the representation of the FSB...

1. On discursive meanings: why does it matter?

Within the Critical Studies on Terrorism, Jackson affirmed that the “knowledge about terrorism in the field is highly contestable and open to debate,” it is politically and ideologically loaded and thus “reify existing structures of power in society” (2009: 67). Therefore, there is a need to approach the discursive meanings as situating the knowledge in the field of Terrorism Studies has become an imperative. On that ground, this section aims to define why I chose to consider discursive representations as central to my analysis. It is divided in two subheads: one that aims to shed light on the epistemological difference between *why* and *how*, and the other one that focuses specifically on the decision of considering hegemonic narratives and their consequences.

1.1 On *why* and *how*

As it was defined in the introduction of this Master’s Thesis, I am not interested in finding the different motives of the FSB; I am looking for a comprehensive understanding of their violence from a gender perspective. Consequently, I do believe, following Brunner’s assumptions, that there is an important necessity of “accountability for knowledge production concerning complex political topics” (2007a: 969) in order to “complicate ideal-types of

women and suicide bombers, and implicate questions of agency, emotion, and relationality” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008:6).

In the first chapter, we have seen that the motives are multiple and complex while the choices we make are never completely free of constraints because they are not “independent of the gendered social and political contexts” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 17). The gender perspective helps us to avoid an oversimplification of the act of suicide bombing as well as to open the realm of our investigations by not focusing solely on the personal and psychological grievances of the perpetrator.

In fact, most of the authors agree that the collective and individual motives that lead a woman to commit a suicide attack vary considerably across time, space and culture and that there is no such thing as the profile of the bomber (Campana, 2006: 106; Al-Gharbi, 2008:4-5; Qazi, 2011: 30). The motives can be political, economic, psychological, and social including a wide range of grievances that are difficult to capture (Sahel, 2005). But it seems that most of the work, including in academia, is focused on the reasons behind the act of the FSB as shown by the recurrent focus on the motives, adopted by the most cited authors on the topic (see: Bloom, 2005, 2005a, 2007, 2010, 2011; Schweitzer, 2006; Davis, 2003 & Victor, 2003 among others). Moreover, given the fact that the perpetrator dies during the deed, these authors often base their conclusions on video testimonies, farewell testimonies, family testimonies or “endow the dead terrorist with the motives of the living” (Asad, 2007: 45) by interviewing the FSB that have failed their mission or have been arrested *a priori*. This can be the beginning of a response, but it will effectively always be an incomplete one, especially since the testimonies can largely be biased by numerous exogenous and endogenous factors.

The question here is the following: do we necessarily need a *why*? Without diminishing the importance of such investigations, I think, following Asad’s (2007) argument that the focus should be on *how* FSB come to occur and what is our perception of it. The point

here is to insist on “the social construction of activities and the meanings that societies assign to them” by turning the *why* questions into *how* questions. The focus on *why* one decides to kill and under which motives and circumstances he or she does it might be helpful to comprehend the phenomenon better. However, these motives, in the case of FSB, can never be proved and the “open-endedness of motive inevitably leaves considerable scope for interpretation” (Asad, 2007: 41). Moreover, Bloom argues that even the suicide bombers themselves might not be able to comprehend the totality of their actions and their motives (Bloom, Thayer & Hudson, 2010: 187). We rather benefit from these other questions: *how* are the FSB portrayed in academia? *How* do these narratives contribute to the creation of a stereotype of the Arab/Muslim/Terrorist women? *How* do these portrayals benefit the perpetuation of gender subordination?

As Ahall shows in her doctoral Thesis, the *how* questions are more oriented to the comprehension of the various manifestations of power and how the subjects come to get involved in certain kinds of situations (2011: 17). Finally, instead of trying to guess the root causes of FSB acts, the *how* questions allow us to grasp the meaning of the phenomenon and the female terrorist violence but, furthermore, to assess our perception of it. With that being said, an interesting way to interrogate such questions is to put an emphasis on deconstructing narratives. The next section is offering the first steps towards this.

1.2 On narratives and their consequences

Narratives may appear intangible, but they are more important than they may seem. As Ahall notes, “[i]t is only through the construction in language that ‘things’, objects, subjects, states, living beings and material structures, are given meaning and endowed with a particular identity. This means that language is both social and political” (2011: 46). We give meaning through complicated processes of denominating what surround us. Daily, we receive thousands of images, discourses and subtle messages from all types of communication means:

it is not so much of a surprise that this frames our perception of reality. In the case of the FSB, almost all the information we get comes from the mass media, above all from the West. The problem is that, regarding terrorism in general and FSB in particular, the media construct a public discourse that contributes to our perception/reception of politics. But the major obstacle I want to address here is that some well-known authors in the field of terrorism, as we above mentioned, are also contributing to a distorted framing of the phenomenon. Indeed, I think these authors have a biased perception on FSB and they fuel the dominant discourse. The problem is that authors such as Bloom, Victor, and Pape, among others, are perpetuating gender subordination, political victimization of the women and, more than often, contributing to reinforce the American discourse on terrorism by demonizing Islamic cultures (Brunner, 2007a: 957).

Moreover, and this is of interest to us here, some of the authors on female terrorism are also contributing, in quality of “experts” on the question, to the public debates in the mass media and therefore, are giving shape to “the way in which we conceptualize the body in the field of politics” (Butler, 2009: 52), and, by extension, to draw a collective image of the FSB. Therefore, and following the argument on the importance of insisting on *how* instead of *why* regarding the depiction of FSB, this section aims at justifying how I decided to attribute so much weight to narratives, or discursive manifestations of gender stereotypes in this Thesis.

First and foremost, it appears that suicide attacks are “above all, histories” as argued by Asad (2007: 41) and that “looking to the story-teller(s)” can help us understand “how gender norms have been reinforced in the cultural context of the ‘war on terror’” (Ahall, 2011: 5-6). Indeed, the very act of a suicide attack involves a huge amount of people directly affected by the deed (civilians or militaries) but also indirectly implicates the ones that are not present at the scene (for example, the family or the friends of the bomber as well as state apparatus and terrorists/insurgents organizations). It is in this sense that Asad (2007) refers to

suicide attacks as “histories”: the very report of the attack is marked with plenty of discourses, images that are all part of an “interpretative frame” (Butler, 2009: 41).

Unfortunately, as the media present the first news on a suicide attack, it also structure the way we perceive and apprehend the wars (Butler, 2009: 66) and violent events, the different stories we hear about FSB (or MSB) are always framed and culturally embedded, and most of the time, distorted for political purposes. It thus also shapes the ways in which, we, political and social scientists interpret violent events. As above mentioned, the problem is that some social scientists are adopting an uncritical point of view by interpreting FSB within the framework of the ‘war on terror’ and debatable counterterrorism policies (Brunner, 2007a: 957) as it is the case for Bloom or Pape.

For example, in his book, Pape makes it explicit and retake the rhetoric of the “war on terror”: “To win the war on terrorism, we must have a new conception of victory. Our enemies have been studying suicide terrorism for over twenty years. Now is the time to level the playing field” (2005: 7). In his discourse, there is a possibility to wage war on terrorism, there is a willingness of an “American victory” against it and there is a clear line delimited between who are the “good” and who are the “enemies”. The same can be argued with Bloom when she align with the official American discourse and condemn authoritarian regime for producing suicide bombers, adopting the rhetoric of democracy as a solution (2011: 239-240). There is another danger related to the academy: most of the time these scientists are giving interviews or are writing for some important mass media. The line then becomes blurred between academy and the media, as the social scientists who are seen as expert on the question, can perpetuate some stereotypes regarding suicide bombings (see for example Pape, O’Rourke & McDermit, 2010). While much of their contribution might be valuable, some of their discourses are contributing to frame the “other” in the context of the “war on terror”.

For FSB, it is doubly preoccupying because gender enters the scene and, apart from being interpreted in the frame of the “war on terror,” most of the academic are reifying their deeds under the umbrella of personal grievances. At the same time that they are labeled as a ‘terrorist’ versus ‘innocent’ population victim of their deeds, they are also framed along gender stereotypes that accompany the categorization of violent women. This, in turn frames our “moral responses” (Butler, 2009: 41) to FSB: as the hegemonic narratives portray them as insane, non-women or victim of men’s domination, we tend to demonize the FSB and not question the unequal global relations of power behind such violence and representations that surround it.

Second, I decided to investigate deeper on narratives because in all the cases I present in this Thesis (Iraq, North Caucasus and Israel/Palestine), some of the narratives on FSB served as war justification and, therefore, to the perpetuation of violence. For instance, in Chechnya during the second war, the dramatization and hypermediatization of the suicide bombings perpetrated by women had two tragic consequences: to obscure the war led by Russia in Chechnya and to silence “the powerful feminine opposition to the conflict” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007:91) that was oriented towards peaceful means to ending the war. It then appears that “[v]iolence and peace can be constituted through language” (Confortini, 2006: 333) and that this can also be extended to the phenomenon of FSB as the depiction of their violence also fueled some tensions and perceptions regarding the conflict in which they were involved. In fact, narratives of collective suffering are especially important in times of war (Banner, 2006: 218-224) and a lack of understanding of the underlying power relations of these narratives only lead to a characterization of the FSB as terrorists or evil in a body of a woman. We will come back to this topic in the third section of this chapter.

Thirdly, I thought that there is a current misconception about female terrorism in the social sciences in general. The general focus is on the biography of these women, trying to

explain what may never be explained by finding *something wrong* in their lives that influenced them into acting (Brunner, 2005: 39). Because FSB perform against the established gender norms, most of the authors try to construct narratives to explain their deviations. Obviously, editors are always seeking a simple and shocking way to transmit information: they used gendered frames to depict FSB, simplify the reality and to make it acknowledgeable to a wider audience (Nacos, 2005: 437). This chapter wants to examine these gendered frames through which FSB are comprehended in the mainstream literature.

It is of a primary importance since these simplifications, while repeated, become meaningful and acceptable by the mass: “Narrations are words and deeds that have a sequence and a meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them” (Gentry, 2011: 178). Thus, the narratives have the capacity to “frame an event in society’s consciousness” (West, 2005: 5), to define what is suffering, who is suffering and what violence means (Asad, 2007: 28 & 32). In the case of female terrorism, these narrations are crucial as both women and terrorism have been institutionally labeled and their discursive meanings need to be critically analyzed.

In the end, I chose to consider narratives because I acknowledge that the different means of getting information are also shaping our view on contemporary violence and the way we study it. Obviously, as Hamilton rightfully said in one of her articles, “I do not intend to reduce violence to discourse” (2007: 915). But if the “collateral language¹⁸” (París Albert, 2009: 136), or the way mass media and political elites distort reality with the aim of constructing a specific reality, has been widely used for the justification of the ‘war on terror,’ it is not reduced to it. Moreover, there is an important need of questioning the “epistemic violence” inherent to academic work in the field of terrorism (Brunner, 2007: 2) that contributes to these hegemonic narratives on FSB. This leads us to reconsider “the way in

¹⁸ Original: “*lenguaje colateral*” (personal translation).

which suffering is presented to us” (Butler, 2009: 63) by questioning the narratives that frame our perceptions in order to better comprehend FSB.

To sum-up, from a Peace Studies perspective, it is fundamental to question these political representations of violent women: otherwise it deactivates all the possibilities of transforming violence (Gómez Fuentes, 2012: 186) and perpetuates the gender subordination in global politics. For these reasons, the next section is devoted to the hegemonic narratives regarding FSB that I considered relevant during the research period of this Thesis.

2. Hegemonic narratives

A suicide bombing, even more when committed by a woman, “does not conform to our established understanding of things” (Butler, 2009: 9): it falls outside our culturally-learned conceptions of what violence is, of what being a woman means. Butler, in her book *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (2009), claims that these frames install “their hegemony” (2009: 12) and regulate our way of perceiving contemporary violence. While she is arguing that those frames are responsible of our perception of what is a life, whose life is worth saving and whose is not, she also argues that these “interpretative frameworks” are the point of departure of our response to what we understand as horrific act (2009: 3 & 41). I sustain here, following her argument, that the depiction of FSB in the three regions of my concern (North Caucasus, Israel/Palestine and Iraq), is regulated by those frames.

These frames are sustained in the collective imaginary by the hegemonic narratives that surrounded the phenomenon of FSB. Those narratives are hegemonic due to the fact that they orient and dominate the thinking around the motivations of women and their implication in such a lethal act as suicide bombing. Therefore, these hegemonic narratives are perpetuating women submissiveness in international global politics and this has had serious consequences, as it will be discussed in part three of this chapter.

In order to investigate the narratives and the frames regarding FSB, I divided them in three groups according to the theme that stands out from the different discourses. Thus, I will first analyze the “monster’s narratives” through beauty, emotions and motherhood; second, I will examine the “unfeminine narratives” by having a look to victimhood and domestic representations; third, I will discuss the cultural narratives; and finally, I will debate the gender emancipation narratives. As it will be exposed, these narratives all express inconformity: these women are violent, they “acted outside of a prescribed gender role” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 9). But they also acted within an armed conflict context, within a cultural context inscribed into a discursively constructed ‘war on terror’.

2.1 Female body narratives

The first narratives I wish to explore are related to the very condition of being and living in a female body. These narratives are based on the fact that being a woman or having a body of a woman changes the way of acting and therefore has consequences on their violence. In fact, since the body is central to the act of suicide bombing, the body narratives are at the center stage of the information we perceive and receive on FSB (Agra Romero, 2012: 56). Hence, the body becomes the field of diverse narratives: “Women’s bodies have long been assigned destructive sex drives, physical weakness, and emotional instability” (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 187) and this is particularly true for FSB. In fact, as Brunner mentions, “the so-called other sex is being redefined as being closely linked to its feminine corporeality” (2005: 30).

Even in Feminist Theory, there still seems to be a difficulty in capturing women’s violence because of the stereotypes naturally attributed to women: there is a “reluctance of feminists to theoretically incorporate controversial experiences such as women’s violence” (West, 2005: 2). In order to effectively approach the hegemonic narratives related to female body, this section is subdivided in three: regarding beauty, irrationality and motherhood.

2.1.1 Beauty: attractiveness of violence

But Loula Abboud, the dark-eyed, petite girl of nineteen with the shock of thick, black hair caressing a soft, oval face, was an unlikely martyr in Lebanon's battle against Israel. Loula Abboud was a Christian.
-Joyce M. Davis (2003: 68)

This quote, apart from taking into account that a Christian would never commit suicide bombing, is clearly focusing on the unnatural match between violence and the female body. The use of words such as "*petite*," "caressing," "soft" with contrast with "martyr" and "battle," clearly puts a gender perspective to the interpretation of her act. In fact, as it was the case when Palestinian hijacker and activist Leila Khaled was compared to Audrey Hepburn, a "beauty mixed with violence," (The Guardian, 2001), FSB are also portrayed in terms of physical beauty. In that sense, FSB are not represented as their male counterparts: their beauty seems to be at the opposite of the violence they perpetrate and this is a factor of collective fascination.

The association between beauty and violence is not new: from Charlie's Angels, to Laura Croft, Uma Thurman in *Kill Bill* or Angelina Jolie in the movie *Salt*, the representation of physical features coupled with violence in order to dupe men is common in the popular imagination (Oliver, 2007: 29). We could even argue that the Western image of the "bad" and "perverse" as feminine comes from the Catholic conceptualization of Adam and Eve: "Women have been associated with the downfall of man since Eve supposedly tempted Adam with forbidden fruit" (Oliver, 2007: 3). Most of the time in the narratives of FSB, the recurrent interrogation is: why such a pretty woman, a *petite* woman could ever be able to commit horrific crimes as suicide bombing (Kemoklidze, 2009: 182)? It seems that in the line with the stereotypes, a pretty woman, that follows gender requirements cannot be associated with violence: there is a profound misunderstanding of this equation in collective imagination.

Youzik's book about Chechen FSB is a very good example of the insistence with respect to female body narratives. While I am sure that her intention was to give voice to these women, her book is problematic in the sense that she mostly depicts the women as forced and coerced to act, arguing on their apparently "innocence". Recurrently, she makes use of body metaphors to make the distinction between the "mean Wahhabis" and the beautiful, pretty and innocent young women: "A girl with empty sight, with scarlet nails with the tic-tac of a bomb in her belly, a mechanism of self-destruction ready to be switched on"¹⁹ (Youzik, 2003: 57). In another passage, she completely acknowledges that a beautiful woman cannot be standing next to a terrorist or commit horrific act, it is clearly something that she categorizes as non-sense: "After her death, the photo of her passport was enlarged to A4 format to determine if it really was her, this beauty with almond eyes, which was standing next to Movsar Barayev, the leader of the terrorists of *North-East*"²⁰ (Youzik, 2003: 63).

The same rhetoric of beauty is used by Bloom, the well-known author on the topic, when she portrays FSB. A good example of her emphasis on the physical features is when she describes her meeting with Ahlam Tamimi²¹ in jail. She mentioned that she was smiling "angelically" and she compares the physical appearance of Tamimi when she was in jail, with no makeup and a hijab, to the physical appearance she had the day she accompanied a suicide bomber:

She wore no makeup and her thick dark hair was neatly tucked under a beige hijab. [...] Both wore Western-style clothes, mimicking young Israelis rather than conservative Palestinians. She was in tight blue jeans and a sexy halter top. With her long dark hair and tawny lipstick matching her outfit, she was extremely telegenic, the picture of a modern Palestinian woman (Bloom, 2011: 112, 114-115).

¹⁹ Original: "*Une fille au regard vide, aux ongles écarlates avec au ventre le tic-tac de la bombe, un mécanisme d'autodestruction en marche*" (personal translation).

²⁰ Original: "*Après sa mort, la photo de son passeport fut agrandie au format A4 pour déterminer si c'était bien elle, cette beauté aux yeux en amande, qui se tenait à côté de Movsar Baraïev, le chef des terroristes de Nord-Est*" (personal translation).

²¹ Alham Tamimi was released from jail in October 2011. She is Jordanian and she assisted a MSB into committing an attack in Israel in 2001 at Sbarro's pizzeria. A total of 15 people were killed and 130 wounded (Crimi, 2011).

The problem here does not reside only in the fact that she insists on the link between beauty and violence, it is also the fact that she judges what it means to be “modern”, and what kind of physical appearance is judged as correct, based on Western references. We will get back to this point in the third part of this chapter. Bloom also refers to other would-be and successful Palestinian suicide bombers as surprisingly attractive: “you would be struck by how attractive many of them are” (2011: 128). She argues that this is a tactic of the terrorist groups in order to attract media attention, but what if it was instead, the media and academics that attribute this meaning to women’s violence. Her findings are not proven, yet it appears that she deliberately uses this element of attractiveness following her own considerations.

Some authors effectively put emphasize on the physical description (body and clothes) of the FSB much more than the MSB. When FSB are described, the emphasis is put on their Muslim clothing for example: “[...] their traditional clothing, large and covering the whole body, facilitate the concealing of a great quantity of explosives²²” (Baños Bajo, 2005). Apart from the fact that this is an assumption that FSB is reserved to Muslim women that can conceal weapon because of their clothing, it also emphasizes the Muslim women clothing and the tactical advantage of their body. It directly portrays the traditional clothing as a security threat.

These depictions of the body are important since, in the case of Goris, there is a clear line delimited between societies that are producing violent bodies and those which are not. In the Arab world (and above all within the Palestinian communities) too, the FSB bodies are described with certain attractiveness and heroism. As Oliver underlines, “the *shahidas* are reportedly described as beautiful, pure, and self-sacrificing; their images are printed on posters and pocket-sized icons to be idolized” (2007: 32-33). Wafa Idriss has probably been the most idolized of all Palestinian bombers. She was portrayed as the “most beautiful of the

²² Original: “[...] *sus ropajes tradicionales, amplios y que cubren todo el cuerpo, facilitan ocultar gran cantidad de explosivos*” (personal translation).

Palestinian beauties, a wonderful model of sacrifice, did what the strong, proud men do” (MEMRI, 2002). These narratives of pretty violent women are clearly not giving a step towards equality, but strongly over glorify and legitimize the entrance of women into violent actuations.

As Oliver sustains, these narratives are sending one message: “her ponytail and pretty smile can be used as deadly weapons; and with the charms of her vulnerability and sweet face, she can subdue even the most bloodthirsty villains and win over the hearts of friend and enemy alike” (Oliver, 2007: 44). This leads to a huge paradox: the explanation of their violence and the association with their beauty obscure the fact that, in reality, they killed many people (Berkowitz, 2005: 614).

In the end, it is crucial to take a look at the depiction of physical appearance of FSB as it shows that we still perceive women along traditional lines of sexual divisions: the feminine body determines social functions and strongly regulates identities (París Albert, 2007: 107-110). Besides, this emphasis on the woman identity also leads to the problem of strongly considering this identity and forgets about other identities that can compel a woman to act violently (Toros & Gunning, 2009: 97). The focus on feminine body alters the consideration of other forms of identities such as political, religious, etc. It reduces the identity of the violent women to her feminine condition.

To be more specific, the language associated with physical features changes the focus: it is not regarded as political violence but sexuality. Apart from undermining women’s agency (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008a: 6), it perpetuates the perception of women as social sexual objects and it compels “the body to conform to an historical idea of ‘woman’” (Butler, 1988: 522). This is closely linked to the perception that women are weak, malleable, irrational and prone to men’s machination which will be further developed below.

2.1.2 Emotions and irrationality: acting solely for personal reasons

Bloom affirmed that motives for women to detonate a bomb are rather easy to understand: “Why? Motives vary: revenge for a personal loss, the desire to redeem the family name, to escape a life of sheltered monotony and achieve fame, and to level the patriarchal societies in which they live” (2005a: 143). These kinds of sensationalist affirmations are frequent in the hegemonic narratives regarding FSB: loss, redemption, escaping monotony, achieving fame and so on. Therefore, by depicting it as irrational and led by emotional instability might be the easiest way of explaining the violence of FSB in Muslim societies. Women are frequently associated with emotions and irrationality (Agra Romero, 2012: 62) in everyday life and for the stories of FSB, these associations between womanhood and sentimental experiences are multiplied. Indeed, as Oliver argues, women have always been correlated with the oscillation of their bodily fluids, with cycles and instability: they are “fluid, inconsistent, and irrational, while the male body is imagined as solid, permanent, and rational” (2007: 38).

Plenty of authors in the academic field are generally arguing that the reasons for women’s engagement in suicide bombings are mostly related to their personal grievances (Enkerlin Madero & Zatarain, 2011: 157). Bloom repeatedly focuses on redemption, personal loss or revenge while explaining FSB’s violence (2007: 95; 2005a: 143). In her last book, she also sustains that almost all FSB in Iraq are willing to bomb themselves because of their marriage and emotional affiliation to a male member of Al-Qaeda (Bloom, 2011: 217). Victor emphasizes “the personal problems that make their lives untenable” (2003: 7) while Pape also adopts this overgeneralization regarding Chechen FSB while he assumes that the hegemonic narratives of widowhood are the main reason for these women to commit the deed (2005: 183-184). Youzik also goes toward the same narratives of personal losses for the Chechen women: while trying to attribute some political agency recognition to Palestinian women, she

depicts the Chechen FSB as different, as victims of the instrumentalization of their personal tragedy (2003: 22). Youzik finally comes up with the conclusion that the principal motives of Chechen women are either personal tragedy or a miserable life (2003: 21).

Another frequent assumption is that FSB get involved in terrorist organizations “through their emotional and sexual attachments to male terrorists” (Hamilton, 2010: 99). For example, Morgan (2001) has been criticized for her presumptions that women become terrorists because they are sexual slaves or victims of sexual exploitation put in place by patriarchy in Muslim societies. From her point of view, this is what ultimately conducts them to act with irrationality because they become victims of their sexual dependency to men, which Sjoberg and Gentry have called the “erotomania” narrative (2008a: 10). Morgan is insisting that male terrorists are “Demon Lovers,” which implicates that the danger of death is attractive and the women easily fail under the power of these terrorists (2001: xvi). She quotes:

So she who lies in terror’s arms clutches for another bond of reassurance, and it is waiting to curl and know around her loins: charisma. The men will initiate her and she will be (almost) one of them; other women will look upon her with awe. The charisma attaches because of her intensifying proximity to death: she becomes even more of a treasure to him, since she will be lost to him and since he loves only what he can lose or kill (Morgan, 2001: 215).

The equation is perfect: women become involved in terrorist organizations for the love or the loss of a man, and they lose their mind as they become too emotional. It is acknowledged that they are seduced and indoctrinated, acting out of irrationality (Victor, 2003: 7): “When women blow their own heads into the ceiling of an Israeli café, or march into a theater in Moscow grasping the cords that will ignite bombs at their waists, where purses often go, the old pathologies of woman repeat. Women are neurotic and irrational” (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 187).

While being absolutely conscious that personal motives are central to the analysis of FSB (as argued in chapter one), framing their violence only through personal grievances and

trauma obscures the political reality of their lives: from a feminist standpoint, a clear difference cannot be established between political and personal grievances. In fact, “most suicide attacks have emotional and social components”. However, it is important to analyze FSB from the perspective of the “complexity of their decision-making” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 8-9) and not solely on the basis of their emotions/irrationality. The point is in fact considering that emotions are an important factor for both MSB and FSB, but that they are clearly not acting only out of despair and insanity.

