

# Suicide bombers' motivations are studied

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A British scientist says the view that suicide bombers are brainwashed, religious fanatics vulnerable through poverty and youth is not accurate.

University of Nottingham researcher David Stevens argues that while religion plays a central role -- there are few instances of non-religiously motivated suicide attacks -- the suicide bomber is also driven on another level by a rational thought process. That is the desire to be part of a group that engenders strength and solidarity from strictness, and encourages members to submit totally to the collective aims of the group.

"Seen in this light, suicide bombing is explicable in terms of rationally motivated actions, and not in terms of theological and/or irrational motives," said Stevens.

But, he noted, suicide bombing is very rare.

"Rare, that is, when it is remembered that extreme religious groups make up only a tiny fraction of religious groups as a whole, and 99.99 percent of those groups are, in fact, peaceable," he said.

Statistically, finding one or two people willing to make such a sacrifice is incredibly rare, he added.

"However, given the nature of suicide bombing, it only takes one or two."

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