BYSTANDER EFFECT AND RELIGIOUS GROUP AFFILIATION: TERRORISM AND THE DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract

The collective nature of group affiliation may inhibit an individual from exhibiting prosocial behavior regarding acts of religiously-motivated terror. This study's purpose was to investigate the nature of bystander intervention as it relates to religious group affiliation. Darley and Latane's bystander effect theory provided the theoretical framework for this study. The research questions examined the impact of religious group affiliation and group size on the dependent variables of civic moral disengagement (CMD) and commitment to the war on terror (CWT). Three validated survey instruments were administered to a random participant pool of 206 respondents. An ANCOVA and Spearman’s rho correlation were employed to address the research questions. Findings revealed that neither religious group affiliation nor group size significantly predicts either CWT or CMD after controlling for the degree of religious commitment. Further research should test alternative theories associated with leadership and group dynamics. Positive social change is advanced by acknowledging that bystanders to acts of terrorism may not be influenced by factors such as group affiliation or size of religious group affiliations. These findings underscore the complexity of the relationship between behavior and religious affiliation. Policy makers and future researchers may benefit by redirecting their focus for prevention and intervention toward influences such as the motivational dynamic between religious leaders and their followers.

Keywords: Bystander Effect, Bystander Intervention, Terrorism, Religious Conflict

Introduction

Human conflict is composed of a variety of interrelated components generally set within an environment of competition for resources or power. In terms of religiously motivated conflict, these dynamic forces take a global stage, incorporate the collective experiences and passions of generations, and pressure millions of bystanders to take notice and engage the conflict. Religious terrorism is both the most prevalent and deadly form of terrorism (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2013). Terrorism remains a tactic that generates fear and elicits a response from bystanders. Therefore, the role of the bystander is not simply an important element but instead it holds an integral position within the dynamics of terrorism itself. The role of the bystander and their degree of participation remain determining factors in the trajectory of future action (Staub, 2013a). The choice to take an active or passive stance in the face of terrorism may either mitigate or perpetuate the violence associated with religious conflict (Staub, 2013a). This study investigated the relationship between religious group affiliation and the variables associated with civic moral disengagement and perceptions regarding the war on terror.

Active and passive bystandership, or the degree of passivity that an observer exhibits, can be seen in human behavior during times of large scale human conflict (Staub, 2013b). Staub
(2013b) has shown that this phenomenon exists in global as well as domestic conflicts. Staub stated that an individual might demonstrate a diversion of responsibility, which would diffuse the individual’s perceived role in preventing or mitigating the conflict. This diversion could be projected onto the perpetrator themselves or other bystanders that witness these acts. When bystanders choose to not act, the perpetrators of these actions become emboldened, and their power over the event is reaffirmed (Staub, 2013b). Therefore, the inaction of bystanders may in fact be an active component of the perpetuation of this conflict. The bystander effect theory presents the concept that as the number of bystanders increases the intensity of responsibility, diversion also increases (Darley & Latane, 1968; Latane & Darley, 1970).

Acts of terrorism place all the nations of the world and the people they govern under the umbrella of a knowledgeable bystander. Humans routinely see large nations and groups of people standing idly by during atrocious violence such as genocide and religiously motivated terrorism. Investigation into the dynamics of religious group affiliation and the degree of bystander intervention may provide opportunities for public policy design. Religious groups and their followers are powerful collective forces that can be channeled to mitigate acts of religiously motivated terrorism. The cultural and historical aspects of religious conflict span generations, and it is these religious followers who have the ability to alter the future trajectory of these relationships. Public policy must recognize the role of the religious followers and their collective responsibility. This could be through direct engagement with religious leaders, who have the ability to mobilize their followers. The religious bystanders of these conflicts have the power to confront, mobilize, engage, or disengage from overt acts of terrorism that spawn from the ideology of their group affiliation. A richer understanding of this dynamic will assist in the development of effective policy that capitalizes on the collective power of religious group affiliation and advances positive social change.