Moreover, categorizing FSB as acting only in the realm of the personal has two dangerous effects. As commented in chapter one, it denies any personal reasons for men’s violence (Enkerlin Madero & Zatarain, 2011: 172), while it has been argued that the dichotomies personal/political are not relevant in the case of suicide bombings. Second, it also portrays women as irrational and acting only on the basis of their personal life experiences. In both cases, it distorts reality and fails to make an account of political violence. It normalizes men’s violence and makes it appear as accepted while women’s violence is not even recognized as violence (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 25). It reflects the mainstream division between the international and domestic sphere which leads us to further develop the topic of the narratives of motherhood regarding FSB.

2.1.3 Motherhood

The picture of Reem Riyashi preparing her suicide attack with a rifle in one hand and her son in the other is rather shocking (see Appendix III for the picture). Riyashi was the seventh FSB in Palestine, but for everyone, she had something particular: she was a mother (Berkowitz, 2005: 611). Before her death, she stated: “I am proud to be the first female HAMAS martyr. I have two children and love them very much. But my love to see God was stronger than my love for my children, and I’m sure that God will take care of them if I

become a martyr” (Ali, 2005). The panorama seems difficult to figure out: how could a mother kill herself and, on top of that, kill innocent victims, possibly kids?

The link between motherhood and war is impossible to date. The mother body was a vibrant sign of women’s participation in war during Ancient Greece (Banner, 2008: 79) as victims of war rape or a womb to produce future knights. Correspondingly, within the framework of the modern state, the mother has been associated with nation and nationalism as “mother of the nation” (Qazi, 2011: 32; Agra Romero, 2012: 66). The very reasons for this is that there are infinite possibilities for war that are concentrated in the mother’s body: a mother can bear children to fight for the nation but her body can also be raped in order to destroy a society from within, by bearing enemies and thus change the ethnic composition of the society. The reason is rather simple: the perception of the mother is guided by the fact that she can give life, she has such a power that a man cannot have. Thus, it seems shocking when a FSB decides that she will take her life and the life of innocents: she goes against her femininity, against her intrinsic value as a mother. She is not supposed to take away life, this is not *normal*, it goes against normativity (Agra Romero, 2012: 58) because the female body that commits a bombing is almost always symbolically associated to the body of a mother (Cavarero, 2009: 103).

The images of FSB and their association with motherhood, and infertility, have been part of numerous accounts of their violence: “they bring the repressed female and maternal body back into politics” (Oliver, 2007: 32). Their violence is interpreted as an abandonment of their “ultimate goal” in life (to give life) in order to enter the masculine life of war (Kemoklidze, 2009: 184). This results in the metaphorical use of the maternal body to describe their violent act. Bloom affirms that “the “exploding womb” has replaced the “revolutionary womb” that produced and supported young extremists in the past” (2011: 34). Baños Bajo also describes the same kind of transition for Iraqi women. According to him:

“[the woman] was the true responsible of passing the values to the sons, she converted herself to a direct protagonist of the holy struggle²³” (2008). While at the same time their violence is associated with motherhood, it is also associated with the incapacity of being a good mother:

It is not far-fetched to suspect that Idris may have been depressed and she may have felt she had nothing to live for. She had lost a baby during pregnancy and was unable to bear other children, a significant stigma in the Middle East. Her husband divorced her because of her infertility, and her chances of finding a man who would marry a barren woman were slim. Idris may have decided that life without her own family was meaningless (Davis, 2003: 77).

An example of the narrative of motherhood is the assumption that the FSB have a tactical advantage over their enemies because they can feign pregnancy. As Bloom argues: “To complicate the notions of femininity and motherhood, the female bomber’s improvised explosive device (IED) is often disguised under her clothing to make it appear as if she is pregnant and thus beyond suspicion or reproach” (2005: 57). This seems doubly lethal because the capacity of giving birth is transformed in the capacity of causing death. It seems inconceivable to think about a woman killing children, and even more incomprehensible to imagine a pregnant woman as a suicide bomber. Pregnant women have been perpetrating suicide attack as for example in Iraq in 2003, where a woman appeared pregnant in a videotape and later explodes herself against the Coalition forces (Bloom, 2007: 100; Von Knop, 2007: 402). Three women out of the 19 FSB present in the scene of the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow were also pregnant (Bloom, 2011: 55; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006: 63), which provoked a lot of controversy.

In fact, the idea of motherhood, or the idea of female body as a possible body for pregnancy, makes it untenable to think about: it completely shocks our ideas of the “boundary between ‘natural’/‘unnatural’ femininity” (Ahall, 2011: 42). As an example, in the events at Dubrovka, most of the accounts from the hostages (that need to be analyzed with a lot of caution) insist in the nurturing nature of the FSB compared to their male counterparts as a

²³ Original: “*la verdadera responsable de transmitir los valores a los hijos, a convertirse en la protagonista directa de la lucha santa*” (personal translation).

consequence of their natural capacity to be a mother. When asked, the hostages were saying that women were more caring, giving food, helping the victims even if the Chechen fighters were asking not to do so (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 102). As an example, Bloom clearly echoes the motherhood narrative while she described the events: “At the Dubrovka theater siege, for example, the men took care of the explosives and intimidation, while the women distributed medical supplies, blankets, water, chewing gum, and chocolate” (2007: 97). With this quote, she affirms a difference in the gender roles at Dubrovka Theater identifying the men as warriors and the women as nurturers.

Even some organizations are using the motherhood narratives as was the case with the reporting of the suicide attack in 2006 committed by Fatimah Al-Najar, a 57-year-old Palestinian woman. In the internet web page of Al-Qassam Brigades in English, the group quotes: “Fatimah ended these effective words to conclude a very great story to a historical woman who protect (*sic*) the life of many women and children when she exploded her body between a group of Zionist forces” (Al-Qassam, 2013). Reem Riyashi, another Palestinian bomber, is portrayed as the following, despite the fact that she said in her last video that her willingness to martyr was stronger than the love for her children: “Reem met her death as a Shahida, underlining (*sic*) with unprecedented courage her love for her two small children [...]” (Al-Qasam, 2013). Finally, some FSB themselves use the metaphors of motherhood prior to their act like it was the case of Dareen Abu Aysheh, a Palestinian FSB: “Let Sharon the coward know that every Palestinian woman will give birth to an army of martyrs, and her role will not only be confined to weeping over a son, brother, or husband; instead, she will become a martyr herself” (Eskandani, 2006: 100). Abu Aysheh, in this quote, clearly takes the mother narrative to the advantage of her deed: she manipulates the natural capacity of women to give birth and insert it in the rhetoric of community duty and state of war against Israelis.

She affirms the link between nation, motherhood and the bombings, but she also affirms that motherhood gives women the strength to battle against the enemies.

The problem is that the motherhood narrative reflects the fear of natural bodies: their bodies are associated with a capacity to give life, and from a Freudian perspective, a power over death (Oliver, 2007: 21; Ahall, 2011: 41). There is a tension between the natural body of women (motherhood) and the unnatural body enacted through suicide bombing (political agency). Constantly referring to motherhood also prevents talking about political agency for women, even though it would be interesting to question further the link between political agency and motherhood. In any case, the emphasis on motherhood also reinforces the idea that motherhood is linked with heteronormativity (Ahall, 2011: 29). Therefore, if the FSB has no children, she is categorized as incapable of bearing children and outside the realm of normativity which is interpreted as the reason for her to conduct violence. If the FSB was pregnant or having children, she is also considered abnormal: her deed installs a contradiction between the naturally nurturing status of women as mothers and the horrific unnatural scene of the bombing. She becomes a monster.

2.1.4 The abject: the monster

“Is it possible that the monster can ‘dress’ like a woman²⁴?”

-Maria Xoxé Agra Romero (2012: 51)

The three first narratives I explored regarding FSB (through beauty, irrationality and motherhood) led us to an extreme narrative of these violent women: the monster one. The monster deviant body is one that is not socially conformed and not socially accepted. The FSB’s body is a deviant body: it does not enter into the limits of our conception of what a woman’s body should do or should be. The body of violent women is part of something that we do not understand socially, it “cannot be categorized”, it is abject. Indeed, following

²⁴ Original: “¿Puede el monstruo ‘vestirse’ de mujer?” (personal translation).

Kristeva, the abject body is “something that calls into question borders” (Oliver, 2007: 25). In the case of FSB, the “disfigurement of the singular body²⁵” (Agra Romero, 2012: 56) coupled with the unexpected horror due to the fact that the act is perpetrated by a woman, fascinates the public and fuels the narratives of monstrosity.

The monster narrative comes in opposition to normalcy: FSB are presented as abject women, “as a product of faulty biology or faulty construction” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 13). It is more comfortable to use the monster narrative as it responds to the anxiety to explain women’s violence. In fact, portraying the FSB as monsters confirm that they are just not part of normalcy, they are deviant women: this confirms, on the contrary, that notion of femininity is kept intact as these women are considered deviant (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 7). The monster narrative serves to perpetuate the idea of normal women.

One of the best examples that can be given regarding the monster narratives is the “Black Widow²⁶” one. The very fact of calling them with the name of a black venomous spider already sets up the monster narrative. It associates the power of death of these women to darkness, to the color of the black flag of the Mujahedeen but also, in the West, it refers to the color of mourning. Naming the FSB as “Black Widows” dehumanizes the woman behind the act of bombing and it contributes to a racialized categorization of the Chechen and Dagestani women as a dangerous other (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). Even Pape, O’Rourke and McDermit in an article for the *New York Times*, despite their affiliation to the academic field, are using this narrative of monstrosity of this “widow” term asking: “What makes Chechen women so dangerous?” (2010). Besides the fact that this title reifies all the Chechen women under a categorization as “dangerous”, instead of talking specifically about FSB, it also

²⁵ Original: “*desfiguración del cuerpo singular*” (personal translation).

²⁶ The name Black Widows has been given primarily to the Chechen women during the second war between Russia and Chechnya. The Western and Russian press attributed this name on the basis of the fact that these women were acting out of despair because of the loss of their husbands. In the mass media, it has now been extended to Dagestani FSB.

portrays them as monsters, non-human and threatening. In the end, it also allows a more violent response to suicide bombing: by labeling these women as a spider monster, the Russian government can act violently because these women are not seen as human, nor are they seen as citizens (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 103).

In such a way, this monster narrative frames the FSB as social deviants: they represent the abject of their society, they go against gender norms or they are mentally ill. The categorization of the Chechen women as Black Widows is the most common example, but it also has been the case with the Iraqi or Palestinian FSB who have been depicted as monsters. As a result, following the words of Naaman, there is a “demonization not only of these particular women but also of the society that could produce such monsters” (2007: 942), a topic that will be discussed in the cultural narratives of this chapter. In the end, the victims of the suicide attacks are thus portrayed as innocent while the FSB as the monster in a dichotomy that is far from being that clear.

The analysis on beauty, irrationality and motherhood conducted us to the extreme narrative of deviant body as monster. These narratives regarding the female body lead to further reflection of what is expected for women in Muslim and Western societies and how FSB go against the acquired notions of femininity regarding their social status.

2.2 Status-related narratives

Due to the fact that most of the narratives that concern FSB are based on their private and sexual life, I decided to dedicate a special part on the status-related narratives. In the first chapter, we underlined that the female body is most of the time associated with sexuality and reproduction, or perpetuation of the human life (París Albert, 2007: 109). In the first section, we already questioned the fact that the female body, through attractiveness and beauty myth, was associated with women’s violence. Here, what I aim to present are the narratives that make sexuality (or failed sexuality), understood as the intimate sexual life/relationship, one of

the causes or reasons why women are committing bombings. I consequently explore two types of narratives: one based on domestic matters, which includes all the “failures” of the private sphere (ex.: infertility, failure to get married, etc.), and the other one based on victimhood, which will address the narratives that attribute FSB’s violence to male oppression.

2.2.1 Domestic narratives

The domestic narrative is intrinsically linked to the motherhood narrative: here I understand it as the reduction of the role of the FSB to the private sphere and thus, the assumption that their acts only derive from the failure of a decent domestic status. These narratives contribute to the annihilation of their political agenda at the same time that they contribute to the perception that the division of labor between men and women are made along the line of private and public sphere. In this manner, the violence of FSB is explained by their failures or deceptions in the domestic sphere: most of the academic authors explain their act as one of revenge for domestic fiasco (Agra Romero, 2012: 61)

As the women are seen as the life givers and protectors of the household and community in international relations, they are still not accepted in global politics. As a result, the FSB are seen as an exception to this normativity; their acts are political statements and, most of the time, people are looking for an explanation for the deeds committed. It is very easy to attribute these violent acts to a “perversion of the private realm” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 130).

The most common example of the narratives based on domestic motives is the explanation of the violence because of a failure in the marital status, the impossibility to get married or a rejection of the husband. In his book, Pape states: “An obvious hypothesis that bears further research is that this age difference reflects the declining marriage prospects for mature women in traditional societies” (2005: 39). Apart from the generalization he makes

about what he perceives as traditional societies (versus modern, Western societies), he clearly considers that the best hypothesis would be to consider a marital deception as a core motive for a FSB. This overemphasizes the private sphere and neglects to consider the whole context in which a woman decides to act violently. It also portrays a certain idea of “normalcy” for the Western viewers: what is normal for Muslim women is to get married, if not, they have “no worth” in life, “nothing else to live for” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 101). We will go back to this point in section 2.3.

Bloom is making the same reflections when she refers to Al-Bis, a Palestinian woman who failed to accomplish her mission: “Because of her physical deformity, Al Bis was not going to fetch a good bride price and had no value on the marriage market. [...] She might also have been persuaded that by becoming a martyr she could enter paradise a new woman, without all her scars and burns” (Bloom, 2011: 133). Bloom also allegedly affirms that, in Iraq, almost all FSB have been married to Al-Qaeda members or are linked by affiliation to them. From that, she then comes to the conclusion that since there “are more than 100,000 widows in Iraq,” “the women are poor and borderline illiterate” and thus more vulnerable, “[a]s is the case in other struggles, women are often coerced into taking action” (Bloom, 2011: 218). With this kind of interpretation, she is not only dismissing the agency of women, but she is taking solely a victimhood position, reducing their lives to their husbands.

In fact, the FSB are framed as incapable to overcome marital and domestic failure and, out of despair, they commit a bombing to end their tragic lives. Some authors go further when they affirm that these women have a “self-hate²⁷” because they are not in position to fulfill their ideal life, or the ideal life that society is asking of them (Al-Gharbi, 2006: 67). Enkerlin Madero and Zatarain also indicated that the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs widely used this domestic narrative to portray FSB in Palestine: they deviate from the domestic norms by

²⁷ Original: “*haine de soi*” (personal translation).

being divorced, repudiated, and infertile or socially dishonored (2011: 157). Sjoberg and Gentry also criticize how the covering of Myrium Goris (Murielle Degauque), the Belgian Muslim woman who committed a suicide bombing in Iraq. She was “framed in terms of her failed marriages and inability to have children: so she decided to be a suicide bomber” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008a: 16). The same was done for Wafa Idris; her deed was explained by her impossibility to have children and the divorce that followed (Banner, 2006: 241). This reduces the willingness to commit a suicide bombing to a failed life as a wife: “How bad must your life be if you think that it is better to be a sacrifice than to live, have a family, and be a productive member of society?” (Bloom, 2005: 1).

More recently, when a Dagestani woman blew herself up in Russia, the rhetoric of “Black Widow” had been retaken, alluding that there was a direct correlation between being a widow and being a suicide bomber: “Most of the Chechen attacks against Russia in 2004 have involved “Black Widows” wishing to avenge the deaths of family members in Russia’s conflict in Chechnya” (Bloom, 2005a: 157).

This Black Widow narrative reflects the necessity of “othering” the Chechen and Dagestani FSB: it portrays all these North Caucasian women as potential bombers because of the loss of their husbands and indoctrination to radical Islam. It also gave an unprecedented political advantage to Moscow: the Black Widow narratives “have helped the Russian government frame all Chechen women as combatants, taking away whatever protection they might have had from the conflict had they been considered civilians” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 92).

In conclusion, it appears that these narratives only bring awareness to one side of women’s life: the violence that they decide to commit is explained by the social abnormalities encountered in the realm of their private lives (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008a: 10). The authors and writers are putting a high value on the marital status of these women considering marital

fidelity, infertility and the fear of honor killings as sufficient factors to consider suicide bombing (O'Rourke, 2009: 706-707). Additionally to the fact that these kinds of narratives perpetuate an Orientalized idea of Muslim women, it also prevents a deeper analysis of the phenomenon because it solely portrays women as deviant from their assigned gender roles. This is directly related to the narratives that will be analyzed in the next section: the deviant body narratives.

2.2.2 Victimhood: male domination

The victimhood narrative is probably one of the most common regarding FSB as it is intrinsically linked to the accepted perception that women are more vulnerable and powerless than men. It is the popular construction upon the female body that induces this widespread belief that violent women are victims of male coercion and oppression. These women are represented as unprotected and mere victims (Ahmed Ali, 2005) by some academics and writers. As Kemoklidze argues:

Rather, it is the social construction of a female victim identity through everyday discourse in media, politics, and social life that is largely responsible for the continuous creation and re-creation of the so-called essentialist gender stereotypes that form the image of a “weak” woman, victimised by a “strong” man.” (2006: 185)

The Chechen FSB are among the most victimized since it has been taken for granted that their implication in the suicide attack was mostly due to the instrumentalization of their pain by male rebels. They have been in the middle of “competing narratives” (Banner, 2008: 78) of victimization, mostly during the second war. On the one side, Russian authorities were victimizing them arguing that they were drugged or blackmailed by Chechen fighters (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 12), using this tactic as a manner to shame and delegitimize the Chechen rebels. On the other side, the Chechen fighters were alluding that the FSB got radicalized because they had been victims of the atrocities done by Russian soldiers (Kemoklidze, 2009: 185-186). Even Robert A. Pape, in his famous book *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, adopted the mediatized narrative “Black Widow” and affirmed that: “The Chechens make such great use of female suicide attackers who have lost husbands or children

that there is a colloquial name for them –Black Widows” (2005: 183-184). If the war certainly affected women strongly, it equally afflicted Chechen men. I am not here denying the horrible atrocities committed by both sides of the conflict. However, the representations of their political choices have been totally distorted by these competing narratives. Speckhard and Akhmedova effectively remarked:

While some, mainly Russian journalists have written that Chechen women are kidnapped, raped, and/or drugged to encourage them to take part in terror activities, we have found no evidence for this. On the contrary, we find strong evidence of self-recruitment and strong willingness to martyr oneself on behalf of one’s country and independence from Russia, to enact social justice (in their perspective) for wrongs done to them, and to avenge for the loss of loved ones in their families (2006: 70).

The narrative of victimhood in the Chechen conflict only indicates that the female body became the battlefield of the conflict (Standish, 2008). However, victimhood narrative downplays the importance of understanding choice in the context of a war. In fact, we must be aware of the fact that, while men and women are victims of war, their decision to perpetuate violent acts does not depend solely on their status of victim. This is an important factor to consider for FSB and the recognition of their agency.

Following that path, another narrative of victimhood relies on the assumption that Muslim women commit suicide bombings due to prior sexual abuses that force them into redeem their honor. These assumptions are based on the fact that these women are living in highly patriarchal and traditional societies that impose on them a code of honor (Butler, 2009: 129). Bloom, in various books and articles, strongly defended the previously raped argument as being the most important and even the principal motive for women to commit a suicide bombing. In her last book, she argues that: “The formerly victimized women reinvent themselves as terrorists and redeem their honor by killing as many of the enemy’s soldiers as possible” (Bloom, 2011: 222-223). While it might appear that rape is an incentive, the direct and strong correlation she establishes between rape, honor code and suicide bombing is weak and she never really furnishes proofs to support her theory (Naaman, 2007: 944). Apart from generalizing the situation of the Arab women and reducing their life to societal codes, she

establishes hasty conclusions regarding rape and subsequent violence. It absolutely removes the possibility of considering the context, the choice, the resilience and the strength of these women by portraying them as “damaged goods” (Schweitzer, 2008: 2).

The portrait it gives of FSB is one of a victim that does not choose but has no choice and thus responds only to cultural oppression (we will get back at that point in the part 2.3). While not denying that rape is a crucial issue to explore, the way it is explored is of central importance as it needs to be respectful towards the victims. Moreover, by constructing a direct correlation between the act of being raped and the act of committing a bombing, it suggests that every Muslim woman who was a victim of rape potentially considers bombing herself, while it is absolutely not the case.

With that being said, I think we should pay attention to rape as an incentive, but I appeal to more consciousness in the overall generalization made by some academics. Becoming a FSB is not a simple thing to understand for the outside viewer and victimhood explanations could appear to make some sense. The damaged body seems to be recuperated through the exploded body. Everything, for a wider audience, gives the impression to be suddenly logical: if the body suffered a certain kind of mutilation, the society gave an answer and this reaction needs to be apprehended by the subject. However, this apprehension is not necessarily one of self-destruction of the body or killing.

Nevertheless, it is still difficult to evaluate the degree in which certain groups are using women, above all in Iraq. The investigations are still very rare on the topic and we know only a few biographical details of the FSB to date. The allegations of rape have been in the center of the debates regarding their willingness to participate. The alarming situation is the increasing willingness of women to participate in suicide bombing since 2008 (Stone & Patillo, 2011: 171). This is clearly an avenue for future research.

To conclude this section, I would suggest that the victimhood narrative reinforces the perception we have of the weakness of women and therefore does not in any manner contribute to understand their violence. While their suffering is clearly an issue to consider, there is an ethical question considering the female bomber solely as victim and not as political agents: it categorizes the FSB equally to the victims they killed. They are attached to the same “innocence” and victimhood in war, while in reality these women murdered militaries and civilians: they acted violently. It is not about denying them a status of victim, but it is, on the contrary, a call for understanding that there is no such clear line between victim and perpetrator. In reality, the stereotypical gender assumptions that women are intrinsically “gentle, submissive and nonviolent” are so strong, and also produced and reproduced on a daily basis, that even when ready to blow themselves up, women are continued to be viewed as “innocent” and their actions as “utter despair...rather than mere cold-blooded murder of civilians” (Kemoklidze, 2009: 186).

In any case, the categorization of women as mere victims of men oppression while portraying FSB is intrinsically linked to the interpretation of their actions as non-political and, therefore, completely personal (West, 2005: 1). Every woman that goes against the gender stereotypes socially assigned to her femininity runs the risk of being categorized as unfeminine. This takes us to the next section regarding the extreme status-related narrative.

2.2.3 The unfeminine: the deviated gender

The two previous narratives explored lead me to examine the extreme narrative related to status: the unfeminine one. I comprehend this narrative as the way in which the FSB are portrayed as “deviant from prescribed forms of femininity” (Naaman, 2007: 935). It is the narrative that pictures the FSB as “engaged in non-female business” and which failed to meet the requirements regarding their gender comparing them to the men that are considered as the norm in the terrorism world (Shcheblanova & Yarskaya-Smirova, 2009: 250). It is the

narrative that makes them appear “stupid, unfeminine, or promiscuous” (Stack O’Connor, 2011: 91). It directly means a distinction with men’s violence that follows the line of accepted violence in terrorism: “there is the mass-mediated notion of the female terrorist who, in order to prove that she belongs, tends to be more fanatical, more cruel, more deadly” (Nacos, 2005: 444).

As Butler says: “[p]erforming one’s gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all” (1988: 528). In chapter one, we have seen that for women, “performing” their gender was related to nurturing and peace in public imagination. A FSB goes very far from that very assumption there is a concrete and tangible difficulty to explain her deed as it tends to be considered as falling outside normalcy.

Plenty of reasons are found to describe the women: they are “zombies,” “tomboy” (Hasso, 2005: 38) or “playing boyish games” (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006: 451). They are acting contrary to their gender, they are the incarnation of the abject. It was the case with Myriam Goris as everyone was looking for what was not feminine in her attitude:

Like Malika, as an adolescent, Muriel had dabbled in drugs, smoked cigarettes, drunk alcohol, and run away from home. She was allegedly more interested in boys than school until she converted to Islam. For her parents, her descent into radicalization was reflected in her changing clothing styles (Bloom, 2011: 212).

The women are portrayed not as women but as masculinized, deviating from the established image we have regarding good behaviors from women (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008a: 14). The example of Palestinian women is important in this regard: the FSB were given different names related to what was considered ‘normal femininity’ as for instance “Brides of Palestine” or “Mother of the Shahids” (Naaman, 2007: 933; Banner, 2008: 79-80). As such, the FSB stay in their respective gender roles, mothers and wives: they stay along the lines of heteronormativity and under “narratives that affirmed the gender status quo” (Naaman, 2007: 946).

In conclusion, the FSB is considered a “double deviant” because she committed a crime but she also went against the gender norms that society prescribes to a woman (Banner, 2008: 82). Thus it is difficult to give an account of the violence since the very body of a female terrorist is already framed through a certain gender stereotype that avoids a complete understanding of the deed and the reasons to perpetrate it. Moreover, as it will be argued in the following section, in the case of Muslim FSB, these narratives of social deviance are coupled with narratives of Neo-Orientalism and Neo-Colonialism that keep us away from the complexity of the interrelation between gender and terrorism.

