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Overview

• Background
• Theory & Hypothesis
• Data
• Analysis
• Results
• Conclusion
• Future Directions
Background: Competing Explanations

• Since the mid 1960s many theoretical explanations for terrorism have been advanced:

  - Religion
  - Poverty
  - Demographic composition
  - Insanity
Background (cont.): Sageman vs. Hoffman

• More recently research has focused on understanding group formation & violence among Arab terrorists.

• Recent debate
  - Sageman vs. Hoffman: whether terrorist groups are more hierarchically organized or comprised of flatly distributed social networks.

• Debate requires theory testing to move forward.
Background: The “Bunch of Guys” Theory In Brief


- A group based social psychological processes theory of terrorism. Contains four core steps arranged in a temporal order.
Background: The “Bunch of Guys”
Theory In Brief

1. Alienation
2. Homophilic Association
3. Closed Society
4. Jihad Membership & Violence
Research Questions

- **Q1**: Are indicators of the “Bunch of Guys” theory related to terrorist acts?

- **Q2**: Do indicators of the “Bunch of Guys” theory provide more explanatory power than alternative explanations?
Data: The Sageman Terrorism Database

• A convenience sample developed to define the individual characteristics and relationship structure of members of the global salafi jihad.

• Inclusion criteria:
  - Members of “islamist” organizations
  - Stated goal of targeting foreign governments and pursuance of salafi objectives, n = 366 males.
Data (cont.)

• For example...

Usama Bin Laden
Adam Yahiye Gadahn
Abdelkarim Hussein Mohamed Al-Nasser
Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah
Ayman Al-Zawahiri
Ali Atwa
Anas Al-Libi
Fazul Abdullah Mohammed
Hasan Izz-Al-Din
Data Collection

• Assembled by Sageman Consulting, LLC, the data was abstracted from a combination of sources:
  - Reviews of legal transcripts & gov docs
  - News reports
  - Personal interviews with key experts
  - Other sources.
Analysis

- Descriptive one and two way tables.
- Descriptive logistic regressions.
- All calculations done in SAS version 9.0.
Analysis Operationalization

• Outcome:
  - *Any participation in terrorist operations*, 1 or 0.

• Predictors:

  Alternative Explanations:
  - Demographics, religiosity and economic disadvantage: marital status, age, religiosity, madrassa attendance and unskilled labor, low socioeconomic status and less than high school education (all 1, 0).

  Sageman's “Bunch of Guys”:
  - *Alienation*: Living as an expatriate (1 vs. 0)
  - *Homophilic association*: Pre-jihad clique membership (1 if in a four or more person clique)
  - *Closed society*: Any family in Jihad (1 vs. 0).
Table 1: Percent Participating in Terrorist Operations*

*Data Source: Sageman Terrorism Database. Figures calculated using SAS v9.0.
Table 2: “Bunch of Guys” by Pct. Engaged in One or More Terrorist Operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Bunch of Guys” Measures</th>
<th>Percent Engaging In One or More Operations*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expatriate</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-jihad Clique Membership</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Family in Jihad</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data Source: Sageman Terrorism Database. Figures shown are column percentages. Figures calculated using SAS v9.0 Chi-square test of independence. NS = Not significantly different.
Table 3: Comparative Multivariate Models Showing Impact Of Covariates on Terrorist Operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covariates</th>
<th>Alternative Explanations</th>
<th>Alternatives and “Bunch of Guys”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bunch of Guys</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expatriate</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.303*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-jihad clique membership</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Family in Jihad</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1.189</td>
<td>1.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.986</td>
<td>0.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religiosity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Madrassa</td>
<td>0.056**</td>
<td>0.063**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Background</td>
<td>5.693*</td>
<td>5.800*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Disadvantage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled Labor</td>
<td>0.323*</td>
<td>0.369*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low SES</td>
<td>1.985</td>
<td>1.689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than HS Ed</td>
<td>2.103</td>
<td>1.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pseudo R Square</strong></td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Log Likelihood</strong></td>
<td>194.765</td>
<td>187.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model n =</strong></td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data Source: Sageman Terrorism Database.  *p.<.05 ** p<.01. Figures calculated using SAS v9.0.
Results

Q1: Are “Bunch of Guys” indicators related to terrorist acts?

A1: No.
- Only one of the three indicators is statistically significant, but in an unexpected direction (expatriate, OR = .330, p < .05).
Q2: Do indicators of “Bunch of Guys” theory provide more explanatory power than alternatives?

A2: No.
- “Bunch of Guys” variables fail to substantially improve the fit of the model, (pseudo r-squared .100 vs., .130).
- Results are similar when specified using linear, ordinal logistic and multinomial modeling methods.
Conclusions

1. “Bunch of Guys” DOES NOT APPEAR substantially related to terrorist operations.

2. Results contradict previous research, but further study is needed.
   - Similar ideas are strongly supported, examples
     - Sutherland’s differential association
     - Bandera's social learning.
Limitations

- **Small Ns.** Models have only 214 cases, possibly not enough power to pick up weak relationships.

- **Lack of Psychological Measures:** Human relationships are dynamic. However, most variables in the STDB are static & don’t measure psychology.

- **Fuzzy Boundaries:** Data may not fully capture the extent of the Al-Qaeda and affiliated networks, boundaries of the jihadi network are unclear.
Policy & Future Directions

• Policy recommendations?
  - None at this time, lack of support too preliminary.

• Authors currently working on replicating these findings using an updated version of the data.
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