2.3 Muslim female body: narratives of cultural fatality

This iteration of the sexual dysfunction narrative of women’s violence is implicitly racialized as well. The relationships between women and men in Islamic societies are the subject of much discourse and fantasy in Western societies.

-Laura Sjoberg & Caron E. Gentry (2008a: 5)

As I was reading and becoming more interested by the topic of suicide bombing, women and bodies, I always (and here I include myself) thought: what about if these women would read how the Western social scientists talk about them? I partially got an answer by reading some of the few authors that criticize the Orientalist perspective on Muslim women in general, and FSB in particular (Brunner, 2005, 2007, 2007a; & Gentry, 2011; Butler, 2009).

It has been 35 years now since Edward Said first criticized Orientalism, or the way we, as Westerners, treat and perceive people from the East. Unfortunately, it seems that the narratives that portray Arab/Muslim women as an exotic other did not disappear. In the cultural discourses that framed the rhetoric of the “war on terror,” the portrayal of Muslim women got a discursive shift. The overall representation is one of an ‘other’, a woman that is incapable of making any decisions for herself, victim of patriarchal and undemocratic societies and who is under the total control of her husband. This way of seeing Muslim

women has been transferred to and replicated by the interpretation made by most of the communication media and scholars.

Gentry called these ways of analyzing, viewing and interrogating FSB “Neo-Orientalism” (2011: 185). In the precise case of FSB, it is highly problematic since that, and coupled with victimhood narratives, it represents the woman as not able to determine her own life nor even her death (Szalkai, 2012) and as ready to die at the direction of her controlling husband (Gentry, 2011: 179). Therefore, in that section, I adopt a critical point of view on the Neo-Orientalist approach of certain narratives.

2.3.1 “Othering” the body of Muslim FSB

It is difficult to culturally capture the body: the social body is bounded by numerous and subtle dynamics. But when it comes to cultural differences, it seems to be easier to identify what is not “the same” in the body of the “other” (even if each of us is an “other” to one another). As an example, Gentry highlights some facts about Myrium Goris and the depiction of her body, considered as perverted by Islam: “The media is seemingly helping Western society make sense of why a “white, middle class,” “attractive, long-haired woman” would take up the cause for radical Islam, betraying her religion and her Western “birthright” of presumed emancipated womanhood” (2011: 181). In that sense, Butler argues, the cultural framework on the ‘war on terror’ has been discursively oriented towards the depiction of Islam as something that is not from our time, as abject and violent by definition (Butler, 2009: 130). Following that, it seems to make sense to Western society that “these cultures” (which refers most of the time to Islamic culture since 9/11) are producing violent women because of their “culture of death” (Szalkai, 2012), an expression used by Victor in her book *Army of Roses* (2003: 8). It is the logical sequence of a comparison between the Western assumed non-violent Self and the violent “absolute other” (Brunner, 2007: 2).

The Orientalist approach to Eastern conflicts presents the Muslim-Arab women body as someone “that is powerless, backward, sensual, emotional and not able to determine its life” (Szalkai, 2012). It is a vision of the female Muslim body as not able of political agency because the idea of Muslim FSB is one of submissiveness (in line with the general conception on Muslim-Arab women) against a widespread assumption that the terrorist is a “fanatic male, bent on destroying” (Berkowitz, 2005: 607). As Berkowitz argues, “[f]rom the perspective of Western media and Western audiences, Arab women are mythical members of their own society, black-cloaked and living in the shadows [...]” (2005: 609). The appearance of women is associated with chadors, burqas, blackness, as well as sexuality mixed with deadliness, all contributing to create a mythical other in the public imagination (Banner, 2006: 239).

There are numerous examples of the ‘othering’ of the Arab/Muslim body of FSB in the literature. Youzik always makes some allusions to the Muslim body of the Chechen bombers: “small, not so pretty, the head covered,²⁸” “another girl, indoctrinated too,²⁹” “women with hijab, dressed in black, all shahidas that came to avenge their husbands,³⁰” or “suddenly the pious girls, hidden under their headscarves and full of the Quran³¹” (Youzik, 2003: 29, 35, 61 & 100). Bloom makes some similar remarks: “Among the suicide bombers were several women who wore veils and allegedly spoke some incomprehensible Central Asian language” (Bloom, 2005a).

In fact, the idea that the body of women in Islamic society is controlled by the men of their family is also widespread (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008a: 13). In the case of the FSB, this makes sense: the allegations of remote control of the belt bomb are very common in the

²⁸ Original: “*petite, pas très belle, la tête couverte*” (personal translation).

²⁹ Original: “Une autre fille, endoctrinée elle aussi” (personal translation).

³⁰ Original: “Des femmes en hidjab, vêtues de noir, toutes des shahidas venues venger leur maris” (personal translation).

³¹ Original: “[...] soudain que ces filles pieuses, dissimulées sous leurs foulards et pleines du Coran” (personal translation).

literature (see for example Bloom). The Muslim female body of the FSB is then seen as manipulated, incapable of taking a decision and is a testimony of gender inequality in the Muslim world because ‘they’ send their women to death.

All these narratives are based on a lot of “raced and cultural assumptions” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008: 15) and they have had some greater consequences such as the established correlation between FSB and the ‘war on terror’. This goes in line with what we have discussed in the first chapter, which is the fact that having a gender perspective also reduces the possibility of making other kinds of discrimination as prescribed by Peace Studies (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 92). But these narratives of othering are also constructed around a notion of Arabic/Muslim culture as an opposition to Western values that contribute to mystify even more the phenomenon of FSB.

2.3.2 FSB: representations of a cultural fatality

The consequences of the categorization of the FSB bodies as an ‘other’ are more important than they appear. These “othering” narratives perpetuate symbolic violence at the same time that they create a distorted vision of the conflict where FSB are involved. Indeed, academics are sometimes propagating these narratives under the exercise of objective investigations (Brunner, 2007a: 966).

The cultural fatality narrative is framed by the assumption that women in Iraq, Dagestan, Chechnya, Palestine and other Muslim countries are controlled and oppressed by the culture they live in, which fosters the idea of transforming them into violent women. This is based on the presumption that the women in Muslim countries have no rights and can be sent to suicide bombing without any right of deciding. Religion and patriarchy are presented as the only reasons responsible for the transformation of Muslim women into violent FSB. An example of this narrative is when Morgan is associating terror with violence:

If we're to look more closely at the worldwide historical conspiracy of religious terror, let the woman reader be warned. You will have to cover your arms and legs, you will have to veil your face. [...] You will be legally raped in wedlock. You will have to obey father, husband, brother, even son. You will have to become pregnant, whether you wish to or not [...] (2001: 86-87).

She is clearly making an association with Islam and terror, even though she claiming to be talking about religion in general. She is directly linking religion as a matter of oppression and a factor of terrorism. Davis is also trying to explain terror violence:

A woman *in this area*, Christian or Muslim, is not expected to strap on a gun and lead men into battle like a modern-day Joan of Arc. *In this part of the world*, it is not unheard of for families to ask brothers to kill wayward sisters to protect the family's honor. A *young woman's reputation is everything*, not only for her but for her family, which is why some families decide that the only way to restore the reputation is to kill a wayward daughter. (Davis, 2003, 72 & 76-77) [The emphases are mine]

At some point, Bloom clearly suggests that religious girls are bad while the secular environments (read Western and specifically American) are less prone to have bombers: "Not all of the girls are religious. Most of them have grown up in secular environments, wearing miniskirts, listening to rock and roll, and watching American movies" (Bloom, 2011: 65). While she assumes that there are multiple societal factors that can lead to radicalization she also follows the cultural fatality narrative in an article directed to Thayer and Hudson: "There are multiple and overlapping societal pressures for young people to engage in suicide terrorism in places where one's death is perceived to be more valuable than one's life" (Bloom, Thayer & Hudson, 2010: 189). Or elsewhere that "[i]n some cultures, however, women in otherwise impossible situations find that they may be more valuable dead than alive" (Bloom, Thayer & Hudson, 2010: 189).

Toles Parkin also frames the FSB as culturally embedded: "To some extent, all suicide operatives are victims, not only of the terrorist organizations, but of the cultural conditioning that lures them into believing that their ultimate life purpose lies in an untimely death" (2004: 86). Finally, the reification of all the FSB under the words "Arab" or "Muslim" is now very common, making abstraction of the other women terrorists in history. An example is the affirmation of Kobrin, the author of *The Banality of Suicide Terrorism. The Naked Truth*

about the Psychology of Islamic Suicide Bombing (2010), in an interview given to the *Citizen Times*:

The female is so completely devalued in these Arab Muslim shame-honor cultures, which spawn suicide bombing that you can actually read the traumatic bonding of the mother in the imagery. In shame-honor cultures the mother assumes heroic proportions which is an overcompensation for being such a devalued female. The male terrorists can not understand how they could be born from such a denigrated female body while the female terrorists have merely internalized male hatred of the female as self-hatred (Streuning, 2010).

Here, a direct correlation is established between shame-honor cultures and the production of suicide bombers. While it leaves aside the multifaceted war contexts in which terrorism expands, it also hastily establishes links between the supposed shame-honor cultures, motherhood sacrifice, self-hatred and political suicidal violence of women.

With this section, we clearly have the impression that Butler's assumptions are confirmed: some of the population seems to be "lose-able" and not everybody "counts as a subject" (2009: 31). The racialized view on the Muslim *other* is fully demonstrated by the narratives on the FSB, leaving aside the fact that these people are or were living war on a everyday basis (Butler, 2009: 74). The dichotomies, as I argued in chapter one, between West/East, women/men, Arab/White, Muslims/Non-Muslims are dangerously problematic and contrary to the Peace Studies standpoint. This is also linked to the thinking of the West as a site of gender emancipation against the East "in necessity" to adopt gender equality from the West, which is thought as the norm to follow. The next section focuses on the narratives of gender emancipation regarding FSB.

2.4 Gender emancipation narratives

As I was writing this chapter, the controversial campaign of Femen, an organization of women that organizes nude protests to reclaim certain rights, was ongoing. It has been argued that the European/Western women were trying to impose their feminist views in Muslim

countries, moreover with the entire story in relation with Amina³². That raises the question of gender equality, what is it and how can it be achieved: are we still trying to impose our view on what it is to be a woman in Muslim countries? Are we really challenging gender norms? Furthermore, for what concerns us, is suicide bombing a form of gender emancipation?

Leila Khaled, one of the most important female activists of Palestine, once proclaims that: “When the religious leaders say that women who make those actions are finally equal to men, I have a problem. Everyone is equal in death—rich, poor, Arab, Jew, Christian, we are all equal. I would rather see women equal to men in life” (Victor, 2003: 63-64). It seems that the debate regarding Muslim women empowerment and their link with armed resistance is still widespread nowadays.

As I argued in the last section, the widespread understanding of Muslim countries and women’s right are biased by a non-nuanced belief of inequality as in Western general literature is associated with honor killing, shame and submissiveness (Butler, 2009: 129). From this assumption of absolute inequality in Muslim countries, the belief regarding FSB is that the assumed ‘everyday’ oppression led them to consider suicide bombing as a gender statement for equality. The impression of gender equality comes from the inclusion of women in terrorist groups (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 8) and largely due to the fact that some “revolutionary movements use ‘women’ as symbols of liberation and modernization, encouraging them to dress as they wish, to aspire to professional positions, and even to participate in the military” (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 184). I sustain that one thing is different in the case of FSB: the dead body. The dead body cannot achieve equality in life (I come back to that point in the next chapter). In fact, what allows women to question and

³² Amina is an Algerian woman that took pictures of herself naked and made a statement for women’s rights affirming her affiliation to *Femen*. The pictures were published all around the world and created controversy, shock and an intense feminist debate.

challenge the gendered structures of the society is “silenced through suicide terrorism” (Szalcai, 2012).

It has been argued that FSB are challenging the patriarchal society in which they perform their act of violence. As an example, the Palestinian FSB has been depicted as heroine of the nation. For example, The Middle East Media Research Institute did a compilation of the Arab “celebration” of the act of Idris: “Wafa's martyrdom restored honor to the national role of the Palestinian woman,” “to take pride in the history of the Arab and Islamic woman,” or “Wafa Idris elevated the value of the Arab woman and, in one moment, and with enviable courage, put an end to the unending debate about equality between men and women” (MEMRI, 2002). Even Arafat used metaphorical comparison between FSB as his “army of roses” and the “Israeli tanks” (Victor, 2003: 19), showing that his organization was accepting woman in a sign of new gender equality. This lead to a crucial question: is this an instrumentalization of conservative religious organization or is suicide bombing (through the inclusion of female in terrorist organizations) giving a real opportunity to Muslim women to show their equality with men?

From a perspective of Peace Studies, I argue that an assumption of achieving equality in violence is only perpetuating the masculine objective vision of the world that emphasizes violent behavior to get rid of conflicts in international politics. As Oliver claims: “it is crucial for women to be able to create new meanings for their lives outside of patriarchal conventions that continue to link women, sex, and death. Otherwise, women’s freedom is reduced to the freedom to kill themselves” (2007: 40). Particularly, to recognize women’s agency does not necessarily mean that their political agenda is coupled with gender emancipation. The very act of death that is intrinsic or almost certain with suicide bombing avoids any progression of social status for women. It has been proven that the women become equal in fight but ordinary women never really reach the same status in everyday life (Szalkai, 2012). It was the

case with Chechnya, where women strongly participated in suicide bombings and various branches of military action but where the aftermath of the war is characterized by the “re-imposition of gender hierarchies” (Banner, 2008: 79).

It is rare that the gender hierarchies challenged during the wars continue or get developed in the aftermath of the conflicts (Banner, 2009: 31). There is no evidence that the structure of a terrorist organization offers a challenge to gender inequalities and this avenue needs to be investigated in depth. It seems that the gender hierarchies are perpetuated in the aftermath of the conflict and some authors like Enkerlin Madero y Zatarain affirm that instead, the FSB are acting in the same line of the patriarchal forces: masculine conception of maternity, self-sacrifice and persistence of the masculine domination (2011: 172). I would argue that, from a perspective of Philosophy for Peace, the very assumption of gender equality in death of FSB is assuming a victory of militarization as criticized by Comins Mingol (2001). As Ness sustains:

It is important to underscore, however, that the changing relationship of females to violence should not, in most instances (if at all), be construed as indicative of progress toward gender equality, whether in a terrorist organization, an ethnoseparatist struggle, or an American inner city (Ness, 2007: 86-87).

In the end, “[i]nclusion is not a synonym with gender equality” and those narratives on gender emancipation need to be approached carefully, above all within Peace Studies. It also appeals to a better understanding of women’s violence from the part of Feminist theory, a consciousness that the fulfillment of gender equality does not lie in suicidal/killing violence and in the belief that women can be a more active part of Muslim societies as agents of social life.

3. Summary of the chapter

Their acts are either framed as an outcome of patriarchal oppression, personal despair and exaggerated emotionality – or the women are oversexualised, vilified and turned into perverted monsters. Both strategies

allow placing women suicide bombers outside of the realm of political agency.

-Claudia Brunner (2007: 8)

While I am conscious that it is barely possible to change the way in which the various sources of information relate to or narrate the stories of FSB, I think that a critical analysis of the hegemonic narratives is indispensable to understand the interrelation between gender and terrorism. Moreover, as Szalkai argues (2012), there is a clear division line between the academics that tend to the “manipulation” theory (See Berko & Erez, 2005; Victor, 2003 & Bloom, 2005, 2005a, 2007, 2010, 2011; etc.) and the ones that advocate for a more complex understanding (See Brunner, 2005, 2007, 2007a; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007, 2008, 2008a, 2010, 2011 & West, 2005; etc.). However, I tried to sustain in that chapter that some of these narratives also contribute to the perpetuation of various forms of violence, direct or symbolic.

The main objective of this chapter was to shed light on the hegemonic narratives regarding FSB. The final conclusions are the following:

- (1) The general portray of FSB in much of the academic sources is distorted, favoring a victimized vision of women’s engagement in political violence.
- (2) The hegemonic narratives are contributing to the racialized and gendered discourses regarding violent women as well as Muslim women in general.
- (3) These representations are perpetuating gender inequalities by reinforcing dichotomies between men and women and, at the same time, are not encouraging new forms of nonviolent action with regards to the topic.

Actually, throughout this chapter, I tried to expose how distorted the narratives are regarding FSB, especially when occurring in Muslim societies. We could understand that the overly emotional, victimized and Orientalist depiction of FSB are misleading the investigation on their violence. Even if it is a complicated task to “understand the mind-body relationship of a woman suicide bomber” (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 187), I attempt to shed light on the distorted portrayal that can lead to misconception in the academic and also policy fields. The

Muslim women engaged in violent acts, and especially suicide bombings, have been portrayed as victims, violent beauties, monsters, national heroines and so on: the general picture is one of a victimized, passive and irrational woman. This does not in any manner promote a peaceful approach to suicide bombing. On the contrary, it makes women more vulnerable and it obscures the possibility to consider them as political agents. Therefore, it also eliminates the possibility of channeling their political resistance towards peaceful means of conflict transformation.

The latter conclusions open the path to consider other narratives, or counter-hegemonic ones, that would question as well as broaden the analysis of FSB in the field of Peace Studies. Hence, there is a need, from Peace Studies, to consider the language used in the academic field as well as a necessity to explore new venues to think about the body at the cultural level which would render easier the interpretation of FSB (Forastelli, 2012: 118). As Hamilton claims, it is important to explore “the ideological frameworks and material conditions in which such actors make political choices, and become engaged in political violence” (2010: 101). From this point of departure, I propose to consider the issue of FSB from a philosophical perspective in order to develop other perspectives into the investigations of women that commit suicide bombings.

Chapter 3

On Bodily Vulnerability, Precariousness and Frames of War: A Philosophical Perspective on FSB

“Vivimos entre fuerzas invisibles de las cuales solo percibimos sus efectos.

*Nos movemos entre formas invisibles de las cuales no conocemos
sus efectos aunque seamos profundamente afectados por ellas.”*

-Painting, Dalt Vila (Ibiza)

When I first read this wall painting, I suddenly started to think about the consequences of being invisible to the rest of the world. Then, I thought about how many lives are vulnerable and invisible, and inevitably about my current topics of interest. I thought about those people that are constantly affected by the material and psychological conditions of war. In particular, I did not stop thinking about all these women who blow themselves up, self-sacrificing their bodies and killing other civilians. This led me to deeply interrogate my responsibility towards these kinds of violent acts. What does it feel like to live and witness violence on a daily basis? What does it feel like to be considered unworthy of protection? Are these life insecurities possible incentives to pursue self-sacrifice?

I thus came to realize, during my journey in the Master in Peace, Conflicts and Development that there is an intrinsic vulnerability to each human being and that this could be a good point of departure for the analysis of FSB. This reflection arose after discussions and theoretical debates I had with some of my colleagues regarding the value of life. In the end, it led me to have more questions than answers. Is it possible to adopt a peaceful and critical approach to women that commit radical violence such as self-sacrifice? Are our ethical responses to terrorism contributed to exacerbate these women's willingness to participate in suicide attacks? Does the consideration of the human body in the analysis of FSB foster greater collective responsibility and peaceful responses?

These questions have been guiding my investigation in this chapter as a commitment to a deeper reflection between the body performances and the reduction of self-sacrifice violence perpetrated by women. As an extension of the discussion started in chapter one regarding the promotion of an interdisciplinary approach to the phenomenon, this chapter raises political debates on FSB based on the philosophy of embodiment and gender perspective. Moreover, this chapter presents itself in a counter-position to the hegemonic narratives analyzed in the previous one. Actually, I have underlined that the attempt of assessing FSB's violence following the motivational approach was leading to a misguided perception as well as the perpetuation of violent discourses and practices towards the issue of women and terrorism. With this in mind, this chapter wishes to counterbalance these narratives with other forms of interpreting the body performances in order to foment a culture of responsibility aimed at the problem.

With that being said, the objective of this chapter is to investigate, in counter position to the hegemonic narratives presented in chapter two, the centrality of the body in the female suicidal violence and its relationship with the precariousness instilled by the frames of war. Correspondingly, three specific objectives are pursued:

- (1) To offer a philosophical perspective on FSB;
- (2) To expose the centrality of the body in performing suicide bombing and to interrogate it as an act of speech and a mode of political contestation;
- (3) To give an account of the various forms which can take the body of a FSB and;
- (4) To emphasize the importance of taking into account vulnerability, precariousness and the frames of war in the ethical considerations around FSB.

Within this scenario, the focus is on major components of suicidal violence; the performativity of the body and the relation to the frames of war (Butler, 2009) with regards to the violence committed by women. The illustrations I will use for the philosophical

framework are still the three previously regions mentioned, which means Iraq, Israel-Palestine and North Caucasus (especially Chechnya) within the “war against terror context,” which gave rise to a highly intellectual debate on the topic.

Hence, the chapter is oriented towards a deeper comprehension of the violence of women in Muslim societies affected by wars in order to give a path forward to decreasing this violence and promoting gender equality in political discourses on women. Moreover, this chapter interrogates our responsibility, as human beings, towards political suicidal violence. It is a tribute to the *how* a woman finds the path to suicidal violence and, above all, what are the global configurations that permit such acts to flourish.

To this end, this chapter is divided into four sections: the first one is dedicated to the delimitation of the philosophical framework of the chapter; the second one is oriented towards a concrete analysis of the body and its constitutive vulnerability; the third one is centered on the precariousness and frames of war in relation with FSB; and the last one questions the place of subversion and furnishes a critique of Butler’s thoughts.

1. Philosophical framework of the chapter

In this chapter, I chose a philosophical approach for two main reasons. The first one being that my relation with philosophy in general has always been one of discovering and thoughtfulness that fuel my life with particular reflections and has helped me with my personal decisions. The second one is because I think that the “motivational” approach to suicide bombing, particularly for FSB, has reached a saturation point: it may explain personal grievances, it may help us to understand violence, but it never works towards a nonviolent and global approach to transform the problem.

Therefore, I took as a philosophical task to reposition the bodies of these FSB in a wider epistemological framework which can trigger critical understanding of the conditions

under which a body becomes a human bomb. In reality, I contend that from the Philosophy for Peace and Gender Studies, it can be possible to rethink the frameworks by which we come to comprehend the exploded, the violent and the abject bodies that characterize the different narratives that I have been analyzing in the second chapter. It is possible to perceive and consider these violent bodies differently, not solely as victims or perpetrators, but as social interdependent bodies that will never be completely explained with the rational actor model or under victimized gender stereotypes.

1.1 The core: Butler's perspective

Without a doubt, the international literature on terrorism has clearly addressed the problem of women suicide bombers since 1985 and massively since 2001. We have come to understand certain patterns although in terrorism, the exception proves the rule. There is no specific profile, men, women and minors are operating for a wide range of reasons such as personal, social and political. However, it appears to have no explicit framework which permits us to comprehend the phenomenon first throughout Peace Studies and, second, in light of intersubjectivity.

When I first read the Butler's book *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (2009), I found the beginning of an answer. I found myself confronted with such infinite questions on vulnerability, life and body while also comprehending that some realities were presented to me throughout certain framings, which inevitably go beyond my cognition capacities. This is where I began to further interrogate the link of these ideas with the issue of FSB. Could this book give us a framework to question the reality of women engaged in terrorism and our perception of them? Decisively, I chose to investigate more on Butler's philosophical perspective. I particularly question her potential contributions to the studies on body vulnerability and the link with FSB. This section is dedicated to the reasons behind this choice.

This third chapter is, in some way, intrinsically linked to the first one, because it relies on the gender philosophy elaborated by Butler that has been influenced by the writings of Derrida, Foucault, Austin and Lacan. These authors have also fostered a series of investigations within the Philosophy for Peace regarding gender, war and performativity (Martínez Guzmán, 2007: 181). While the major works of the Philosophy for Peace have been focused on accountability based upon Austin and Derrida together with the Feminist Theory (Comins Mingo & París Albert, 2010:15), this chapter is oriented towards another extremely important aspect of Peace Studies; the value of life and the role of the body in the formation of the subject political identity.

This philosophical analysis is historically situated: it needs to be comprehended within the wider framework of the “war on terror” put forward by the Bush administration after 9/11 (Butler, 2009: viii). We commonly did not hear about FSB until the Palestinian FSB became the center stage of media attention around 2002, when we began to feel the power of the political discourses on terrorism. Since then, it has become easy to justify widespread violence in the name of the struggle against the abstract entity represented by terrorism. It has been the case for the FSB in Chechnya, where Putin’s administration developed various discursive allusions regarding the links of Chechen rebels to global terrorist groups with the aim of justifying whatever types of violence against civilians (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 93 & 96). This is why it is important to consider this philosophical reflection within the context of the post-9/11. Effectively, since those events much has been written on FSB, on terrorism and “horrorism,” a term presented by Cavarero to explain this form of violence (Agra Romero, 2012: 56; Cavarero, 2009). However, deep philosophical analyses that put forward a perspective on the body and life, two central elements of the suicide attack, have been quite unusual and weakly represented in the mainstream of International Relations.

On the one hand, and contrarily to what we may think, the Western “philosophy of embodiment is relatively recent” (Lennon, 2010). In fact, following Christian legacy, it tended to dissociate the mind and the body, viewing the latter as a mere biological element (Majid, 1998: 332; Lennon, 2010). It is later, with Spinoza, Hobbes and the beginning of the modernity, that the body began to be managed and disciplined politically across time and space, acquiring its national component (Fierke, 2013: 21).

On the other hand, the philosophy of embodiment has rarely been put in perspective with war and armed conflict. Even if the curiosity towards the body is nothing new, “[t]he intertwining of war and the body has thus been an object of limited and sporadic attention within the academy, leading to a relative paucity of theoretical resources on how to formulate and think about such linkages” (McSorley, 2013: 110 & 240). If we must admit that there is a wide range of philosophers that addressed the body, from phenomenology to psychoanalysis and poststructuralism (Lennon, 2010), the link between power, gender, body and violence have been made intelligible by authors like Derrida, Foucault and, more recently Butler as well as Oliver.

Consequently, I consider it convenient to begin my reflection on body and life of FSB with Butler in order to better understand the performativity and vulnerability of the female violent body. I consider that her work provides the basis for my analysis, together with other authors that have been writing on the subject such as Kristeva (1982), Cavarero (2009) and Oliver (2001, 2007). It is a tentative assessment on what Butler’s philosophical thoughts can bring to the theorization of corporality and conflict, taking the case of FSB. I believe that her ideas can foment innovative reflections on the value of life, the performativity of the violent body and the frames that condition our perspective on war and populations categorized as “inherently violent”. Drawing from Foucault’s perspective on the effects of power over the body and the “bare life” from Agamben (Fierke, 2013: 21), Butler set up an interesting way of

approaching contemporary violence, and this is what I want to suggest here, in the analysis of FSB within the contemporary “war on terror”.

Even if some would argue that Butler’s theory is more relevant when it is time to account for sexual difference, I do believe that her work is encompassing and allows a wide range of reflection regarding the body, violence and life. As she said herself in an interview given to Córdoba and Meloni, the transgender activism is far from being an isolated struggle; on the contrary “it permit us to rethink what is a body, what is human³³” (2011: 71) and can serve us as a basis to understand bodies that are considered socially abject.

What is interesting with the perspective of Butler with regards to FSB is that she offers a wider perspective than the one centered on the self. She investigates the political interests and the discourses behind contemporary violence and this is especially important within the framework of the “war on terror” (Martínez Guzmán, 2007: 182). Without taking away any responsibility from these violent women, I agree with her in the sense that FSB are the product of certain material and historical conditions that could make the contemplation of radical suicidal violence possible. In fact, Butler invites us to go farther in the reflection on suicide terrorism and violence in general because, besides condoning or condemning FSB, the problem resides in the fact that “we disqualify ourselves to understand it” (Dabashi, 2012: 4).

Butler argues that:

Undoubtedly, it is important to think about the victims of suicide terrorism, but I want to emphasize that it is also necessary to think about the victims of other types of violence. It is not that I don’t care about the victims, but what matters for me is why we worry eminently about certain types of victims who are an object of certain types of violence. Why distinguish between those who were justifiably murdered and those who were unjustly murdered. It seems to me that there are reasons to feel concern and horror for all the victims of these murders. It worries me that some of our more stereotypical ways of describing terrorism reiterate these mistakes or prejudices³⁴ (Butler, 2010: 54).

³³ Original: “[...] nos permite repensar qué es un cuerpo, qué es un humano [...]” (personal translation).

³⁴ Original: “Sin duda, es importante pensar sobre las víctimas del terrorismo suicida, pero deseo subrayar que también hay que pensar sobre las víctimas de otros tipos de violencia. No es que me tengan sin cuidado las víctimas, lo que me importa es por qué nos preocupamos eminentemente de ciertos tipos de víctimas que son objeto de ciertos tipos de violencia. Por qué distinguimos entre los que fueron asesinados justificadamente y los

Consequently, this allows us to reconsider various aspects of the act of suicide terrorism and our perception of it. Thinking about FSB and violent actions conducted by some women at Abu Ghraib, Oliver asks “why do images of women abusing and killing captivate us” so much (2007: 9). Why does suicide terrorism appear to be considered more horrifying than certain kind of deaths that are legitimated by the framework of the “war on terror”? How do bodies come to perform suicidal violence?

In a vibrating reflection on the power of frames, images and visual representations of war, Butler interrogates how we can understand contemporary violence within global politics without removing the importance of the suicide attacks (Butler, 2004: 7). She appeals to a critical understanding of the value of life, which is central to any analysis of the deed perpetrated by FSB. She pleads for an understanding of “ourselves as global actors, and acting within a historically established field, and one that has other actions in play [...] to consider the way in which our lives are profoundly implicated in the lives of the others” (2004: 7). From there, we must grasp our ethical responsibility towards the reduction of FSB.

We need to take into consideration that there is a certain epistemological difficulty with this chapter: as we mentioned before, like any kind of radical violence, it is a complicated task to explain suicidal violence without justifying or endorsing the deed (Agra Romero, 2012: 53). As we remarked in chapter one and two, this difficulty comes with the problem of the conceptualization of women’s violence that is bounded by a multitude of narratives along the lines of gender stereotypes (Agra Romero, 2012: 54).

Obviously, this philosophical perspective does not attempt to be complete and fully exhaustive: it is by no means an attempt of reaching full comprehension of the phenomenon throughout philosophy. However, it presents itself as the beginning, the hint of a framework

que fueron asesinados injusticadamente. Me parece que hay motivos para sentir preocupación y horror por todas las víctimas de estos asesinatos. Me preocupa que algunos de nuestros modos más estereotipados de describir el terrorismo reiteren estos errores o prejuicios.” (personal translation).

that will raise more questions, and promote a critical understanding of the world we live in throughout this reflection on FSB.

In the end, relying on Butler is also taking the discussion further elaborated within the framework of the Philosophy for Peace by engaging a debate regarding human suffering, women and terrorism. In fact, this Thesis assumes that there are some global pressures and conditions that make it possible for women to consider a suicide attacks as a political strategy and/or an option to end suffering. The idea is thus using a philosophical approach to furnish a counter-position to the recurrent analysis of FSB centered on motives. This will allow us to understand some new dimensions of the violence suffered by the FSB and the violence they make people suffer.

2. On considering the body of FSB

The political dimensions of the female body came to bear a new meaning with the pictures taken at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq during the American invasion of the country. For the classic political philosophy, it was the perversion of Marianne, the ideal woman as a revolutionary, intrinsically linked to the idea of state territory (Palmieri & Herrmann, 2010: 9). The events at Abu Ghraib shed light on the contradictions inherent to the contemporary forms of violence; at the same time it confirmed that no genders and no bodies can be pre-attributed to violence³⁵ contrarily to the widespread acceptance that violence is above all masculine. The bodies of these women sexually torturing Iraqi prisoners, taking pictures of themselves, together with the bodies of these Iraqi men in vulnerable and submissive positions shocked our conceptions of what a male body should perform, and what a female body should perform. It also woke up a wider academic interest in investigating the fragility

³⁵ Here I do not mean that violence is asexual, but that we cannot attribute a gender or a sexe to violence; the stereotypes regarding violence as masculine (and the narratives of women irrationality exposed in chapter two) needs to be tackle. On the contrary, the violence at Abu Ghraib, perpetrated by women, needs to be understand as an exhacerbation of sexuality in war context.

and vulnerability (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán: 2010: 56) of the human being by taking back the human body into the field of politics.

I propose to use this revival and interest regarding the body to study the phenomenon of FSB from a different standpoint. In fact, I consider that it is essential to have a look at the body in the suicide attacks committed by women first because it has a central role to play as the principal weapon of the attack (Linos, 2010: 8) and, second, because it stresses a wide range of bodily implications of war and armed conflicts. Indeed, the body *is not* the bomb: it serves as a support to the bomb, most of the time carried out as a belt. However, the shocking image that stays in mind after a suicide attack is the body that explodes first, and then kills in the second place. And the power of bodily image is very strong; it stays in our conscience as the weapon. The body is hence at the center stage of the scene of an attack. The body is also the receptor or armed conflict repression such as occupation, political resistance or injury. As a matter of fact, the body shows physical suffering and responds to it. It is not only that social, political and armed conflict processes shape the body, but the body also forms the basis of social experience and action.

To consider the body in depth, the following section will be divided as the following: a part on the body and the reasons why I chose to concentrate my analysis on it, some notes on the performativity of the body, then a part regarding the forms that takes the body of a FSB and finally, two other parts on suicide violence as speech acts and the body relationship to life and death.

2.1 The body

I always wonder if a woman that is about to detonate herself thinks about how her deed will damage her own body. Does she think about her own dismemberment? Does she perceive that her own body can send political/religious messages to the world? Does she think that she is telling the truth by exploding herself? Is she reclaiming something through her act

of self-sacrifice? In this section, I want to clarify how I interpret the body within the context of a female suicide attack.

First, I hereafter focus on how the body acquires such an important connotation to my analysis. Second, I emphasize on the intrinsic vulnerability that characterizes every human being/body and I acknowledge that the consideration of this vulnerability is the path towards a nonviolent strategy concerning FSB.

2.1.1 On the body

In the previous chapter, we postulated that the very fact of being a body is in itself political. We cannot escape from it, it is part of our being and our interrelations with other beings: it is therefore a significant concept to take into account in global politics (Wilcox, 2009). As Butler claims:

Rather, to be a body is to be exposed to social crafting and form, and that is what makes the ontology of the body a social ontology. In other words, the body is exposed to socially and politically articulated forces as well as to claims of sociality-including language, work, and desire-that make possible the body's persisting and flourishing (2009: 3).

Without denying any prior materiality to the body, this Thesis argues that the body is fundamentally social and inherently crafted by the social. As we have seen in the first chapter, the Philosophy for Peace calls upon a consideration of the body because it triggers the recognition of each person as a human being: it is a corner stone of our identity. We enter in relation with people through our bodies, and we get in touch with the world, and vice-versa, through our body (Comins Mingol & Martínez Guzmán, 2010: 43-44). The body becomes central to my analysis to the extent that it is linked to the human identity (Forastelli, 2012: 123); we do not just have a body, but we are a body (Mairs, 1997: 298) even though this body is never entirely ours (Butler, 2009: 54).

Thus, life is not an isolated experience, what one expresses with his or her body does have impacts on other bodies that surround him or her (Comins Mingol & París Albert, 2010: 52-53), and it is precisely the case with FSB. Effectively, as I expose during this chapter, the

body of FSB come to bear a certain political and gendered identity through performance, through repetitive acts that construct bodily identity.

The greatest contribution of the Philosophy for Peace to our argument on the body is that it helps us to “visibilize” the violence that FSB perpetrate and are victim of: we can comprehend the deed of the women from their body as victims of contemporary violence but also as agent of it (Martínez Guzmán, Comins Mingol & París Albert, 2009: 97; Alcañiz Moscardó, 2009: 44). Of course, an emphasis on the body may appear problematic for some. As an example, as McSorley rightfully argues, it “tends to render any clear demarcation of discrete war zones and times problematic, emphasizing instead the enactment and reproduction of war through affective dispositions, corporeal careers, embodied suffering and somatic memories that endure across time and space” (2013: 2). It definitely appears to be reducing the war and political engagement to body materiality and it might seem to be minimalistic, showing only a micro part of the political violence. However, I think that it is especially what global politics currently needs: to bring the body back to the scene, because the body is the primary actor of violence. Currently, and largely because of new technologies, “the bodies of combatants and civilians are largely absent from the ways in which we think and talk about war” (McSorley, 2007) and that there is a need to interrogate this absence. I consider that Philosophy for Peace and Gender Studies give us the path forward to begin this reflection.

In what refers to the FSB, the body acquires a very different meaning than most of the forms of contemporary violence. Effectively, it takes the form of a weapon, or a support for it, and second, it appeals to certain categorizations of the female body that contribute to our misunderstanding of it, as we have explored in chapter two. In such a way, the body of the FSB becomes central to the deed but also to the political propaganda following the explosion as a female body causes even more publicity. The body of a FSB is, in some way, a strange

body: it is “destined to be mutilated and erased” (Linos, 2010: 8); it is a feminine bearer of life, death and destruction that worth being analyzed carefully.

As we have examined in chapter two, there are various associations between the women’s bodies and the act of suicide bombing in itself that do not conflagrate with the normal gender performance we attribute to women. I demonstrated that the only fact of being born as a woman changes the expected social functions (París Albert, 2007: 107) related to gender and thus influence the way mundane society perceives a violent woman who decides to commit a suicide attack. Moreover, as the hegemonic narratives showed us, the body needs to be considered in the precise case of FSB because of the very association of women as more biological, corporal and natural than men that tend to be connected with spirit and mind (Lennon, 2010). The social ontology of the body then allows us to bypass the hegemonic narratives and to construct other visions on the topic of FSB, particularly regarding bodily performances.

Women’s bodies in armed conflicts present a special historical materiality and political meaning. These bodies are produced from difficult contexts: they live under siege, occupation, war and harsh living conditions. The three regions of concern are not spared: North Caucasus and Israel-Palestine have been through decades-long conflicts while Iraq is living under violent conditions since 2003, following the dictatorship.

As Banner argues, “women’s bodies are frequently front and center in debates over religion, tradition, and women’s rights in the developing world” (2008: 78) and thus acquire a special value in time of armed conflict. The example of Chechnya can be given: the bodies of Chechens women have long been the scene where national struggle was inscribed. Suicide bombings perpetrated by women are not the first engagement of Chechen women in times of conflicts. They have been involved in various forms of protests and political resistance against the Russian state, notably as bearer of fighters and in the reclaiming of the body of their

disappeared male relatives (Banner, 2008: 82). It seems that the women suicide bombings are inscribed in this logic of protestation against the Russian state may be as an ultimate reclamation of the national body.

In my point of view, suicide bombings in general and FSB in particular, is a byproduct of the national state (and may be a response to its recent loss in credibility and legitimacy). The body of FSB is directly linked to the national body, the metaphorical embodiment of the nation, and by some extent, affirm its opposition to the occupation force³⁶ in most of the countries that present a problem of self-sacrificing violence. Through the injured bodies (Banner, 2009: 39), the national body is also hurt and dominated; most of the time, this body takes female form, in a longstanding association between the mother and the land; although this tends to be less clear nowadays with recent globalization. This has some serious implications in the development of contemporary violence that is closely linked to individual bodies which “become sites of security/insecurity, depending on the confluence of one's national identity, gender and geographical location” (Hyndman & De Alwis, 2004: 535), and I should add, religious identity within this territory.

In the case of FSB, it leads us to question “the power of an occupation over the real bodies of women and children and of the colonized in general” (Brunner, 2005: 36) and the extent to which it can trigger willingness to self-sacrifice, above all in light of the recent self-immolation in the recent Arab Revolts. It certainly shows that the “human body is closely linked to the body politic” (Brunner, 2005: 37) and that the body of FSB definitely cannot be taken away from its cultural, social and political context of emergence as postulated hereafter.

2.1.2 On vulnerability

“Think of rhetoric such as ‘After 9/11, America will never be the same. America is now vulnerable.’”

-Kelly Oliver (2009: 103)

³⁶ The relationship between FSB, occupation and the body will be addressed later in this chapter (see section 2.2.2).

What comes to our mind in front of the suicide attack perpetrated by a woman is the individual aspect besides everything: we consider that for her to perpetrate a suicide bombing, something in *her persona* must be wrong, mentally ill or pathologic. For the purpose of this Thesis, I chose to consider the body of a FSB not as an isolated morphology but as a social entity. For this reason, I follow the argument of Butler and take the bodies as social by definition: they “depend on what is ‘outside themselves’” (2009: 30). She argues that we must accept that we are, from the very moment of our formation, social beings in interdependency with each other (2009: 23) and consequently, “each body finds itself potentially threatened by others” (2009: 31).

Butler, who is definitely Hegelian in her perspective of the self and the body, considers that the “subject is always outside itself” since “one’s life is always in some sense in the hands of the other” (2009: 14 & 49). Without any doubts, Butler is not denying the materiality of the body, assuming that “surely bodies live and die; eat and sleep; feel pain, pleasure; endure illness and violence; and these “facts,” one might skeptically proclaim, cannot be dismissed as mere construction” (1993: xi). However, she insists on the fact that, even if we can claim an autonomy (and surely agency) on our bodies, the social and political crafting of our bodies are crucial issues to address as “the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own. The body has its invariably public dimension. Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine” (Butler, 2003: 15).

In this light, Butler argues that the reason why we should pay more attention to the body resides in the fact that this permits us to think about our interdependency differently (2010: 58). This should serve our understanding of how we need to become responsible for the forms of violence that are now occurring in certain war-torn Muslim societies as suicidal violence. For Butler, this is our condition (2010: 59): nonviolence cannot be thought about in isolation and suicidal violence is no exception. In this view, the very fact that our bodies are

social entities comes with various consequences, one of these is that our bodies are then, by definition, vulnerable: “As a body, the vulnerable one remains vulnerable as long as she lives, exposed at any instant to *vulnus*” (Cavarero, 2009: 30).

2.1.2.1 Vulnerable bodies

Vulnerability, state of emergency and fear are a common place of the discourses on terrorism since 9/11. The body is at the center stage of security control, overly searched by people who are considered to detain the authority on bodies and liberal values. I came to understand that vulnerability, in relation with the body, was essential to my understanding of FSB in the very context of the “war on terror” as a discursive frame.

Along this line of reflection, many authors have been debating over the question of assuming if vulnerability is constitutive of a human being or if in reality, it leads solely to more violence, and thus may be a factor tending to exacerbate the possibility that a body perform suicide bombing. For instance, Oliver does not agree with the vulnerability as being a constitutive element of human nature, as she prefers to rely on forgiveness as the path to nonviolence (2007: 140). In my point of view, I consider that forgiveness lacks a philosophical argument as it represents a Judeo-Christian value that we cannot assume as being part of our constitutions. On the contrary, I agree with both Butler and Cavarero in their corporeal interpretation of vulnerability and I think this can be a source of mutual understanding regarding the phenomenon of female suicide terrorism once we come to perceive our interdependency on each other.

Obviously, the mutual exposition to one another and the fact that “the social conditions of my existence are never fully willed by me” can conduct to cruelty and violence (Butler, 2009: 61 & 171). But this same vulnerability can also serve us to shed light on violence and reverse the rage occasioned by those social conditions.

First and foremost, the body is vulnerable because it is intrinsically linked to death. No human being is eternal, and therefore, the finitude of life is obvious (Butler, 2009: 30). At any moment, everybody can be gone. Moreover, during the whole life of a human, the existence is marked by precariousness and the fear of death at any time (Wilcox, 2009). Suicide bombings exponentially multiply this fact. The scene of a suicide attack reminds us of this vulnerability; if a bomber decides to explode herself or himself, the other people become exposed bodies vulnerable to death.

Even *a priori*, both the woman terrorist and the victims are vulnerable bodies. That is their human condition. In fact, both the victims of suicidal attack and the victimizer are human beings and “singular” bodies “exposed to wounding” (Cavarero, 2009: 30): in the three major cases we have been discussing here, the suicidal violence never came first. There were prior conditions in which this vulnerable and violated body of FSB came to develop themselves as violent bodies. In fact, Butler argues that this “vulnerability, however, becomes highly exacerbated under certain social and political conditions, especially those in which violence is a way of life and the means to secure self-defense are limited” (Butler, 2003: 10). From this point, I wish to underline, and I will illustrate my thoughts in the third section of this chapter, that in times of armed conflict and war, women’s bodies come to bear another meaning that can possibly turn into self-sacrifice.

There is a further trend to analyze regarding the body vulnerability of FSB. As some of the political statements of the female bombers were clearly claiming a sort of “equivalence” in death and injury with their enemy, we can ask ourselves if the act of suicide bombing is not in this case perpetrated in order to transcend the body vulnerability while destroying it. For example, this Iraqi woman, Um Abdallah clearly states that she wants to hurt those whom she perceives as her enemies as strong as she feels she has been injured in her own ontological vulnerability: “I’m going to be a suicide bomber in the name of God,”

Um Abdallah said. “I will be one of the Iraqis who will take revenge for all suffering that US and Iraqi militaries have caused in the past years and force them to leave the blessed land of Iraq” (IRIN, 2007). Chechen women follow the same lines when they deplore the state of vulnerability during the war, claiming that their living conditions are similar to social death (Nivat, 2005: 416). As an example, one sister of a Chechen FSB that took the Moscow Theater together with other rebels, definitely indicates that she sees a differential of injury that can trigger her violence: “I cannot look calmly at how these Russians go on our land how they kill our brothers and sisters how they torment them.” [...] “And why should only ours die? Why only we should always suffer?” (Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2006: 479).

Moreover, this vulnerability is also more than often, identified and instrumentalized for the cause pursued by the organization behind the FSB (or MSB). In Iraq for example, Ahlam Al-Dujaili, chairman of the Defending Women Rights Organization, claims: “They [FSB] aren’t being forced but they surrender easily to the pressure” (IRIN, 2007). Therefore, a particular attention needs to be put on the understanding that our exposition to others can also foster more vulnerability and more cruelty (Butler, 2009: 61). This tangent definitely needs to be further investigated on the basis of the proneness to increased vulnerability in armed conflicts and foreign occupation.

But in the framework of contemporary violence, if this vulnerability could be understood prior to any suicidal deeds by putting forward the precariousness of life itself, it could be possible to find a path towards a reduction of those acts. Constant with this idea, I considered that throughout this chapter, it must be taken into account that the ontological status of a human being “is also in fact a constitutive vulnerability, especially when understood in corporeal terms” (Cavarero, 2009: 20) and in the case of our interest in violent deeds that implicate the use of the body as a weapon. However, as McRobbie remarks, this vulnerability “reminds us of our dependency on others” and “the fact that we can be so easily

injured or harmed, gives rise to recognition of dependency, which in turn can be productive of new forms of sociability” (2006: 78).

To conclude this section, it is not a matter of eradicating vulnerability; on the contrary, our bodily vulnerability must be acknowledged and not feared. Our constitutive vulnerability reminds us our deep interconnectedness and the way social interactions also contribute to the formation of our self to reiterated actions as I will introduce in the next sections through the performativity of the body.

2.2 Performativity of the body of FSB

Violent women, and particularly FSB, are not performing their gender as the norms expect them to do so: they are engaged in a “male” territory of violence because “performing one’s gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect and performing it well provides reassurance” (Butler, 1988: 528). This section is firstly devoted to the theorization of performativity regarding FSB, and secondly, to the body performances under occupation.

2.2.1 FSB’s performativity

The theory of the gender performances advanced by Butler and drawing from both Derrida’s iterability as well as Austin’s act of speech has been largely discussed inside Feminist Theory and gave some new impulse to the queer movement. Some authors have been criticizing the performative of setting aside the materiality of the body; others have been arguing that it tackles individual agency while some have been interpreting it is too much of a universal theory that have come to impose hegemonic thinking on feminism (Lennon, 2010; Lorber & Moore, 2007: 66; Shep, 2012). While these criticisms are valuable and can be perfectly argued in some context for sexual recognition, I do not share this view as I personally think that it is precisely in the performance, and by extension subversion, of the body that agency, responsibility and body materiality can be understood. For that reason, it

seems important to consider how the theory of performativity can be useful for the comprehension of FSB embodiment.

When Butler wrote her article *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory* in 1988, she argues the following:

In this sense, gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed (*sic*); rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time —an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.

Thus, in the view of Butler, performativity is “a more useful term than construction” (2009: 168) to give an account of how the self comes to acquire a gender identity, or its identity as a whole. She makes allusion to theatrical performances and bodily repetitions to explain how she considers that certain repeated acts contribute to our formation. I consider that it is an excellent point of departure to reconsider how social conditions, speech acts and their iterability can forge someone’s identity and someone’s political engagement through this identity. However, and to be more specific, “this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject” (Butler, 1993: 95). It is neither a singular nor an isolated act that a subject can decide to acquire itself but rather:

[...] one of the powerful and insidious ways in which subjects are called into social being from diffuse social quarters, inaugurated into sociality by a variety of diffuse and powerful interpellations. In this sense the social performative is a crucial part not only of subject formation, but of the ongoing political contestation and reformulation of the subject as well (Butler, 1997: 160).

Moreover, it is interesting to think about how suicidal violence is put on as a performance, dramatized and projected in the various media and academic literature, especially when it is a woman that perpetrates the deed. The suicide attack is a very much theatrical scene; just take as an example the Dubrovka Theater. The performance was impressive and the gender roles were very well delimited as the body was at the center stage of the attack. Suffering, political grievances, religion: the script was perfectly written for the

embodiment of national outrage and horror. The events of Dubrovka dramatically “galvanized world attention by staging a spectacular drama” where “women dressed in black were shown on a pre-recorded video and in news coverage horrifyingly displaying bombs prominently strapped to their bodies” (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006: 73). The same happened in the attack on the school of Beslan³⁷ in North Ossetia: the terrific performance of the terrorists attracted the attention on Russia. It has been the kind of event, like 9/11, when you precisely remember where you were when you heard about the scene. It has been described by the mass media as “carnage” with such an outrage provoked by the bodies of “children who were half-naked and covered in blood” (CBS News, 2009). These kinds of events blurred the traditional view on what and how a woman should perform in a Muslim traditional society. Therefore, it caused constant fear “anytime and anywhere, from the gentler of genders” of another explosive staging.

It is then specifically relevant to theorize performativity regarding FSB as the violent body does not come to exist because of a cultural penchant or religious fervency: the bodies of these women become violent through a repetition of suffering, political realities or war logics. There is a certain incapacity, or even impossibility, to capture the gendered body of all suicide bombers: they have come to exist as violent bodies following the repetition of these acts, of these utterances and they have been shaped by their environment and political surrounding. That is the argument I want to bring up here, and from where I foment my interpretation that some populations are even more exposed to the possibility of performing violent acts:

Out of the ruins of war, new bodies emerge” [...] Bodies of women and men are subjected to a variety of militarized practices, and through these practices, new bodies and social conditions are produced. [...] Bodies, then, are not only material but also texts of psychic and social histories that continue to be lived in the present (Lorber & Moore, 2007: 211, 213-214).

³⁷ Chechens rebels, including FSB, took in hostage approximately 800 people (including children) in Beslan School in North Ossetia and 300 people have been killed (Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2006: 435).

Indeed, Butler claims that “the body is not passively scripted with cultural codes” and that, on the contrary, “social actions require a performance which is repeated” (1988: 526). We can thus consider that a violent female body does not form itself on its own. It is also no cultural determinism, as it is argued most of the time regarding Muslim suicide bombing. We have seen above that the body has a social formation that contributes to design its identity: everyday witnessing killings, rape, sexual harassment, forced occupation, foreign intervention, etc., can be (and cannot) be factors that construct a violent body. The FSB thus acquire their violent identity through a repetition of acts, speeches, political actions, until the violent act comes to be a reflexive/intelligible option. Furthermore, it can be said that, following Butler, their “gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives” (1988: 526).

In conclusion of this part, I do not think that the performativity of the FSB’s body downplays the agency of these women. On the contrary, and as I have mentioned in different parts of this Thesis, I contend that this agency takes its forms in divers power relations and that we are never completely free of choices in our decisions precisely because of these social conditions we are in. The violent identity of FSB acquired through repetitive reactive acts to daily violence is not necessarily irrational; women also have agency in their deed. The whole meaning of this consideration of agency is well described by Ahall in the following quote which refers to the work of Butler:

I follow Butler who argues that agency is not related to a theory of the self but is an effect of the operations of discourse-power through which subjects are produced. According to Butler, agency traditionally belongs to a way of thinking about persons as instrumental actors who confront an external political field. But, she argues, politics and power exist already at the level at which the subject and its agency are articulated and made possible, therefore, agency can be presumed only at the cost of refusing to inquire into its construction (Ahall, 2011: 31).

I therefore think that the agency of these women needs to be understood within three contextual levels: local armed conflict (including occupation) in Iraq, Chechnya, Palestine and Afghanistan (among others), within their own social contexts and within the framework

of the “war on terror”. In such way, “the agency of the subject is not a property of the subject, an inherent will or freedom, but an effect of power, it is constrained but not determined in advance” (Butler, 1997: 139).

This obviously does not make these women unaccountable for their deed. Contrary to the critiques Butler frequently receives, it can be underlined that “[T]hose who commit acts of violence are surely responsible for them; they are not dupes or mechanisms of an impersonal social force, but agents with responsibility” (Butler, 2004: 15). Then it can be concluded that the performances of the FSB are marked by other conditions, other imperatives that open the doors for a woman to consider self-sacrifice as a possible option. The following section aims to give an example of how a deployed body performance under occupation, is a factor that seems to be decisive in the conduction of a suicide attack.

2.2.2 FSB’s body performances under occupation

While a wide range of authors consider that suicide bombing is an extreme solution that demonstrates the exhaustion of other alternatives “using bodies itself to defend the community” (Szalkai, 2012), I cannot agree with this affirmation. First I do not think that it should be seen as an act of despair (or at least, not taking despair as the unique variable). Second, I contend that the dynamics of armed conflicts are, on the contrary, multiple and complex. However, it is interesting to question the body performances of FSB in the context of “foreign” occupation³⁸.

Foreign occupation certainly leaves a mark on people’s bodies. Gender and political identities are directly influenced by this condition of occupation. The latter is making the body subjugated, as a “second-class” body: under occupation, both the individual and the collective body are experiencing shame and humiliation, body searches and control. The

³⁸ Here, I understand Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, the occupation of the North Caucasus by the Russian state army and the occupation of Iraq by the United States and their allies.

occupier is exercising a biopower by inscribing the conflict on the body of each individual (Linos, 2010: 9). For the women, it also means “subtle forms of harassment” (Bloom, 2010: 449) as it is largely the case of Iraq under American occupation, including widespread cases of rape by military (IRIN, 2009). In 2010, the United Nations were:

Expressing grave concern also about the increased difficulties being faced by Palestinian women and girls living under Israeli occupation, including the continuation of home demolitions, sharp increase in poverty, soaring unemployment, increased food insecurity, incidents of domestic violence, and declining health, education and living standards, including the rising incidence of trauma and decline in their psychological well-being, and expressing grave concern about the deepening humanitarian crisis and rising insecurity and instability on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in the Gaza Strip [...] (UN, 2010).

As I have shown in the last section , these repetitive hard-living conditions are shaping body performances. Lots of the FSB, failed and would-be FSB interrogated mentioned in their testimonies the power of occupation in their decision to commit a violent act. Schweitzer interviewed two failed Palestinian FSB, and both put emphasis on the occupation in their testimonies. “Zahara” confirmed that both “the situation with Israel and the oppression of Muslims in the world” were incentives for her attempted suicidal act (2008: 11). “Najwa” also clearly stated that “her actions were in response to Israel's actions and based on her sense that there were no alternative way (*sic*) of responding except with force against Israel” (Schweitzer, 2008: 12).

Ayat Akhras, who was the third Palestinian to detonate herself, also preached the same reason for her suicide attacks: “I say to the Arab leaders, Stop sleeping. Stop failing to fulfill your duty. Shame on the Arab armies who are sitting and watching the girls of Palestine fighting while they are asleep. It is intifada until victory” (Hasso, 2005: 29-30). Apart from performing a claim directly related to her gender by appealing to clear gender stereotypes, she is shaming the Arab armies (associated to the notion of nation state, the body of a nation) for their inaction regarding the Palestinian cause. A final example would be the Iraqi woman, Wadad Jamil Jessem who stated, in a repertoire mixing religion and politics: “I have devoted

myself for Jihad for the sake of God and against the American, British and Israeli infidels and to defend the soil of our precious and dear country” (Von Knop, 2007: 402). Clearly, this also confirms that without this “asymmetrical foreign occupation,” suicide bombings are more difficult to legitimize from terrorist organizations. But it also shows how the body comes to acquire a different meaning through repression lived under occupation.

Shefa’a Al-Qudsi, a failed Palestinian suicide bomber, demonstrates clearly the link between the body and occupation: “[...] My body would be a bridge to a better future that my daughter would walk over. Yes, I would die, but I would help give her a better life, a future without occupation. I was placing her fate in Allah’s hands” (Bloom, 2011: 137). This has a lot to do with the fact that the “state has been made symbolically into a woman: violated, aggrieved and vulnerable, in need of protection and vengeance by her masculine protectors” (Wilcox, 2013: 6). FSB are reclaiming their right to protection through their contestation of foreign occupation. By performing a suicide bombing, the female bombers are at the same time exploding the border of state/masculine legitimacy, showing “sovereignty as precarious and inadequate to instilling permanent order” (Wilcox, 2013: 15).

In the end, the focus “on performance art alerts us to the lived experiences of the body and how bodies craft their responses to the disciplinary effects of power and attempt to reshape or alter their social and cultural contexts” (Shinko, 2012: 10-11). Then, it is more likely that most of FSB currently occurring could be considerably reduced if a real and concrete dialogue between the occupiers and occupied took place. As the body performances of the female bombers are largely due to the conflict situations, it is more probable that global initiatives towards the end of such occupation coupled with peacebuilding intervention would diminish the incentives for self-sacrifice.

2.3 Which forms takes the body of a FSB?

When Hiba, a 28-year-old suicide bomber trainee openly affirms that she has to “tell the world that if they do not defend us, then we have to defend ourselves with the only thing we have, our bodies. Our bodies are the only fighting means at our disposal [...]” (Zedalis, 2004: 1) it is difficult to refuse a corporeal analysis of the FSB phenomenon. In the first two parts of this section I have engaged myself in delimiting the theoretical basis of my focus on the body while arguing in favor of considering the performativity in the study of FSB. This section is focused on a more concrete and precise analysis of the representations and perceptions of the body in order to better comprehend all the dynamics surrounding a suicide attack perpetrated by a woman, even if some of the comments can be applied to MSB. This part will be divided as such: a first look into the veiled and abject body, one regarding the disguised/concealed body, then a section regarding the human bomb and exploded body and, finally, a reflection on body dismemberment.

2.3.1 Veiled and abject body

One of the important aspects to consider regarding FSB is the categorization of their body as abject, or better said, as something that fails to be categorized following the existing gender norms. I will explore in this part two avenues: one related to the abject body of FSB and one related to the cultural assumptions of Muslim women that reinforce the horror felt before a suicide attack perpetrated by a woman.

Even if some may think that Butler thought about the abject body only with reference to sexual differences, she resists in giving clear examples of what she considers as an abject body but insists on the fact that abject bodies applies “to all kind of bodies whose lives are not considered to be lives” (Costera Meijer & Prins, 1998: 276 & 281). However, her aim is clear when she says in an interview that:

To conceive of bodies differently seems to me part of the conceptual and philosophical struggle that feminism involves, and it can relate to questions of survival as well. The

abjection of certain kinds of bodies, their inadmissibility to codes of intelligibility, does make itself known in policy and politics, and to live as such a body in the world is to live in the shadowy regions of ontology (Butler *in* Costera Meijer & Prins, 1998: 277).

In reality, according to Butler, bodies that do not matter are abject bodies. When a suicide attack is perpetrated by a woman in Muslim war-torn societies, the body of the woman becomes an abject body; the body that “injures” innocent victims, that goes against the natural gender performance attributed to a woman (Ahall, 2011: 123). The body is thus seen as a weapon, a weapon that goes against nature and thus, does not conform to its very formation by becoming abject to the perception of the other. These female bodies do not have the same “right” to self-sacrifice than soldiers sacrificed in war for a national state: they do not count as bodies because they are particularly “uncanny” (Oliver, 2007: 128).

Worst of all, the bodies of these women, in almost all the cases we explored in chapter two, are considered abject *before the deed they commit*. Almost all these women are part of a society under occupation or foreign intervention: their daily lives are marked by bodily aggression. As Butler claims, they are not bodies that matter: “Such bodies are not intelligible (an epistemological claim), nor do they have legitimate existence (a political or normative claim) [...] they fail to materialize” (Costera Meijer & Prins, 1998: 279). They are living in a part of the world where, from outside, they are viewed as bodies with no real and tangible value within the context of the “war on terror”. I will come back to this in the next section of this chapter when I will address precarious and ungrievable lives.

This last point leads us directly to something that has become very common in the Western media and society in general: considering the veiled body as a synonym of backwardness (Majid, 1998: 334), a submissive woman and thus, with a predisposition to suicidal violence as an issue to the living world suffering. I think that the veiled body has come to enter the category of “abject body” in the minds of a large fringe of the Western society as a result of the over mediatized “war on terror” and all the discourses that have been

designed to ‘save the Muslim women’ as a mean to justify war in the Middle East. As prominent authors like Bloom regarding FSB dare assume that “women’s bodies in Islamic society are subject to masculine anxiety” (Bloom, A. Thayer & M. Hudson, 2010: 188), it is difficult to change the perception of these FSB from abject bodies to intelligible ones. In this sense, the covered body is automatically related to the exploded body: the assumption of women in Muslim societies as subordinated leads to the conclusion that she must be acting out of agency, under the oppressive influence of her culture.

However, some authors, such as Lorber and Moore, argue that “female suicide bomber challenges the image of Muslim and Arab women as docile bodies” that are sometimes “veiled, sometimes in “Western” dress, this body moves away from home, crosses borders, and infiltrates the other’s territory” (2007: 207). In this sense, these women are considered to challenge the abject view on them. I should argue two more things here. First, I do agree that these women are searching and demonstrating agency and challenging the dominant view of submissiveness normally attributed to them. I also argue that Western feminism have been using this rhetoric of backwardness to “support the thesis of a universal patriarchal subordination of women” (Butler, 1993: 117). However, I do not believe that this changes our conception of the abject bodies/veiled bodies in the discursive frames designed by the rhetoric of the post-9/11 context. The site of understanding the suicidal attack of a woman needs to be apprehended in a larger epistemic framework as the body of the exploded woman needs *a priori to be considered human* in order to truly challenge these conceptions we have on FSB.

2.3.2 Perversion of the body: disguised and concealed

In this section, I make some clarifications regarding the body of the FSB as transformed from its initial cultural form. For the same reason people create narratives to explain the wrong gender performances of violent women, women arouse less suspicion than men when controlled at checkpoints as they are perceived as inoffensive (Bloom, 2007: 100).

However, their capacity to “change” their bodily appearance easily often facilitated the perpetration of their deed.

Technically, suicide bombers, male or female, always appear “disguised” in the sense that they concealed their weapon under their clothes, and looked like they were performing business as usual (Asad, 2007: 67), while clearly preparing for another type of performance. It seems that this trend is even stronger regarding FSB.

On the one hand, it has been noted that some of the bombers are using their everyday Muslim dresses to commit their attack; it probably feels that their body (and consequently the weapon) are more “covered” and everything more “concealed”. It sometimes permitted them to feign pregnancy (Bloom, 2007: 95), as the weapon is ironically taking the same space reserved to the possible future baby (which contributed to fuel the narrative on motherhood). In Iraq, a woman feigned pregnancy to commit her suicide attack during a wedding in Baghdad (Niva, 2008). But it also set confusion because as we mention anteriorly, some of the bombers were effectively pregnant, reinforcing the horror in with regards to the mixing of the body of the baby and the mother, sealed in life and death.

On the other hand, other women have been using the contrary tactic: they have “westernized” their body, adopting clothing that is similar to the ones that they have as targets (Hasso, 2005: 26; Bloom, 2007: 100). This is directly in line with what Fanon argued concerning the activism of the Algerian women during the struggle for independence from France. He was claiming that the malleability of the women’s bodies allow them to gain at the political and tactical level (Oliver, 2007: 37-38). While the argument of Fanon might be relevant for the Algerian revolution, the recent counter-terrorism approach to suicide bombing might render difficult the strategy of disguise of the FSB³⁹.

³⁹ See for example the “Daughter of Iraq” initiative led by the American army to fight FSB by training Iraqi women in the detection of would-be bombers (CNN, 2008).

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, there is an interesting trend in Afghanistan regarding my argument on the body. It appears that men are using the traditional dresses of women in order to attract less attention and commit suicide bombing (Reuter, 2011: 18). This is a very surprising trend, but also confirming my postulate on body performativity; these men have come to understand a new form of gender identity in order to perform their violent act. They radically changed their appearance with the aim of gaining strategic terrain. That would be an interesting venue for further investigations.

2.3.3 Human bomb, exploded body and body reclaiming

“It is a woman who blew herself up, and with her exploded all the myths about women’s weakness, submissiveness, and enslavement.”

-Editorial Al-Sha’ab (Bloom, 2007: 98)

Andaleeb Takafka⁴⁰, a Palestinian FSB, affirmed in her farewell video the following: “I’ve chosen to say with my body what Arab leaders have failed to say [...] My body is a barrel of gunpowder that burns the enemy” (Hasso, 2005: 29). I found this quote interesting since it expresses the argument I want to adopt here: the bomber clearly identifies her body with weapons while also openly assumes this same body will burn other bodies. As I have argued, there is a strong link between vulnerability and political violence, and the exploded body, is the extreme incarnation of this constitutive vulnerability brought back to the political field.

The human bomb triggers powerful and untenable levels of fears and affective responses (Butler, 2009: 158). For certain persons, it can signify “dehumanizing” the body, for others, it can signify the personification of the weapon. But whether we incline ourselves for the first or the second option, the union between the bomber, the body and the bomb is complete. As Wilcox argues, the “bombs become part of the bodies of the bomber, not only

⁴⁰ Andaleeb Takafka blew herself in Jerusalem in April 2002.

at the moment of detonation, but in an act of incorporation into the bomber's bodily presentation, a presentation necessary for the mission to be carried out" (2013: 7-8).

When bodies are weapons, or better said, supports for weapons, it appears very shocking for us in contemporary wars dominated by the technologies: this is way more shocking when the body is as a feminine form (Agra Romero, 2012: 57). In fact, suicide bombing perpetrated by a woman "combine technology and nature" and this is why their deeds are considered more horrific, deadly and incomprehensible (Oliver, 2007: 32). The FSB type of violence is considered "barbaric" for this reason, also showing a certain inclination to the legitimation of "high-tech warfare of Western militaries" as considered less aberrant (Oliver, 2007: 127 & 129).

As I argued at the beginning of this chapter, the body of a woman is linked to nature by the direct association to bearer of life while men are linked to culture. This is not necessarily a characteristic of Muslim societies, as the narratives we examined in the chapter two showed us: even in Western mind, the female body is associated with natural transmission of life. In its very essence, this reminds us of the considerations of Freud regarding the female body: "the life-giving power or the mother is the uncanny double of her death threat" (Oliver, 2007: 21). It thus seems so horrific to us the correlation that can be made between motherhood, life/death and exploded body.

Otherwise, in a very interesting anthropological analysis, Linos rethinks the body of Palestinian suicide bombers, both male and female, in a wider community frame. She describes the body that is destined to be burned and reduced into pieces as "an extreme form of reclaiming the violated body" (2010: 8). She appeals to the consideration that the exploded body might be the ultimate manner for reclaiming the Palestinian identity; a form of answer to the structural violence they witness every day. It is definitely an interesting venue to explore as in most of the countries where the phenomenon of FSB is present, there is also a strong

relationship between body control, identity, repression and political claims as I discussed in the part on body performances under occupation.

Hamilton finds some similar relations between the body and the state taking the example of the women implicated in terrorism in the ETA. She questions whether the violence might come from their own bodies as these bodies have always been intrinsically linked with the construction of their national identity (2007: 914 & 917). In the end, it seems that the body of FSB might be used as a political reclamation as “suicide terrorism also indicates that there is no other alternative than using bodies itself to defend community” (Szalkai, 2012). Chechnya is a great example of this triad between identity, body and nation as the Chechen women deliberately engaged their bodies in the pursuit of the conflict with the state of Russia, even before the Stalin regime so their implication in “biopolitical act of suicide” is coherent with this strategy (Banner, 2006: 216 & 231-232).

To conclude this part, “the self-exploded suicidal body is a sign” (Dabashi, 2012: 5) and in the end, it is the burned female body into pieces that carry all the meaning of a suicidal attack. Dabashi considers that “the exploded body of the suicide bomber the excavated territory of the state where it has been categorically rendered obsolete” (2012: 10). Thus, it may also suggest something that would require further investigation: could it be possible that the FSB are viewing self-sacrifice suicidal violence as the only viable option to attack the nation state with their own body? It is surely a horrific contestation to the power of nation state and the next section wants to push further this analysis on body dismemberment.

2.3.4 On horror and body dismemberment through suicide attack

In 2008, the Hamas operative Umm Suheib clearly claimed: “I swear by Allah that I will turn my body parts into a fire that will burn the occupation soldiers, if they move towards my house” (Ebel, 2012: 41). Only thinking about body parts flying is tremendous: the very theater of a suicide attack perpetrated by a woman is horrific: terror is the site of fear since it

instills a collective panic that is exponential at the view of the dismembered body (Agra Romero, 2012: 56). Asad remarks that people react strongly to the view of a suicide bombing arguing that it brings so much horror in the very sense understood by Stanley Cavell as it wakes up the “perception of the precariousness of human identity” (2007: 68). When the body that perpetrates a suicide attack is a female one and, by extension, a maternal one in the collective imagination, then the horrific view becomes unbearable. The portrayal is sordid: the human body of the bomber in pieces, the other bodies suffering and trying to escape from the explosion, fighting to survive. A suicide attack perpetrated by a woman is destabilizing; in itself it is the incarnation of horror, “state of paralysis” and “repugnance” (Agra Romero, 2012: 56). What is the most shocking is that suicide attack destroys the unicity of the female body, this same body that is supposed to represent life and continuation of life. The father of Ajza, a Chechen FSB, pronounced himself regarding the dismemberment of his daughter: “All that remained of my daughter was her head. [...] Apart from the head, all that was left was a bit of shoulder, and part of a finger with the nail. I put everything together into a parcel. All that was left of Ajza was five or six kilos, no more” (Cavarero, 2009: 9). But even more so, a female body, supposed to bear life, is destroying the unicity of innocent victims.

A self-sacrifice perpetrated by a woman is therefore challenging all our acquired notions of the conception of female body and human condition. It appears that the view of a woman dismembered body affects our conception, and apart from being violence, it also produces horror because it reiterates our constitutive vulnerability as human beings. When the bodies are dismembered in the site of the bombing, all the bodies are uncovered, all the bodies are showed in their most vulnerable state. The human being is “offended in the ontological dignity of its body” (Agra Romero, 2012: 56) and what follows is horror, “a state of being that is *felt*” (Asad, 2007: 68). Moreover, the image of vulnerability is also visibilized through the dismembered bodies of the victims, mixed with perpetrators. This vulnerability

inherent to the sudden attack against human condition is ultimately exacerbating the horror, and thus, the fear in society.

The point I am trying to make is that, *per se*, the body of a self-sacrifice human is a direct re-assessment of our constitutive vulnerability discussed at the beginning of this part. When this body is a female one, it completely challenges “our conception of body and bodily sensation” (Oliver, 2007: 88) and the very conception of the body as a solely biological entity. If Levinas was arguing that the face was “the most vulnerable part of our body” (Oliver, 2007: 89) and that, in some sense it could be the only manner we can prevent murder by a sort of compassion felt by looking at the face of someone (Butler, 2005: 92), then the FSB is completely challenging this affirmation. In fact, the dismemberment of the female body into the act of suicide attack also foments incomprehension in our minds: “what kind of psychopath will use their own bodies to blow up people” (Oliver, 2007: 127)? As technologies replaced real bodies in war, it seems inconceivable to us that a woman would dismember herself for political means (Oliver, 2007: 127). This is partly why these women are also portrayed, as we have seen in chapter two, as monster and psychopath; it does make not any sense for human nature to valorize more killing at the cost of body dismemberment (Oliver, 2007: 127-128).

As Linos rightfully explains referring to Asad’s book *On Suicide Bombing* (2007), part of this horror over dismemberment is related to the “inability to retrieve a complete body on which funerary rites can be performed” (2010: 12). Effectively, Asad argues that “it is not the occurrence of death as such in which horror resides but the manner in which it occurs and how the dead body is dealt with by the living” (2007: 78). Moreover, Linos sustains that:

The *horror* of a suicide bomb, however, as compared to other bombs that may also dismember the body, may lie in the symbolic and literal mixing of enemy bodies. By killing oneself and simultaneously killing another, the suicide bomber, often from a different religious and ethnic background, pollutes the death of the victims with his blood and body, in a way that a regular bomb does not (2010: 12).

In a suicide attack, the body then becomes the site of contradictions, fears and post-mortem panic over the dismembered body. Moreover, Rose goes further in her analysis of the consequences of a suicide attack on the social conception of body and death:

Why dying with your victim should be seen as a greater sin than saving yourself is unclear. Perhaps, then, the revulsion stems partly from the unbearable intimacy shared in their final moments by the suicide bomber and her or his victims. Suicide bombing is an act of passionate identification – you take the enemy with you in a deadly embrace. As Israel becomes a fortress state and the Palestinians are shut into their enclaves, and there is less and less possibility of contact between the two sides, suicide bombing might be the closest they can get (2004).

This quote reminds us of the fragility of our human nexus; the act of suicide bombing brings back the body of the victim and assailant, the dominated and the oppressor, back to an extreme form of politics, united in death. Cavarero gives the example of the bombing perpetrated by Ayat Al-Akhras in a supermarket in Jerusalem. Initially, two deaths were reported, the bomber and the security guard. But in the end, it appeared that a third person was on the scene, a young girl very similar physically to Ayat (2009: 104).

In conclusion, suicide attacks leave both sides, the assailant and the victim, in an inhuman condition; in “a way that collapses the inside and outside of bodies, resulting in a gory spectacle” (Wilcox, 2013: 2 & 7). The body’s shapes in the suicide attacks are gendered and the horror of the suicide bombing lies under the fact that the victims and the perpetrator are sharing the last moment of their lives in a horrific scene that completely undercuts the constitutive vulnerability of human beings.

2.4 Body as political statement?

In my reflections on the performative character of subject formation, I came to interrogate myself on the possibility to consider the body of FSB as a bearer of a political statement or an act of speech. I was wondering in what measures the suicidal violence could be recognized as a message to society. The question is rather complex because the bomber is

not directly speaking: the statement takes the form of a body message, sometimes coupled with other more concrete messages as video testimonies, but sometimes not.

Therefore, I assume that this section is a tentative assessment with regards to the relation between the deed and the political message that can be sent by the physicality of the body: it does not pretend to answer if yes or no FSB are proclaiming an act of speech through suicidal violence. Instead, it aspires to identify if FSB could be understood and apprehended as an act of political embodiment. In other words, this is an attempt towards engaging a philosophical discussion on the significance of political self-sacrifice of these women, as I think that, the body can speak through gesture.

As Martínez Guzmán highlights, for Austin, everything that is said is also something that is done (2009: 83). In *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, Butler also quotes Henry Louis Gates Jr. who said: “Yes, speech is a species of action. Yes, there are some acts that only speech can perform. But there are some acts that speech alone cannot accomplish. [...] You cannot uplift the poor by declaring them to be rich” (1997: 127). This means that in some ways, acts are necessary to political achievements. So then, can we empirically maintain that what is done can also be a statement?

In the case of FSB, we can imagine they claim discontentment, or may be even fear or rage. Obviously, some women are preparing their suicide attacks long before, others might be more influenced by the fluidity of the contexts, the organizations imperatives or personal events. They might not know a few weeks before that they will engage in radical suicidal violence. But in any case, they certainly send a message by exploding their own body. But, who are we to interpret it as they finally act as a “death emitter”? Or is it the dead body which is acting as a transmitter of the message? Is it the dead body, through its dismemberment and exposition of human vulnerability that truly speaks in the end? Is it a political statement against political, masculine or occupying power? Does FSB acquire a power position in

perpetrating these acts in a sort of cathartic violence that purifies the body of the FSB in death, rendering it equal to the male terrorist? Is it a form of statement against a nation state or occupation force that repressed their bodies as analyzed before? What are they telling us and from where are they speaking?

All these questions were in the midst of my interrogation regarding the embodiment of their political statement as Muslim women in countries experiencing daily-based violence. The FSB are political agents to the extent that each and every body has a political dimension apart from the material dimension of its existence. But is that an evidence of an act of speech as understood by Austin? As Butler claims, Austin categorizes the acts of speech between illocutionary and perlocutionary: “between actions that are performed by virtue of words, and those that are performed as a consequence of words” (1997: 44). For the purpose of our argument, we can thereby consider the latter as a way to interpret suicidal violence of these women in North Caucasus, Palestine and Iraq, or elsewhere.

In the end, could suicidal violence be a refusal “to be normalized” under occupation and a “construction of political significance” (Aretxaga, 1995: 12)? As we have seen in the previous section, the exploded bodies of the FSB could be associated to the reclamation of the “subjugated bodies” (Linos, 2010: 9). Could this reclamation of the body be seen as a political message, an act of speech of the bomber? Here, I follow the argument of Fierke and I consider that yes, it appears that the body is transmitting, through its own death, an act of speech. Fierke argues that the sacrificed body through suicide bombings appeals to a consideration of the injustices lives by the same body (2013: 37). It communicates its own political, religious and may be cultural resistance through embodiment.

In this sense, I think that we should consider the possibility of reading and understanding this act of speech in a wider framework: as the body is also the site of social resistance, it “can thus be seen as a stage upon which local and global conflicts are played out,

and where agency over the body is contested” (Linos, 2010: 9). I propose that a woman who decides to blow herself up in order to kill does have something to say in the act she is carrying. Even if it is perceived as an act of self-destruction and destruction of others, it appears that it might on the contrary, be a call for political change for a given community (Linos, 2010: 8). In this sense, the FSB gives a physical speech of which kind of direct and structural violence she lives daily. Without acknowledging a certain and direct correlation between her living conditions and suicide bombings, it might be argued that she is using her body to give an account of what life is for her, though she paradoxically transmits it through death.

In any case, I think we should rethink the global sources of the suicidal violence of these women, without absolving their violence, but surely by comprehending better the meaning of it. This quote on suicide protest by Adriolo invites us to consider the message in a suicide protest:

Protest suicide is dying with a message, for a message, and of a message. The body becomes the site on which self-destructive mimesis denounces the wrongs that humans have wrought. Protest suicide is, perhaps, the most radical form of embodied minding. [...]Protest suicide attempts to draw the attention of others to something that, in the suicide’s perception, constitutes a wrong of moral, political, or economic dimension, a wrong that affects the lives of many (2006: 102).

This then suggests that, trying to identify the personal motivational factors of FSB can provide some tips to understand why this particular woman has decided to engage in violent action. However, it does not inform us on the whole violent context of emergence that these women try to oppose. I suggest that we should consider the body of the FSB as an act of speech, an act of resistance and a political affirmation of a given context.

I here want to draw a parallel between the body as performing an act of speech and the performativity itself. Performativity allows the body to take the forms it aspires to; within the framework we have analyzed, it is the body which constructs its own resistances through repeated act, shaping its own identity in the resistance (Shinko, 2012: 12). Effectively, the

body of the bomber is acting upon its own body and the body of the other (Shinko, 2012: 14); it is inscribing a bodily message, affirming its own subversion through the deed. This capacity of body resistance is most of the time deployed in political process, but it would be assertive to consider the embodiment of this resistance through suicidal violence (which would certainly be also applicable to self-immolation and hunger strikes for example). Suicidal violence must be seen here as the woman's "willingness" to risk her own body for a reason she considers as legitimate. It is obviously radical political resistance and its own body will not be the one that benefits from the struggle in question because she "resists" through her own physical and social death.

In conclusion of this section, I am assuming the body is speaking to us by its self-sacrifice, as it "raises questions about the relationship between the body and our common humanity and the inhumanity by which the death occurred" (Bell, 2005: 249 *in* Fierke, 2013: 22). Most probably however, is that their message has not yet been heard, or has been misunderstood: sending messages through violence is too contradictory of a thing (Spivak, 2004: 97). But by "listening" to the message sent by the exploded body and interrogating the context of its emergence, then we should be able to understand the frameworks that allow such events to take place and maybe develop different tools to transform this resistance into a pacific one.

2.5 Concluding thoughts

In the end, what are the effects of the death bodies of FSB? How does it change our perspective, the degree of the way we get horrified when there is a dismemberment of the bodies? Is suicidal violence of women claiming some kind of death/life relationship? My contention in this part is to give the path forward to the next section. In this section on the body, I tried to expose that the body is at the center stage of the violence of FSB. I also tried to underline that their body performances are transmitting messages on contemporary

violence, particularly through the contestation of occupation, and that the very act of suicidal violence might be seen as a perlocutionary act of speech with the aim of denouncing social injustices lived by the Muslim communities analyzed here.

Much has been said on the fact that FSB must act out of despair and that their self-sacrifice comes from the dissatisfaction regarding their personal lives. As they cannot fulfill the ideal life, suicidal violence is interpreted as an opportunity to attain the “sacralization of the self in death⁴¹” (Al-Gharbi, 2006: 67). I personally disagree with this interpretation of the relationship between life and death of a female bomber. I try to demonstrate, on the contrary the intrinsic complexity of the various forms that the body can take and I have instead argued in favor of considering the life/death relationship as an embodied resistance that appeals us to a more accurate collective response towards the phenomenon. In that sense, I wish to open the debate to the next section where I want to explore which responsibility we have with regards to these women by trying to demonstrate the importance of the frames of war and precariousness in the analysis of FSB.

3. On precariousness, frames of war and collective responsibility

Regarding the Palestinians who killed the 129 Israeli children, their names and the names of those who sent them are public knowledge, and most of them have been killed – in suicide attacks or by the IDF. Or they are serving life sentences in Israeli prisons. The soldiers who killed 1,373 Palestinian children remain nameless. They – like those who sent them – continue to live among us as free citizens who have fulfilled their national duty (Hass, 2013).

I decided to begin with this quote for two reasons. The first one refers to the fact that it always shocked me how differently presented and mourned were the lives of Israelis in front of the almost unheard deaths of Palestinians since the beginning of the conflict. Second, it is also absurd to observe how intensively the death caused by suicide bombers are publicly denounced and how silenced all the Palestinian lives are going unnoticed to Westerners. In reality, “there is no other life than the Israeli life, that counts as a life and that needs to be

⁴¹ Original: “*sacralisation de soi dans la mort*” (personal translation).

defended at any cost. And even if we can count the number of Palestinian civilians and children dead, we cannot count them⁴²” (Butler, 2010: 38). This led me to ask myself whether if before committing suicide bombing, Palestinian, Chechen and Iraqi women are considered as *lives* or as ungrieveable lives, or *already dead* before they are physically dead.

In this section, I wish to expose that certain frames of war (Butler, 2009) and discursive processes contribute to weaken and render more vulnerable certain Muslim populations which can lead certain people, in our case certain women, to conduct acts of self-directed violence such as suicide bombings. Accordingly, each of the regions we have been mentioning in this Thesis have in some sense witnessed “[...] a suffering imposed from an indifferent outside at the expense of freedom and particularity” (Butler, 2005: 7): Chechnya under the war with Russia, Palestine since the creation of the Israeli state and Iraq with the American invasion of 2003. Apart from increasing the vulnerability of civilians, this has had huge consequences on what is considered a life worth saving and which are the lives that do not count as such. In fact, in each of the above mentioned cases, the precariousness of the Islamic population has been increased (Butler, 2010: 41-42) and their conditions of living have largely been deteriorated. Therefore, this section will be divided in two: an explanation of the frames of war as well as some considerations on precarious and ungrieveable lives and, in the end, a tribute to our collective responsibility toward FSB.

3.1 Frames of war: the formation of precarious and ungrieveable lives

With the emphasis on the body, the principal objective was to go back to the essential ethical problem with FSB: it is a violent act that both kills the perpetrator and its victims. Throughout the analysis on the body, we came to understand that some bodies are considered “bodies that matter” (Butler, 1993), while other are characterized as abject bodies, as

⁴² Original: “*no hay otra vida que la vida israelí, que cuenta como vida y que debe ser defendida a cualquier coste. Y aunque podamos contar el número de civiles y niños palestinos muertos, no podemos contarlos*” (personal translation).

unworthy. As the Muslim bodies in the context of the “war on terror” is considered, *a priori*, as an abject bodies as above mentioned, the bodies of FSB are double transgressive as they also become abject during and because of their violent deed. This poses ethical questions related to how we see human bodies since the events of 9/11.

In this part of the chapter, my contention is to push further the initial reflection we made of the body as a social entity. I want to argue that the bodies of FSB should not be seen as isolated murderous bodies, but as consequences of the conditions in which they emerge, without removing the agency of the women, but considering that these conditions are part of a larger frame in which contemporary violence comes to be intelligible. As Butler sustains, “[o]ur acts are not self-generated, but conditioned” by certain “normative schemes of intelligibility” (2004: 16 & 146) that, in the end, decides who count as human and who is not considered as such.

Butler understands the “frames of war” as “the ways of selectively carving up experience as essential to the conduct of war” (2009: 26). In my interpretation, these frames should be understood as some powerful schemes that allow war to be intelligible (Butler, 2010: 15) and have as an effect the delimitation of which lives count and which do not count as grievable. This means that once we acknowledge that some “epistemological frames” and “mechanisms of power” (Butler, 2009: 1) are in action, we should adopt a more critical perspective on the phenomenon of FSB by not categorizing these women straight away as monsters but understanding the whole problem as way more complex than it appears initially.

Accordingly, there is “no life and no death without a relation to a frame” (Butler, 2009: 7). Consequently, these frames are intrinsically related to the precariousness and vulnerability of life. As Neilson and Rossiter summarize, for Butler, “precariousness is an ontological and existential category that describes the common, but unevenly distributed, fragility of human corporeal existence (2005). Then, if Butler believes that each and every life

is precarious by definition, she also admits that this precariousness is unequally distributed and that some populations are differentially exposed to it (Córdoba & Meloni, 2011: 69). Butler explains that “populations who are eminently grievable and other whose loss is no loss” and that within the framework of the ‘war on terror’, “differential of grievability across populations” as well as “affective disposition in front of horror, violence” suffered by the US versus the population suffering (2009: 24). In fact, war and armed conflicts are “producing and reproducing precariousness” as they “maintain the population in the limit of the death” by making “precariousness as the norm of the daily life⁴³” (Butler, 2010: 22). This has some important impact regarding the possibility of “persisting and flourishing” exposing these populations “to greater violence” and opening the path to radical and suicidal violence (Butler, 2009: 28).

Thus, this implies that some of the bodies implicated in war casualties are not counting as lost human beings because they were already categorized by the frames as war instruments (Butler, 2010: 28). The state of Israel for example framed the violence of Palestinian FSB in terms of personal grievances which led to increase the suspicion and fear among Israelis as it triggers a feeling that Palestinians were cultivating a cult of death and sending their women to die (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2011: 1; Brunner, 2005: 42).

I therefore think it is particularly the case of the populations from where the FSB come from: these populations are not considered as grievables, the life in itself has been denied to these populations even before death occurs (Butler, 2010: 40-41). As Dabashi argues regarding Palestinian people, “they were born at the instance of their death, dead at the moment of their birth” (2012: 21). In fact, as Asad remarks, “some peoples are less valuable than the lives of others and therefore their deaths less disturbing, perception of human life has differential exchange value in the marketplace of death” (2007: 94).

⁴³ Original: “*producir y reproducir la precariedad*” / “*sostener a la población en el límite de la muerte*” / “*produce precariedad como la norma de la vida cotidiana*” (personal translation).

This has a lot to see with our discussion on abject bodies as Islamic populations are nowadays categorized as “lose-able populations” (Butler, 2009: 31) by mass media, political elites and, sometimes, by scholars on the topic, because they are framed as a threat to Western societies, complicating the interpretation of FSB as they are labeled under some Neo-Orientalist/Neo-Colonialist perspective of the Muslim body. The Islamic populations are considered as “less than human” (Butler, 2009: 125): in the contemporary frame of violence, these populations “are found at the margin” and they are “not conceptualized as intelligible” but as “irrational, violent and monstrous⁴⁴” (Butler *in* Córdoba & Meloni, 2011: 71). Even if ultimately, some scholars are working hard in countering these ideas regarding Muslim societies, this differential framing contributes to the fomentation of “monster” and orientalist narratives on FSB, tackling any critical analysis of the topic.

To conclude this part, I wish to give three examples of how frames operate to maximize precariousness in the case of FSM. For instance, sometimes the frames through which war comes to be understood are “providing no image, no name, no narrative, so that there never was a life, and there never was a death” (Butler, 2004: 146). That was the case with the Iraqi FSB at first: when the use of FSB became a tactical strategy in the confrontation between Iraqi insurgent groups and American occupation forces, no one heard about these women; they barely had a name, no identity, no life. As Gentry argues,

At the time, in 2007, it seemed as if the desired reflection of the war in Iraq on the part of coalition forces was that it was going well or that any lost ground could be regained. Women blowing themselves up for the various militias and possibly al-Qaeda would indicate that the war is not going well (2011: 184).

Then, these women began to have an identity when the Western society felt it was interpellating them, and more significantly when the participation of these women in suicide attacks became more intensive (Gentry, 2011: 183). Otherwise, they were not part of what it was understood as human suffering and human violence. As Butler says, the frames are not showing violence

⁴⁴ Original: “*se encuentran en el margen*” / “*no son conceptualizadas como inteligibles*” / “*irracionales, violentas, monstruosas*” (personal translation).

necessarily (Butler, 2004: 147), but symbolic violence by silencing human suffering and consequences of war on women.

Another example that could be quoted is the frames through which the war in Chechnya has been designed. The kind of violence that was displayed throughout the two wars in Chechnya was a “mechanism through which certain lives and deaths either remain unrepresentable or become represented in ways that effects their capture (once again) by the war effort” (Butler, 2004: 147). The results was, after 2002, a framing of all Chechen women as dangerous suicide bombers, under the label “Black Widows”, which led to widespread human rights abuses by the Russian State in the North Caucasus while all the attention was turned towards the actions and victims of FSB violence (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 92). This set out the impossibility for us to clearly understand the underlying forces and conditions that engender radical violence and make it the “only viable option for some” (Butler, 2004: 16).

The third example concerns control of the frames of war by the authorities/occupation forces (Butler, 2009: 12) in Iraq. Gentry explained how, in her careful analysis of the FSB perpetrated in Iraq, the suicide attacks perpetrated by women were going completely unnoticed before 2007. While the coverage of Myrium Goris, the Belgian suicide bomber, has been phenomenal (largely due to her link to the West and the aberration of her deed), the Iraqi women who detonated themselves were rarely reported, and if reported, very briefly. It was not until the phenomenon became unbearable in 2008 that information began to flow. Gentry explains that :

At the time, in 2007, it seemed as if the desired reflection of the war in Iraq on the part of coalition forces was that it was going well or that any lost ground could be regained. Women blowing themselves up for the various militias and possibly al-Qaeda would indicate that the war is not going well (2011: 184).

It seems that in the three example I gave, the frames of war are articulating “modes of power enter into the very definition of life itself” (Butler, 2009: 16). They are changing the war conditions and shaping views regarding these armed conflicts.

With that being said, as I repeatedly contend during my Thesis that I obviously do not intend to excuse, absolve or justify any type of radical suicidal violence by women. On the contrary, I want to figure how such acts come to bear meaning for a subject. These frames of war have a direct incidence on the level of everyday violence and precariousness in war zones and, on our perception of horror regarding FSB. They have an impact on the decision of the women to conduct violent acts in global politics and on our behavior towards punitive means for FSB. These frames of war are increasing on both sides the intrinsic vulnerability of human being: they create fear of the bombings, while perpetuating a state of precarity in the three regions of our concern, exposing the population to “injury, violent, and death” (Butler, 2009: 25). Under those conditions, while not arguing for war determinism, the option of self-sacrifice might appear to a woman as a viable option to challenge the social oppression derived from armed conflict.

As Butler affirms, there is “some distance to be traveled between living in terrible conditions, suffering serious, even unbearable injuries, and resolving on murderous acts” (2004: 149). However, I do believe that in order to transform this radical violence into a pacifist political action, we should be conscious of the conditions of its emergence and this starts by considering each human life as valuable and grievable.

3.2 Collective responsibility toward FSB

The final reflection here is “how do we begin to think about ways to assume responsibility for the minimization of precarity” (Butler, 2009: 33)? Butler effectively invites us to think how we come to assume responsibility “toward those we don’t know” (2009: 36). I think it is time that we start refusing to stick to the personal motivations of FSB and instead start putting forward the interdependency of human beings as a principle for ethical responsibility. The Philosophy for Peace helped me to consider the fact that violence has multiple facets and that the perpetrator/victim dichotomy must be apprehended and analyzed

more rigorously in order to avoid generalizations. As the Philosophy for Peace demonstrates, from the analysis of the performativity of the body, we can reach a form of social responsibility which focuses on the configuration of our actions on the basis of our mutual interrelation (Martínez Guzmán, 2007: 180 & 193).

In fact, I think that the global community has a huge responsibility in the creation of contemporary female suicidal violence as shown in the section regarding the frames of war. Evidently, injustice created by the contemporary sites of war is not a mere excuse or the only factor that contributes to FSB. However, it has a lot to do with the demarcation of which life is grievable and which is not. Nonviolent action towards FSB starts from an acceptance of our intrinsic and constitutive vulnerability and the interdependency on which every human life depends through which it can be possible to heighten awareness and foster capacity-building for the elites and local population of the concerned regions. This responsibility is global and stems from a prior acceptance of our interdependency: this is where the task of the Philosophy for Peace begins.

As I argued in this chapter, a call upon body performativity is also an appeal to agency and to a radical change in our attitude toward the “Other” as Martínez Guzmán invites us to do so (2007: 180). The Philosophy for Peace and Butler’s thoughts converge in the sense that she also considers that to tackle human suffering we should be conscious of our global interconnectedness and responsibility toward the “Other”: “I cannot think the question of responsibility alone, in isolation from the Other; if I do, I have taken myself out of the relational bind that frames the problem of responsibility from the start” (Butler, 2003: 33).

As long as we assume that FSB is a byproduct of certain epistemological frames that contribute to a “differential allocation of precarity” (Butler, 2009: 3), we then can begin to think about multiple ways of countering this phenomenon by channeling the political demands of these women towards nonviolence. This does not remove that FSB also have an

ethical responsibility regarding their deeds (Agra Romero, 2012: 72). However, the peaceful initiatives must be taken before they consider committing their deed. It is, of course, clearly difficult and may be idealist to foster peaceful initiatives in war-torn countries. It will be possible only if we take distances from the “complacent discourse that prepackages moral responses to terrorism, war, and suicide bombing” (Asad, 2007: 5).

In the end, Butler proposes to consider our constitutive vulnerability in order to give the “basis of nonviolent responses to injury and, perhaps most important, to a theory of collective responsibility” (2003: 31). It is obviously difficult to become responsible towards someone that causes injuries, even more towards FSB/MSB as they are “beyond all earthly punishments or revolutionary rewards” (Dabashi, 2012: 1). However, it is clearly the time we become responsible for the violence perpetrated and partly engendered by the frames of war and I think that the recent protests in North Africa and the Middle East with their numerous cases of self-immolation are a vibrant call to collective responsibility.

4. Further thoughts and critiques

This section is dedicated to some closing remarks, further thoughts regarding the philosophical perspective presented in this chapter. It aims at fostering more interrogations and possibility for further investigations, but also to nuance the perspective of Butler. It is divided between notes on subversiveness and critiques regarding the philosophical thoughts of Butler.

4.1 On subversiveness

Throughout my investigation for this Thesis and particularly for this chapter, I was wondering if Butler would argue against my thoughts. Not because I think I misinterpreted her thoughts, although I surely did not capture it entirely since it is a breathtaking life work. Nor because I think she would disagree with a better understanding of FSB based upon critical thinking on global frames of war.

However, I think she might be skeptical regarding how performativity and subversion can be conceptualized regarding FSB without legitimizing any forms of violence. For Butler, a social action needs a repeated performance, which will allow the body to take different forms, subversive forms, which can trigger political changes (1988: 526 & 529). This is problematic for FSB because, if by their actions political changes might be instituted, the action in itself was perpetrated under violent means, a sort of “perversion of subversiveness” *à la Butler*.

I decided not to enter in how the political claims of FSB could be channeled through nonviolent means and subversive activities that neither damages their bodies nor the bodily integrity of the others. I thought that first it would be interesting to interrogate the very conditions of their formation as violent bodies and that it would be interesting to consider it throughout my studies in the framework of Philosophy for Peace. But I do agree, this relation between FSB and political nonviolent action would be the next step to engage in the future. A first step towards this apprehension of subversiveness in the armed conflicts exposed in this Thesis would be the way in which the “subversive use conventional conceptions of womanhood and femininity as a secret weapon of the struggle” as it was the case in Palestinian and Irish movements (and where death was not part of the subversion) (Sharoni, 2001: 93). A further analysis of the link between FSB and subversiveness could be an interesting path towards reducing the violence of these women, by channeling their political claims into new bodily performances.

4.2 Critical thoughts on Butler’s framework

I deliberately chose to analyze FSB from the perspective of body vulnerability and precariousness of war because it appears to me that bodily performances should have a greater place in global politics investigations. Obviously I am conscious that this has a lot of positive consequences, but also presents some philosophical gaps.

I argued that raising awareness on the body, its vulnerability and injurability, might be the opportunity to change our views on FSB, adhere to a new form of collective responsibility and therefore, adopt preemptive measures to channel the violence of these women towards peaceful actions. However, other authors, such as Oliver, argue that vulnerability contains inherently the seeds of violence. While accepting that the body is by definition social and political, Oliver claims that human beings are not inherently and constitutively vulnerable. Precisely, a critique that can be undertaken is that it is not because we recognize other humans as human, and as vulnerable bodies that we will not harm them. Oliver is arguing against the Hegelian perspective on recognition that takes the latter as the first step towards moral responses (2007: 8 & 156-157). The postulate of Oliver is totally valuable, and I think further reflections can be made regarding the constant state of vulnerability perceived in the political discourses of Western elites since 9/11. However, as previously mentioned, I also think that the state of global vulnerability we are facing in the aftermath of 9/11 is due to the non-acceptation of this constitutive vulnerability, which contributed to trigger fear and violence.

Otherwise, since the theory of performance is evidently widely discussed and used in plenty of areas of studies, critiques have also been made to Butler's gender performativity. The vast majority of the critiques are articulated around the premises that "gender-as-performance analytically foregrounds the agency of people in the construction of gender" and that it tackles any attempt to situate the structural and cultural context of a phenomenon (Lorber & Moore, 2007: 66-67). Shep, on his part, argues that Butler's theory on performativity has reached a point of hegemony, and thus has become replete for giving an account of some gender identities (2012: 864). These critiques are interesting in the sense that they appeal to be careful with theories that are accepted almost unanimously, even though I consider that performativity offers innovative ways of considering agency through wider frameworks of interpretation.

Others authors, with whom I do not explicitly agree, but also recognizing that their critiques needs to be heard, are the ones that criticize Butler regarding the materiality of the body. The claim here is that the materiality of the body cannot be apprehended through performativity which downplays what the physical body is capable of doing (Ortega, 2010: 37-38). While Butler is not negating the materiality of the body, I also think that some authors are confounding her thoughts with the constructivist theory, understanding performativity as synonymous with social construction.

5. Summary of the chapter

“Let’s face it. We’re undone by each other. And if we’re not, we’re missing something.”

-Judith Butler (2003: 13)

Even if it is still difficult for us, as human beings, to understand such radical suicidal violence perpetrated by women, I think that the current geopolitical situation leads us to critically reformulate our perception of the “Other”. In this chapter, my principal contention with this chapter was to propose another way to look at FSB, through philosophy, as to go farther than the usual never-ending investigation on personal motives of these women. I considered first that I did not have the tools to conduct an investigation on motivational approach and then that the very question was not *why* they do what they do, but *how* radical violence turn ups to be a possible option for these women. I was more interested in the philosophical perspective because it is not only investigating the phenomenon of FSB but also our collective responsibility towards these kinds of radical events of self-directed violence.

To summarize, this chapter aimed at portraying a philosophical perspective on FSB, notably by analyzing the body as an element central to the act and by repositioning it in perspective with the frames of war and precariousness of life as theorized by Butler. The following conclusions are highlighted:

- (1) A philosophical approach regarding FSB permitted us to shed light on the complex dimensions of embodiment as well as the way in which the body of these women are “speaking” to us through political statement;
- (2) In counter position to the hegemonic narratives analyzed in the chapter two, the phenomenon of FSB should be analyzed under the conditions of its emergence which are profoundly marked by daily violence; this should lead us to a nonviolent intervention regarding the problem;
- (3) The account that I have made of the link between vulnerability, precariousness and the frames of war showed us that we must an ethical responsibility towards FSB and their deed and;
- (4) The three above mentioned conclusions leads us to a possibility of fomenting a nonviolent response with regards with the problematic of women suicide bombers.

Throughout this chapter, I have demonstrated that there are other venues to analyze the phenomenon of FSB than the “motivational” approach. Moreover, this philosophical perspective allowed me to interrogate the FSB in its various bodily forms and to reflect on the consequences of the contemporary war on human bodies. I guess it was my way to reach a critical understanding and put in question how the “other” is suffering and how we can find alternatives to it (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 161). The vulnerability that links us all invited me to a deeper reflection on the social links between each human being, and the place of the FSB in relation to this exposition to others. If we come to understand this very constitutive part of our self, maybe then, the relationship between life and death will attain more significance, and life will count equally for all.

In the end, through the bodily experience, I contend that it is possible to account for a better comprehension of their violence that ultimately would lead to preventive initiatives in terms of collective responses. The bodily experience is not easy to capture, but I wish this

philosophical perspective could be the beginning of a wider concern about bodily existence and war within the Philosophy for Peace.

Conclusions

The task of investigating violent women is by no means an easy one: as we have seen through this Thesis, the history of war has been largely gendered. The violent women have been identified as unnatural and therefore, most of the stories depicting them are singularly full of stereotypes which prevent an exhaustive analysis of their acts. Equally, any research on violent women as FSB is subjected to the danger of legitimizing their violence. However, throughout this Thesis, I tried to show that these violent women are human beings, and that we need a more comprehensive approach to FSB in order to transform their motivations and violent deeds into politically engaging nonviolent struggle. Besides, the task is not impossible as most of the failed suicide bombers have lately come to understand that there are other means of channeling their political grievances and more often than not, express their regrets with regards of their intention to commit self-sacrifice. It was the case of the Palestinian FSB Shefa'a Al-Qudsi who admitted in an interview that she strongly thinks that the way to achieve peace goes through sincere dialogues between Israelis and Palestinians (RT News, 2011).

From this standpoint, I thought that a first step towards this was to reconsider the global approach to suicide terrorism by women and, furthermore, to include the study of these women within the debate of our Chair of Philosophy for Peace.

The main objective of this Thesis was to problematize the phenomenon of FSB from a Gender and Peace Studies perspective, more precisely within the framework of the Philosophy for Peace. In order to do this, I used examples from three Muslim war-torn regions and I centered my analysis on the body.

Consequently, three specific objectives were animating the writing of this Thesis. First, I aimed to rethink the debate on terrorism and gender within the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, calling on the importance of considering the interdisciplinary approach

to FSB. Second, I attempted to deconstruct the hegemonic narratives regarding FSB in order to critically understand the underlying judgments and stereotypes that accompany the accounts on them. Thirdly, I proposed another way to look at FSB taking the conceptualization of the body and the frames of war as points of departure to other possible ways of investigating the actions and the context related to the suicidal violence perpetrated by these violent women.

The present Thesis has various key findings. First of all, I should specify that it demonstrated the importance of analyzing the phenomenon of FSB following an interdisciplinary approach. The method I chose was to link Terrorism and Gender Studies with Philosophy for Peace in order to foment a more comprehensive approach to the problem of radical suicidal violence. I found that, in the first chapter, the Philosophy for Peace was useful to analyze the relationship between Terrorism and Gender Studies since it opened the pathway to comprehending agency, emotions and rationality and confirm that the body is a central component of identity.

In chapter two, in trying to go beyond the motivational approach, I conclude that the hegemonic narratives are perpetuating a raced and gendered “othering” of FSB, in particular, and Muslim women, in general, and that this contributes to the prolonging of gender subordination in global politics. These hegemonic narratives that portray women along the lines of domesticity, attractiveness or irrationality accentuate the victimization of violent women while not contributing to a nonviolent transformation of the problem.

Finally, in chapter three, by analyzing the link between vulnerability, precariousness and frames of war, I concluded that a philosophical perspective makes us understand the complex dimensions of embodiment of FSB. In fact, I conclude that FSB should be read as an act of speech, a political statement that should be understood through the social body. From there, we come to acquire a social responsibility towards them and, finally, a nonviolent

response can be possible as the analysis of their violence in the condition of emergence serves us as a point of departure for those responses.

Even if the general objective of this Thesis was to change the way we come to think about FSB and their suicidal violence, it is clear that further research is needed, not only related to these women but in a wider perspective such as body/war relationship. On the one hand, I think that what can be identified as a limitation of this Thesis might be the focus on women; as Hamilton argued, there is a tendency to associate gender to women and thus to minimize the consideration for men as also *gendered* bodies in terrorism (2010:104-105). This also leads to ask ourselves the place of transgender people in suicidal violence as it was the case with Faiza Amal Juma'a who recognized and identified herself better as Ahmad (Eleftheriadou, 2008: 10; Rajan, 2011: 121). These are obviously further paths to explore regarding the body of a suicide bomber or, we should say, the changing body of the bomber.

On the other hand, I believe that the literature is widely dominated by Western writers on the topic, mostly American, which is not a problem in itself but it could be an enrichment to consider what Islamic Feminists, or Islamic writers in general, have to say regarding body and suicidal violence by women. Following this, it would be interesting to carry out a deeper analysis on the relationship between religion, body and war with a special focus on the conceptualization of the body in Islam, which I consider would be my interest for my Doctoral Studies. Equally, during my research for the Thesis, I had difficulties in finding credible academic sources that account for FSB's violence in Dagestan. It seems that the problem is understudied and that would be a key point for further research as it is intrinsically linked with the Chechen suicidal violence. Further investigations must also be undertaken with regards to recent suicidal violence committed by women in Somalia, Afghanistan, Egypt and Pakistan.

Finally, suicidal violence is not the only form of terrorist violence. On that ground, I suggest that Philosophy for Peace, and more broadly Peace Studies, should take a stronger stand to analyze the different roles of violent women in terrorism and how this violence can be addressed by nonviolent means, “compatible with the ridding of direct, structural, and cultural violence (Toros & Gunning, 2007: 107).

It is a long way to go. First because changing our way to interpret violent acts is not an easy task as we are governed by epistemological frames that channel our thoughts and problematize our responses to these acts. Second, because suicidal violence is particular, and as it is self-directed, punishment becomes superfluous, unnecessary. But there is a ray of hope as most of the suicidal violence attacks perpetrated by females did not lead to any tangible gains in the three regions I analyzed, therefore opening the doors to alternatives for these women to get engaged socially.

But in the end, suicidal violence does not appear from nowhere; it has its own history, and the women that decide to commit it also have a background. Suicidal violence is part of global contemporary politics, but also questions the value of individual lives which is something central to the Philosophy for Peace. As I introduced in this Thesis, the curiosity towards suicidal violence comes from a personal experience that I tried to channel and transform into an academic work. I do believe that each body has a social existence that exceeds its materiality; each body, and life by extension, is worthy of humanity. I guess this Thesis was finally a call to foster nonviolent verbal and physical actions to counter female violence based on our common vulnerability...

Bibliography

- ADRIOLO, KARIN (2006): "The Twice-Killed: Imagining Protest Suicide," *American Anthropologist*, 108(1), 100-113.
- AGRA ROMERO, MARÍA XOSÉ (2012): "Con armas, como armas: la violencia de las mujeres," *Isegoría. Revista de Filosofía Moral y Política*, nº46, 49-74.
- AHALL, LINDA TERESE (2011): *Heroines, Monster, Victims: Representations of Female Agency in Political Violence and the Myth of Motherhood*, [Doctoral Dissertation], Birmingham, University of Birmingham.
- AHMED ALI, FATUMA (2005): "Mujeres en Conflicto: una multiplicidad de roles que supera la victimización," *Pueblos*, available at: <http://www.revistapueblos.org/old/spip.php?article1003>, Consulted: 28-03-2013.
- AL-GHARBI, IKBAL (2006): "Les femmes dans les mouvements islamistes: aliénation ou tentative de libération?," *Journal d'étude des relations internationales au Moyen-Orient*, 1(1), 58-71.
- (2008): "Le phénomène des femmes kamikazes," *Note d'analyse*, European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center, 1-9.
- AL-QASSAM (2013): "Female Martyrs," *Ezzedeen Al-Qassam Brigades*, available at: http://www.qassam.ps/female_martyrs.html, Consulted: 01-06-2013.
- ALCAÑIZ MOSCARDÓ, MERCEDES (2009): "La presencia de las mujeres en la resolución de los conflictos armados: mediación y capacitación," *Información psicológica*, nº 96, 43-53.
- ALI, FARHANA (2005): "Muslim Female Fighters: An Emerging Trend," *Terrorism Monitor Volume*, 3(21), available at: http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=603, Consulted: 25-04-2013.
- ALIMI, EITAN Y. (2011): "Relational Dynamics in Factional Adoption of Terrorist Tactics: A Comparative Perspective," *Theory and Society*, 40(1), 95-118.
- ALISON, MIRANDA H. (2009): *Women and Political Violence. Female Combatants in Ethno-National Conflict*, New York, Routledge.
- AOUN, SAMI (2007): *Mots-Clés de Islam*, Montréal, Médiaspaul.
- AP (2013): "Female suicide bomber injures 18 in southern Russia," *CBC News*, available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2013/05/25/suicide-bomber-dagestan.html>, Consulted: 01-06-2013.
- ARETXAGA, BEGONA (1995): "Dirty protest: Symbolic overdetermination and gender in Northern Ireland," *Ethos* 23(2): 123-148.
- ASAD, TALAL (2007): *On Suicide Bombing*, New York, Columbia University Press.

ATEEK, NAIM (2005): "Suicide Bombers: What Is Theologically and Morally Wrong with Suicide Bombings? A Palestinian Christian Perspective," *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 8, 5-30.

AUSTIN, JOHN LANGSHAW (1962): *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford, Clarendon.

BANNER, FRANCINE (2006): "Uncivil Wars: 'Suicide Bomber Identity' as a Product of Russo-Chechen Conflict," *Religion, State & Society*, 34(3), 215-253.

— (2008): "Mothers, Bombers, Beauty Queens: Chechen Women's Role in the Russo-Chechen Conflict," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 9(2), 77-88.

— (2009): "'Beauty Will Save the World': Beauty Discourse and the Imposition of Gender Hierarchies in the Post-War Chechen Republic," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 9(1), 25-48.

BAÑOS BAJO, PEDRO (2008): "Mujer terrorista suicida iraquí," *El Diario de León*, available at: http://www.diariodeleon.es/noticias/opinion/mujer-terrorista-suicida-iraqui_398827.html, Consulted: 05-05-2013.

BAR-ON, BAT-AMI (2002): *The Subject of Violence: Arendtean Exercises in Understanding*, Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield.

BAUMAN, ZYGMUNT (2006): *Vida Líquida*, Barcelona, Paidós.

BECK, ULRICH (2003): *Sobre el terrorismo y la guerra*, Barcelona, Paidós.

BENNET, JAMES (2002): "Arab Woman's Path to Unlikely 'Martyrdom,'" *The New York Times*, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/31/world/arab-woman-s-path-to-unlikely-martyrdom.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>, Consulted: 22-05-2013.

BERKO, ANAT & EDNA EREZ (2005): "'Ordinary People' and 'Death Work': Palestinian Suicide Bombers as Victimizers and Victims," *Violence and Victims*, 20(6), 603-623.

BERKOWITZ, DAN (2005): "Suicide Bombers as Women Warriors: Making News through Mythical Archetypes," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 82(3), 607-622.

BLOOM, MIA (2005): "Mother, Daughter, Sister, Bomber," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 61(6), 55-62.

— (2005a): *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terrorism*, New York, Columbia University Press.

— (2007): "Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend," *Daedalus*, 136(1), 94-102.

— (2010): "Death Becomes Her: Women, Occupation, and Terrorist Mobilization," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 43(3), 445-450.

— (2011): *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press.

- BLOOM, MIA, BRADLEY A. THAYER & VALERIE M. HUDSON (2010): "Life Sciences and Islamic Suicide Terrorism," *International Security*, 35(3), 185-192.
- BRADY, ANITA & TONY SCHIRATO (2010): *Understanding Judith Butler*, London, Sage.
- BROWN, KATHERINE E. (2011): "Blinded by the Explosion? Security and Resistance in Muslim Women's Suicide Terrorism," in Sjoberg, Laura & Caron E. Gentry (eds.): *Women, Gender, and Terrorism*, Athens & London, The University of Georgia Press, 194-226.
- BRUNNER, CLAUDIA (2005): "Female Suicide Bombers – Male Suicide Bombing? Looking for Gender in Reporting the Suicide Bombings of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict," *Global Society*, 19(1), 29-48.
- (2007): "Discourse – Occidentalism – Intersectionality Approaching Knowledge on 'Suicide Bombing'," *Political Perspectives*, 1(1), 1-24.
- (2007a): "Occidentalism Meets the Female Suicide Bomber: A Critical Reflection on Recent Terrorism Debates; A Review Essay," *Signs*, 32(4): 957-971.
- BUTLER, JUDITH (1988): "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theater Journal*, 40(4): 519-531.
- (1993): *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex,"* New York & London, Routledge.
- (1997): *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, New York & London, Routledge.
- (2003): "Violence, Mourning, Politics," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 4(1), 9-37.
- (2004): *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*, London & New York, Verso.
- (2005): *Giving an Account of Oneself*, New York, Fordham University Press.
- (2007): *El género en disputa*, Barcelona, Paidós.
- (2009): *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*, London & New York, Verso.
- (2010): *Violencia de Estado, guerra, resistencia. Por una nueva política de la izquierda*, Buenos Aires, Katz.
- CAMPANA, AURÉLIE (2006): "Chechnya, Impact on Women of Wars in," in Bernard A. Cook: *Women and War: A Historical Encyclopedia from Antiquity to the Present*, Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 103-106.
- (2010): *Terrorimes*, Notes of a series of conferences given at Laval University, available at: <https://www.portaildescours.ulaval.ca/login.jsp?js=true>, Consulted: 10-02-2013.
- (2011): "The Terrorist Threat Ten Years after 9/11," *The Dispatch – Quarterly Review of the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute*, Winter 2011, 17-18.

CAVARERO, ADRIANA (2009): *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*, New York, Columbia University Press.

CBS NEWS (2009): "Carnage in Russia School Siege," *CBS News*, available at: http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-202_162-641167.html, Consulted: 24-08-2013.

CNN (2008): "U.S. Trains Iraqi Women to Find Female Suicide Bombers," *CNN World*, available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/06/24/daughters.of.iraq/index.html>, Consulted: 24-08-2013.

COMINS MINGOL, IRENE (2001): "Cultura de guerra y género" in Benet, Vicente J. & Vicente Sánchez-Biosca (eds): *Decir, contar, pensar la guerra*, Valencia, Subsecretaria de Promoció Cultural Conselleria de Cultura i Educació, 193-208.

— (2007): "La ética del cuidado: Contribuciones a una transformación pacífica de los conflictos," *Feminismo/s*, n°9, 93-105.

— (2010): "El cuidado, eje vertebral de la intersubjetividad humana," in Comins Mingol, Irene & Sonia París Albert (eds.): *Investigación para la paz: Estudios Filosóficos*, Barcelona, Icaria, 73-87.

COMINS MINGOL, IRENE & VICENT MARTÍNEZ GUZMÁN (2010): "Del miedo a la alteridad al reconocimiento del cuerpo: Una perspectiva desde la Filosofía para la Paz", *Investigaciones Fenomenológicas*, vol. Monográfico 2, 37-60.

CONFORTINI, CATIA C. (2006): "Galtung, Violence, and Gender: The Case for a Peace Studies/Feminism Alliance," *Peace & Change*, 31(3), 333-367.

CÓRDOBA, DAVID & CAROLINA MELONI (2011): "A propósito de las vidas precarias. Entrevista a Judith Butler," *La Torre del Virrey: Revista de Estudios Culturales*, n°10, 60-73.

COSTERA MEIJER, IRENE & BAUKJE PRINS (1998): "How Bodies Come to Matter: An Interview with Judith Butler," *Signs*, 23(2), 275-286.

CRCCT (2012): "Programme de recherche," *Chaire de recherche du Canada sur les conflits et le terrorisme*, Université Laval, available at: <http://www.chaire-terrorisme.ulaval.ca/index.php?pid=166&lang=fr>, Consulted on 21-02-13.

CRETTEZ, XAVIER (2000) : "Les modèles d'appréhension du terrorisme," *Les Cahiers de la sécurité intérieure*, n°38, available at : http://xaviercrettez.typepad.fr/diffusion_du_savoir/2007/02/les_modles_dapp.html, Consulted : 04-04-2013.

CRIMI, FRANK (2011): "Voices of Palestine : Alham Tamimi," *Frontpage Mag*, available at: <http://frontpagemag.com/2011/frank-crimi/voices-of-palestine-ahlam-tamimi/>, Consulted: 04-04-2013.

DABASHI, AMID (2012): *Corpus Anarchicum: Political Protest, Suicidal Violence, and the Making of the Posthuman Body*, New York, Parlage Macmillan.

DAVIS, JESSICA (2013): "Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 36(4), 279-291.

- DAVIS, JOYCE M. (2003): *Martyrs: Innocence, Vengeance, and Despair in the Middle East*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- DE SPINOZA, BENEDICTUS (1992): *The Ethics: Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect. Selected Letters*, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing
- EBEL, MEREDITH E. (2012): *My Body is a Barrel of Gunpowder: Palestinian Women's Suicide Bombing in the Second Intifada*, [Bachelor's Thesis], Pittsburg, Carnegie Mellon University.
- ELEFThERiADOU, MARINA (2008): "Women and Militant Islamism: The Misunderstanding behind 'the Woman and the Gun'," in "Kids, Jihad and the Ballot box: Women in the Middle East," *A Greek Review of Middle Eastern Affairs*, Issue 10, available at: <http://pedis.uop.gr/joomla/images/mideast/meb/meb10.pdf>, Consulted: 25-07-2013.
- ENKERLIN MADERO, HELKE & MARCELA LUIS ZATARAIN (2011): "¿Víctimas o victimarias? Replanteando concepciones sobre mujeres terroristas suicidas," *CONfines*, 7(13), 147-176.
- ENLOE, CYNTHIA (2000): *Maneuvers : The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- ESKANDI, SHADI (2006): "The Letter," in Sarah Husain (ed.): *Voices of Resistance: Muslim Women on War, Faith, and Sexuality*, Emeryville, Seal Press, 100-106.
- FARDANEWS (2013): "تصاویر / طالبان با لباس زنانه" [Images: Talibans with Women's Clothes], *Fardanews*, available at: <http://www.fardanews.com/fa/news/227903/%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%88%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3-%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87>, Consulted: 08-04-2013.
- FIERKE, KARIN M. (2013): *Political Self-Sacrifice: Agency, Body and Emotion in International Relations*, New York, Cambridge University Press.
- FISAS, VICENÇ (2004): *Procesos de paz y negociación en conflictos armados*, Barcelona, Paidós.
- FISAS, VICENÇ AND OTHERS (2012): "Alerta! Informe sobre conflictos, derechos humanos y construcción de paz," *Escola de Cultura de Pau*, Barcelona, Icaria.
- (2012a): "Barómetro sobre conflictos y construcción de paz. Julio- Septiembre 2012," *Escola de Cultura de Pau*, Barcelona.
- FOUCAULT, MICHEL (1976): *Vigilar y castigar: Nacimiento de la prisión*, México, Siglo XXI.
- FORASTELLI, FABRICIO (2007): "Regulaciones culturales y violencia. Recientes debates en el movimiento de mujeres y Queer en América Latine," *Feminismo/s*, n° 9, 51-66.
- (2012): "Los dilemas de la diferencia desde las luchas de género y sexualidad," *Recerca*, n°12, 113-128.
- GALTUNG, JOHAN (1969): "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.

- GÁMEZ FUENTES, MARÍA JOSÉ (2010): “La comunicación desde la perspectiva de género,” in Comins Mingol, Irene & Sonia París Albert (eds.): *Investigación para la paz: Estudios Filosóficos*, Barcelona, Icaria, 145-156.
- (2012): “Sobre los modos de visibilización mediático-política de la violencia de género en España: consideraciones críticas para su reformulación,” *OBETS. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 7(2), 185-213.
- (2013): “*La vida secreta de las palabras: De mujeres, narrativas y violencia*,” *L’Atlante*, enero-junio, 99-105.
- GENTRY, CARON E. (2011): “The Neo-Orientalist Narratives of Women’s Involvement in al-Qaeda,” in Sjoberg, Laura & Caron E. Gentry (eds.): *Women, Gender, and Terrorism*, Athens & London, The University of Georgia Press, 176-193.
- GONZALEZ-PEREZ, MARGARET (2011): “The False Islamization of Female Suicide Bombers,” *Gender Issues*, 28(1), 50-65.
- GREWAL, INDERPAL (2013): “Outsourcing Patriarchy: Feminist Encounters, Transnational Mediations and the Crime of ‘Honour Killings’,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 15(1), 1-19.
- GROSKOP, VIV (2004): “Chechnya's deadly "black widows,"” *NewStatesman*, available at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/node/148776>, Consulted: 12-05-2013.
- HAMILTON, CARRIE (2007): “Political Violence and Body Language in Life Stories of Women ETA Activists,” *Signs*, 32(4), 911-932.
- (2010): “Towards a Historiography of Gender and ‘Terrorism’,” *Zeitgeschichte*, 2(37), 95-110.
- HASS, AMIRA (2013): “The Israeli-Palestinian balance of brutality,” *Haaretz*, available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/features/the-israeli-palestinian-balance-of-brutality.premium-1.526092>, Consulted: 14-07-2013.
- HASSO, FRANCES S. (2005): “Discursive and Political Deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers/Martyrs,” *Feminist Review*, n°81, 23-51.
- HAUG, FRIGGA (2006): “Hacia una teoría de las relaciones de género,” *La Teoría Marxista Hoy*, 327-339, available at: <http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/ar/libros/campus/marxis/P3C1Haug.pdf>, Consulted: 25-08-2013.
- HYNDMAN, JENNIFER & MALATHI DE ALWIS (2004): “Bodies, Shrines, and Roads: violence, (im)mobility and displacement in Sri Lanka,” *Gender, Place and Culture*, 11(4), 535-557.
- IRIN (2007): “Iraq: Killings drive women to become suicide bombers,” *IRIN News*, available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/70582/iraq-killings-drive-women-to-become-suicide-bombers>, Consulted: 25-08-2013.
- JACKSON, RICHARD (2008): “An Argument for Terrorism,” *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 2(2), available at: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/27/html>, Consulted: 19-03-2013.

- (2009): “Knowledge, Power and Politics in the Study of Political Terrorism,” in Jackson, Richard, Marie Breen Smyth & Jeroen Gunning (eds): *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, London & New York, Routledge, 66-83.
- JACKSON, RICHARD, MARIE BREEN SMYTH & JEROEN GUNNING (EDS.) (2009): *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, London & New York, Routledge.
- KEMOKLIDZE, NINO (2009): “Victimisation of Female Suicide Bombers: The Case of Chechnya,” *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, 3(2), 181-188.
- KOBRIN, NANCY HARTEVELT (2010): *The Banality of Suicide Terrorism: The Naked Truth about the Psychology of Islamic Suicide Bombing*, Washington D.C., Potomac Books.
- KRISTEVA, JULIA (1982): *The Power of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- LENNON, KATHLEEN (2010): “Feminist Perspectives on the Body,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-body/>, Consulted: 27-04-2013.
- LINOS, NATALIA (2010): “Reclaiming the Social Body through Self-Directed Violence,” *Anthropology today*, 26(5), 8-12.
- LORBER, JUDITH (2002): “Heroes, Warriors, and *Burqas*: A Feminist Sociologist’s Reflections on September 11,” *Sociological Forum*, 17(3), 377-396.
- LORBER, JUDITH & LISA JEAN MOORE (2007): *Gendered Bodies: Feminist Perspectives*, Los Angeles, Roxbury Publishing Company.
- MAIRS, NANCY (1997): “Carnal Acts,” in Conboy, Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina & Sarah Stanbury (eds.): *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, New York, Columbia University Press, 296–308.
- MAJID, ANOUAR (1998): “The Politics of Feminism in Islam,” *Signs*, 23(2), 321-361.
- MARTÍNEZ GUZMÁN, VICENT (2005): “La Filosofía para la Paz como racionalidad práctica”, *Investigaciones fenomenológicas*, nº 4, 87-98.
- (2005a): *Podemos hacer las paces. Reflexiones éticas tras el 11-S y el 11-M*, Sevilla, Desclée de Brouwer
- (2007): “Virtualidad, performatividad y responsabilidad,” in Moreno, César and others (eds.): *Filosofía y Realidad Virtual*, Zaragoza; Teruel, Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 179-200.
- (2009): *Filosofía para hacer las paces*, Barcelona, Icaria.
- MARTÍNEZ GUZMÁN, VICENT, IRENE COMINS MINGOL & SONIA PARÍS ALBERT (2009): “La nueva agenda de la filosofía para el siglo XXI: los estudios para la paz,” *Convergencia*, Núm. Esp. IA, 91-114.
- MARTÍNEZ LÓPEZ, CÁNDIDA (2000): “Las mujeres y la paz en la historia” in Muñoz, Francisco & Mario López (eds.): *Historia de la Paz. Tiempos, espacios y actores*, Granada, Instituto de la paz y los conflictos, 255-290.

MCRROBBIE, ANGELA (2006): "Vulnerability, Violence and (Cosmopolitan) Ethics: Butler's *Precarious Life*," *The British Journal of Sociology*, 57(1), 69-86.

MCSORLEY, KEVIN (2007): "The reality of war? Politics written on the body," *Newstatesman*, available at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/cultural-capital/2010/06/war-politics-bodies-body>, Consulted: 25-06-2013.

— (2013): *War and the Body: Militarisation, Practice and Experience*, New York & London, Routledge.

MEMRI (2002): "Wafa Idris: The Celebration of the First Female Palestinian Suicide Bomber - Part III," *The Middle East Media Research Institute*, n°85, available at: http://www.mefacts.com/cached.asp?x_id=11709, Consulted: 15-05-2013.

MERLEAU-PONTY, MAURICE (1962): *Phenomenology of Perception*, London & New York, Routledge.

MORGAN, ROBIN (2001): *The Demon Lover: The Roots of Terrorism*, New York, Washington Square Press.

MOSER, CAROLINE O.N. & FIONA C. CLARK (2001): "Introduction" in Moser, Caroline O.N. & Fiona O. Clark (eds.): *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, London & New York, Zed Books.

NAAMAN, DORIT (2007): "Brides of Palestine/Angel of Death: Media, Gender, and Performance in the Case of the Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers," *Signs*, 32(4), 933-955.

NACOS, BRIGITTE L. (2005): "The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media: Similar Framing Patterns in the News Coverage of Women in Politics and in Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28(5), 435-451.

NCTC (2013): "Counterterrorism 2013 Calendar," *National Counterterrorism Center*, available at: http://www.nctc.gov/site/pdfs/ct_calendar_2013.pdf, Consulted: 04-04-2013.

NEILSON, BRETT & NED ROSSITER (2005): "From Precarity to Precariousness and Back Again: Labour, Life and Unstable Networks," *The Fibre Culture Journal*, Issue 5, available at: <http://five.fibrejournal.org/fcj-022-from-precarity-to-precariousness-and-back-again-labour-life-and-unstable-networks/>, Consulted: 14-07-2013.

NESS, CINDY D. (2007): "The Rise in Female Violence," *Daedalus*, 136(1), 84-93.

NIVA, STEVE (2008): "Behind the Surge of Iraqi Women Suicide Bombers," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, available at: http://www.fpif.org/articles/behind_the_surge_in_iraqi_women_suicide_bombers, Consulted: 09-08-2013.

NIVAT, ANNE (2005): "The Black Widows: Chechen Women Join the Fight for Independence—and Allah," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 28(5), 413-419.

- O'ROURKE, LINDSEY A. (2009): "What's Special about Female Suicide Terrorism," *Security Studies*, 18(4), 681-718.
- OLIVER, KELLY (2001): *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- (2007): *Women As Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and the Media*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- (2009): "Technologies of Violence and Vulnerability," in Gaon, Stella (ed.): *Democracy in Crisis : Violence, Alterity, Community*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 90-109.
- ORTEGA, FRANCISCO (2010): *El cuerpo incierto: Corporeidad, tecnologías médicas y cultura contemporánea*, España, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.
- PALMIERI, DANIEL & IRÈNE HERRMANN (2010): "Entre Amazones et Sabines : une approche historique de la question des femmes dans la guerre," *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, n° 877, 1-10.
- PAPE, ROBERT A. (2003): "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review*, 97(3), 1-19.
- (2005): *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, New York, Random House.
- PAPE, ROBERT A., LINDSEY O'ROURKE & JENNA MCDERMID (2010): "What Makes Chechen Women So Dangerous?" *The New York Times*, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/31/opinion/31pape.html?pagewanted=all&_r=2&, Consulted: 25-05-2013.
- PARÍS ALBERT, SONIA (2007): "Reconstruir la identidad social de las mujeres para la transformación pacífica de los conflictos", *Feminismo/s*, n°9, 107-120.
- (2009): *Filosofía de los conflictos: Una teoría para su transformación pacífica*, Barcelona, Icaria.
- PAVEY, ELEANOR (2006): "Les Kamikazes sri lankais," *Cultures & Conflits*, n°63, available at: <http://conflits.revues.org/2103?&id=2103>, Consulted: 05-04-2013.
- PINTOS PEÑARANDA, M^A LUZ (2010): "Fenomenología, género y paz," in Comins Mingol, Irene & Sonia París Albert (eds.): *Investigación para la paz: Estudios Filosóficos*, Barcelona, Icaria, 51-71.
- POZO, ALEJANDRO (2010): *Las Guerras Globales. Un enfoque crítico a la supuesta novedad de las guerras contemporáneas y una revisión de los factores globales de los conflictos armados*, [PhD Dissertation], Castellón, University Jaume I.
- QAZI, FARHANA (2011): "The *Mujahidaat*: Tracing the Early Female Warriors of Islam," in Sjoberg, Laura & Caron E. Gentry (eds.): *Women, Gender, and Terrorism*, Athens & London, The University of Georgia Press, 29-56.

RAJAN, JULIE V.G. (2011): *Women Suicide Bombers*, London & New York, Routledge.

RANDSTORP, MAGNUS (2009): "Mapping Terrorism Studies after 9/11: An Academic Field of Old Problems and New Prospects," in Jackson, Richard, Marie Breen Smyth & Jeroen Gunning (eds.): *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, London & New York, Routledge, 13-33.

REITMAN, JANET (2013): "Jahar's World," *The Rolling Stones Magazine*, available at: <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/jahars-world-20130717>, Consulted: 25-08-2013.

REPO, JEMIMA (2006): *Gendering the Militarisation of the War on Terrorism: Discourses and Representations of Masculinities and Femininities*, [Master's Thesis], Helsinki, University of Helsinki.

REUTER, KRISLYN P. (2011): *Why not Use Women?: An Examination of the Conditions Under Which an Islamic Terrorist Organization will Employ Female Suicide Terrorism*, MA Thesis, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., ii-35.

ROSE, JACQUELINE (2004): "Deadly Embrace," *London Review of Books*, 26(21), available at: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n21/jacqueline-rose/deadly-embrace>, Consulted: 14-07-2013.

RT NEWS (2011): "To die for... Failed female suicide bomber speaks out," *RT News*, available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPLCtXAlIIM>, Consulted: 25-08-2013.

SAHEL, BASEL (2005): "Palestinian Suicide Attacks Revisited: A Critique of Current Wisdom," *Peace Magazine*, April/June, available at: <http://peacemagazine.org/archive/v21n2p19.htm>, Consulted: 01-04-2013.

SCHEP, DENNIS (2012): "The Limits of Performativity: A Critique of Hegemony in Gender Theory," *Hypatia*, 27(4), 864-880.

SCHWEITZER, YORAM (ed.) (2006): "Female Suicide Bombers: Dying for Equality?," *Memorandum*, n°84.

— (2008): "Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers: Virtuous Heroines or Damaged Goods?" *The Institute for National Security Studies*, Tel Aviv University, 1-20, available at: [http://cdn.www.inss.org.il/reblazecdn.net/upload/\(FILE\)1300713843.pdf](http://cdn.www.inss.org.il/reblazecdn.net/upload/(FILE)1300713843.pdf), Consulted: 05-05-2013.

SHARONI, SIMONA (2001): "Rethinking Women's Struggles in Israel-Palestine and in the North of Ireland," in Caroline O.N. Moser & Fiona C. Clark (eds.): *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors: Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, London & New York, Zed Books, 85-98.

SHCHEBLANOVA, VERONIKA & ELENA YARSKAYA-SMIROVA (2009): "Explanation of Female Terrorism. Discourses about Chechen Terrorists in the Russian Mass Media: "Easy Girls," "Coarse Women" or Fighters?" in Eifler, Christine & Ruth Seifert: *Gender Dynamics and Post-conflict Reconstruction*, Germany, Peter Lang, 245-268.

SHINKO, ROSEMARY E. (2012): "Theorizing Embodied Resistance Practices in International Relations," International Relations Research in Progress Seminar Series, available at: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=theorizing-embodied-resistance-practices-in-international-relationsedited.pdf&site=12>, Consulted: 15-08-2013.

SIP (2009): "Todavía en busca de la Paz – 1984-2009: XXV Aniversario," *Fundación Seminario de Investigación para la Paz*, Colección Actas, 78, Serie 'Estudios para la paz', 24, Zaragoza, Gobierno de Aragón.

SIPRI (2012): "SIPRI YEARBOOK 2012: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security – Resumen en Español," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, 1-25, available at: <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2012/files/SIPRIYB12SummaryES.pdf>, Consulted: 04-02-2013.

SJOBERG, LAURA & CARON E. GENTRY (2007): *Mothers, Monster, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*, London & New York, Zed Books.

— (2008): "Profiling Terror: Gender, Strategic Logic, and Emotion in the Study of the Suicide Terrorism," *Austrian Journal of Political Science*, 2008(2), 181-196.

— (2008a): "Reduced to Bad Sex: Narratives of Violent Women from the Bible to the War on Terror," *International Relations*, 22(1), 5-23.

SJOBERG, LAURA, GRACE D. COOKE & STACY REITER NEAL (2011): "Introduction," in Sjoberg, Laura & Caron E. Gentry (eds.): *Women, Gender, and Terrorism*, Athens & London, University of Georgia Press, 1-25.

SPECKHARD, ANNE & KHAPTA AKHMEDOVA (2006): "Black Widows: The Chechen Female Suicide Terrorists," *Institute for National Security Studies*, Tel Aviv, Israel, 63-80.

SPIVAK, GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY (2004): "Terror: A Speech after 9-11," *Boundary 2*, 31(2), 81-111.

STACK O'CONNOR, ALISA (2011): "Zombies versus Black Widows: Women as Propaganda in the Chechen Conflict," in Sjoberg, Laura & Caron E. Gentry (eds.): *Women, Gender, and Terrorism*, Athens & London, University of Georgia Press, 83-95.

STANDISH, KATERINA (2008): "Human Security and Gender: Female Suicide Bombers in Palestine and Chechnya," *The Peace & Conflict Review*, 1(2), available at: <http://www.review.upeace.org/index.cfm?opcion=0&ejemplar=13&entrada=73>, Consulted: 27-04-2013.

STONE, JENNIE & KATHERINE PATTILLO (2011): "Al-Qaeda's Use of Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq: A Case Study" in Sjoberg, Laura & Caron E. Gentry (eds.): *Women, Gender, and Terrorism*, Athens & London, University of Georgia Press, 159-175.

STREUNING, FELIX (2010): "To Stop Suicide Bombing We Must Focus on the Devalued Little Muslim Girl," *Family Security Matters*, available at: http://www.familysecuritymatters.org/publications/id.7070/pub_detail.asp, Consulted: 22-05-2013.

SYLVESTER, CHRISTINE & SWATI PARASHAR (2009): "The Contemporary 'Mahabharata' and the many 'Draupadis': Bringing Gender to Critical Terrorism Studies," in Jackson, Richard, Marie Breen Smyth & Jeroen Gunning (eds.): *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, London & New York, Routledge, 178-193.

SZALKAI, KINGA (2012): "The Failure of Female Empowerment through Suicide Terrorism in Palestine," *E-International Relations*, available at: <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/07/11/the-failure-of-female-empowerment-through-suicide-terrorism-in-palestine/>, Consulted: 25-04-2013.

TAHIR-UL-QADRI, SHAYKH-UL-ISLAM DR. MUHAMMAD (2010): *Fatwa on Suicide Bombings and Terrorism*, London, Minhaj Publications.

THE GUARDIAN (2001): "I made the ring from a bullet and the pin of a hand grenade," *The Guardian*, available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/jan/26/israel>, Consulted: 05-06-2013.

TILLY, CHARLES (2004): "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists," *Sociological Theory*, 22(1), 5-13.

— (2005): "Terror as Strategy and Relational Process," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 46(1-2), 12-32.

TOLES PATKIN, TERRI (2004): "Explosive Baggage: Female Palestinian Suicide Bombers and the Rhetoric of Emotion," *Women and Language*, 27(2): 79-88.

TOROS, HARMONIE & JEROEN GUNNING (2009): "Exploring a Critical Theory Approach to Terrorism Studies," in Jackson, Richard, Marie Breen Smyth & Jeroen Gunning (eds.): *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, London & New York, Routledge, 87-108.

UJI (2013): "Cátedra UNESCO de Filosofía para la Paz," *Máster Universitario Internacional en Estudios de Paz, Conflictos y Desarrollo*, available at: http://www.epd.uji.es/web/es/institucional_catedra.html, Consulted: 28-03-2013.

UN (2010): "Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women," *United Nations*, Resolution 2010/6, available at: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2010/res%202010-6.pdf>, Consulted: 24-08-2013.

UNESCO (2006): *UNESCO Chairs and Unitwin Networks – Directory*, Fifth Edition, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

VICTOR, BARBARA (2003): *Army of Roses: Inside the World of Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers*, USA, Rodale.

VON KNOP, KATHARINA (2007): "The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30(5), 397-414.

WEST, JESSICA (2005): "Feminist IR and the Case of the 'Black Widows': Reproducing Gendered Divisions," *Innovations: A Journal of Politics*, vol. 5, 1-16.

WILCOX, LAUREN (2009): "Body Counts: The Politics of Embodiment in Precision Warfare," *Political Theory Colloquium*, available at: <http://fr.scribd.com/doc/46307637/Body-Counts-Theory-Colloquium-1>, Consulted: 12-08-2013.

WILCOX, LAUREN (2013): "Explosive Bodies and Bounded States: Abjection and the Embodied Practice of Suicide Bombing," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 1-20.

YOUZIK, JULIA (2003): *Les fiancées d'Allah: Le drame des femmes kamikazes tchétones*, Paris, Presses de la Cité.

ZEDALIS, DEBRA Z. (2004): *Female Suicide Bombers*, MA Thesis, Master of Strategic Studies Degree, ii-33.

Appendices

I. Summary of FSB in North Caucasus, Israel-Palestine and Iraq

Region	Name of the FSB	#killed	#wounded	Organization	Date
Israel-Palestine	Wafa Idris	1	90-150	Al-Fatah	27-01-2002
Israel-Palestine	Dareen Abu-Aysheh	0	2-3	Al-Fatah	27-02-2002
Israel-Palestine	Ayat Akhras	2-3	20-23	Al-Fatah	29-03-2002
Israel-Palestine	Andaleeb Takafka	6	60-95	Al-Fatah PFLP	12-04-2002
Israel-Palestine	Hiba Azem Sai	3	30-50	Islamic Jihad	19-05-2003
Israel-Palestine	Hanadi Tayseer Jaradat	19-21	48-61	Islamic Jihad	04-10-2003
Israel-Palestine	Reem Riyashi	4	12	Hamas	14-01-2004
Israel-Palestine	Mirvat Ma'sud	0	1	Islamic Jihad	06-11-2006
Israel-Palestine	Fatima Omar Mahmud Al-Najar	0	2-5	Hamas	23-11-2006
Russia Chechnya	Luiza Magamadova & Khava Barayeva	2	5	Chechen Separatists	07-06-2000
Russia Chechnya	Mareta Duduyeva	N/A	N/A	Chechen Separatists	?-12-2000
Russia Chechnya	Elza Glazueva	1	3	Chechen Separatists	29-11-2001
Russia Chechnya	Zarema Inarkaeva	23	17	Chechen Separatists	05-02-2002
Russia Chechnya	19 women & 21 men	129	644	Chechen Separatists	23-10-2002 to

					26-10-2002
Russia Chechnya	Alina Tumrieva (with 2 other men)	83	60-200	Chechen Separatists	27-12-2002
Russia Chechnya	Names unknown (2 men, 1 woman)	40-41	200	Chechen Separatists	12-05-2003
Russia Chechnya	Shahidat Shahbulatova & Zulay Abdurzakova	18	145	Chechen Separatists	14-05-2003
Russia Chechnya	Lida Khildehoroeva	17	16	Chechen Separatists	05-06-2003
Russia Chechnya	Zakir Abdulazimov (with 1 man)	6	38	Chechen Separatists	20-06-2003
Russia Chechnya	Zulikhan Elihadjieva & Mariam Sharapova	14	60	Chechen Separatists	05-07-2003
Russia Chechnya	Zarema Mujikhoeva (alive)	1	0	Chechen Separatists	11-07-2003
Russia Chechnya	Mariam Tashukhadjieva	1	0	Unknown Group	27-07-2003
Russia Chechnya	Unknown	6	14	Chechen Separatists	09-12-2003
Russia Chechnya	Unknown names, 3 women & 1 man	41	≈150	Chechen Separatists	05-12-2003
Russia Chechnya	Sazita Jebirhanova	43	0	Chechen Separatists	25-08-2004
Russia Chechnya	Aminat Nogaeva	42	0	Chechen Separatists	25-08-2004
Russia Chechnya	Unknown	10	33	Chechen Separatists	31-08-2004
Russia	Roza Nogaeva	330	470	Chechen	01-09-2004

Chechnya	& Mariam Tuburova (with 30 other men)			Separatists	to 03-09-2004
Russia Chechnya	Unknown	0	0	Unknown	?-05-2005
Russia Chechnya	Unknown (2 women)	0	0	Unknown	?-05-2005
Russia Chechnya	Unknown	0	0	Unknown	?-07-2005
Russia Chechnya	Shamil Saltakhanov (with 1 man)	4-5	1-3	Chechen Separatists	21-08-2009
Russia Chechnya	Petia Dementova	1-2	1-8	Unknown Group	16-09-2009
Russia Dagestan	Unknown	0	4-5	Unknown	23-10-2007
Russia Dagestan	Vitaly Razdobudko (with 1 man)	3	27	Unknown	15-02-2011
Russia Dagestan	Djennet Abdurakhmanov & Marja Ustarjanova	39	72	Insurgency group from North Caucasus Emirates	29-03-2010
Russia Dagestan	Unknown	0	18	Unknown	25-05-2013
Iraq	Nusha Mujalli Munayfir al-Shammari & Waddad Jamil Jasim Al-Dulaymi	3	2	Unknown	04-04-2003
Iraq	Unknown	50-55	N/A	Unknown	10-02-2004
Iraq	Unknown	5-6	30-53	Al-Qaeda in Iraq	28-09-2005
Iraq	Muriel Degauque	0	1	Unknown	09-11-2005

Iraq	Unknown	27-43	32-72	Al-Qaeda in Iraq	06-12-2005
Iraq	Unknown	1	30-39	Unknown	30-01-2006
Iraq	Unknown	4	10	Unknown	25-11-2006
Iraq	Unknown	42	30-55	Unknown	25-02-2007
Iraq	Unknown	14-17	20-33	Unknown	04-11-2007
Iraq	Unknown	2-7	0-10	Unknown	23-07-2007
Iraq	Suheila Shlet	15	35	Sunni Group against Al-Qaeda	07-12-2007
Iraq	Unknown	0	6-7	Unknown	31-12-2007
Iraq	Unknown	8	7-15	Unknown	16-01-2008
Iraq	Unknown (2 women)	72	150	Unknown	01-02-2008
Iraq	Unknown	0-3	2-5	Unknown	17-02-2008
Iraq	Unknown	4	0	Unknown	10-03-2008
Iraq	Unknown	50	65-73	Unknown	17-03-2008
Iraq	Unknown	4-5	4-15	Unknown	19-03-2008
Iraq	Unknown	3	3-4	Unknown	21-04-2008
Iraq	Unknown	6-18	10-12	Unknown	22-04-2008
Iraq	Unknown	3	9-14	Unknown	27-04-2008
Iraq	Unknown	2	10	Unknown	29-04-2004
Iraq	Unknown	0-2	4-6	Unknown	29-04-2004
Iraq	Unknown (with 1 man)	35	65	Unknown	01-05-2008
Iraq	Unknown	1	15-16	Unknown	17-05-2008
Iraq	Unknown	0	0-5	Unknown	06-06-2008
Iraq	Unknown	2	25-40	Unknown	14-06-2008

Iraq	Wenza Ali Mutlaq	19	40	Unknown	22-06-2008
Iraq	Unknown	2	14	Unknown	07-07-2008
Iraq	Unknown	8	20-24	Unknown	24-07-2008
Iraq	Unknown (3 women)	28-32	70-102	Unknown	28-07-2008
Iraq	Unknown (under 18)	1	0-14	Unknown	11-08-2008
Iraq	Unknown	2	0-10	Unknown	12-08-2008
Iraq	Unknown	18-22	68-75	Unknown	14-08-2008
Iraq	Unknown	20-22	30-33	Unknown	15-09-2008
Iraq	Unknown (under 18)	9	21	Unknown	08-10-2008
Iraq	Unknown	3	7	Unknown	09-11-2008
Iraq	Unknown (2 women under 18)	4	18	Al-Qaeda en Iraq	10-11-2008
Iraq	Unknown	38	65-79	Unknown	04-01-2009
Iraq	Unknown	35	84	Al-Qaeda en Iraq	13-02-2009
Iraq	Unknown	28	50-52	Unknown	23-04-2009
Iraq	Unknown (2 women)	30-71	100-125	Unknown	24-04-2009
Iraq	Unknown	41	106	Unknown	01-02-2010
Iraq	Unknown	6	35	Unknown	04-07-2010

*This list is by no means exhaustive. It is a guiding list for the reader since much of the information regarding each event is not easy to corroborate. Above all, the information for Iraq and Dagestan are the most difficult to get. The recent information about FSB since 2011 is also difficult to get. Please be aware of this while reading. Above all, the information for Iraq and Dagestan are the most difficult to get.

**Sources:

-CPOST (2013): "Suicide Attack Database," *The Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism*, available at: <http://cpost.uchicago.edu>, Consulted: 25-08-2013.

-SPECKHARD, ANNE & KHAPTA AKHMEDOVA (2006): "The Making of a Martyr: Chechen Suicide Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29(5), 432-435.

-MARTÍNEZ VARELA, ESTEFANÍA (2010): "El fenómeno de la mujer terrorista suicida, [Bachelor Thesis], Madrid, Instituto Universitario General Gutiérrez Mellado.

II. Epistemological shift

Epistemological shift from an objective attitude towards a performative attitude
Description of our daily experience from communicational phenomenology

Objective Attitude	Performative Attitude
Objectivity	Intersubjectivity
Observer's perspective	Participant's perspective
Subject-object relationship	Relationship between subjects
Refer to facts	Based on what "we do" to one another
Neutrality with respect to values	Oriented towards values
Without assuming commitment	Commitment for the what you do and what you value
Not subject to responsibility	Subject to accountability
Consciousness paradigm	Communication paradigm
It pretends to be realist but it idealizes a mathematic-experimental view	It reconstructs human possibilities (competencies)

*This is a personal translation of the Spanish version that can be found in the following article: MARTÍNEZ GUZMÁN, VICENT (2005): "La Filosofía para la Paz como racionalidad práctica", *Investigaciones fenomenológicas*, n° 4, 91-92.

III. Picture: Reem Riyashi



*Source: *Your Daily Muslim*: <http://yourdailymuslim.com/2013/01/16/your-daily-muslim-reem-riyashi/reem-riyashi/>, Consulted: 25-08-2013.