The following components of this chapter provide a comprehensive introduction to this study. The extreme violence associated with religiously motivated terror demands that research seek out not only reactions to, but also mitigating forces associated with the dynamics of terrorism. The problem statement and purpose of this study contain this essential aspect of conflict resolution. As a theoretical construct, the bystander effect theory was utilized in an attempt to understand the psychology associated with the role of the bystander in these global events. The survey instruments and the research questions were selected to triangulate the elements of religious commitment, moral responsibility, and investment in the war on terror.

**Background**

The murder of Kitty Genovese in 1964 spawned great interest into the aspect of bystander intervention and eventually led to the development of the bystander effect theory (Fischer et al., 2011). In the aftermath of this crime, there were allegations that 38 people had observed a violent murder and none of them intervened to prevent this woman’s death. Media exposure fueled public outrage and concern for the decay of society. Social scientists began to examine the psychological aspects of either active or passive intervention. Bystander effect theory developed with the assumption that people who have observed critical incidents were able to diffuse their own responsibility by placing communal blame on all bystanders (Darley & Latane, 1968; Latane & Darley, 1970). This early research also examined a variety of elements associated with group
dynamics and the influence this plays on the bystanders’ degree of situational intervention. These elements included such things as severity of the incident, sex of victim and bystander, and size of bystander group, among several other factors (Darley & Latane, 1968; Latane & Darley, 1970). Staub (2013b) expanded this research by further incorporating the concepts of active and passive bystandership. This expanded the theory by discussing the degree of active or passive participation within the role of bystander.

The events of September 11, 2001 encouraged extensive research into the field of terrorism. The abundance of empirical research that is now available provides insight into the nature and complexity of the terrorist phenomenon. However, this robust body of literature does not adequately address the nature and role of the bystander in the perpetuation of conflict. This gap provides an opportunity for future research into religious group affiliation as a mitigating force within the violent struggles of religious ideology. This study investigated the nature of religious group affiliation and its relationship to bystander intervention. It is at this intersection where opportunities to mitigate the cyclical forces of religious violence may be found.

**Research Questions and Hypothesis**

The central research questions this research addressed are provided below along with their corresponding null and alternative hypothesis.

1. Does religious group affiliation impact civic moral disengagement after controlling for the degree of religious commitment?
   
   **Null Hypothesis (H₀<sub>1</sub>):** Religious group affiliation does not significantly impact civic moral disengagement after controlling for the degree of religious commitment.  
   **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁<sub>1</sub>):** Religious group affiliation does significantly impact civic moral disengagement after controlling for the degree of religious commitment.

   Religious affiliation was used as the independent variable. This was a non-dichotomous variable that measured the participants’ religious affiliations as being Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Other Religious Faith, or Atheist. The Civic Moral Disengagement Scale (Caprara et al., 2009b) was used to assess the mitigation of moral consequences of harmful actions. This scale encompasses the eight mechanisms of moral disengagement, the totality of which was used as a dependent variable. These eight mechanisms include moral justification, euphemistic language, advantageous comparison, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, distorting consequences, attribution of blame, and dehumanization. The Civic Moral Disengagement Scale utilizes a 1 to 5 Likert scaling that ranges from *do not at all agree* to *completely agree*. The Religious Commitment Inventory (Worthington et al., 2003) was used to determine the degree of adherence to religious beliefs and values. This survey utilizes a 1 to 5 Likert scaling that ranges from *do not at all agree* to *completely agree*. The level of religious commitment was used as a covariate. The association tested was between the specific religious affiliation and the level of civic moral disengagement.

2. Does religious group affiliation impact commitment to the war on terror after controlling for the degree of religious commitment?

   **Null Hypothesis (H₀<sub>2</sub>):** Religious group affiliation does not significantly impact commitment to the war on terror after controlling for the degree of religious commitment.

   **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁<sub>2</sub>):** Religious group affiliation does significantly impact commitment to the war on terror after controlling for the degree of religious commitment.
Alternative Hypothesis ($H_{12}$): Religious group affiliation does significantly impact commitment to the war on terror after controlling for the degree of religious commitment.

Religious affiliation was used as the independent variable. This was a nondichotomous variable that measured the participant’s religious affiliations as being Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Other Religious Faith, or Atheist. The war on terror investment model (Agnew et al., 2007b) was used to measure support for the war on terror. This scale encompasses four elements, the totality of which was used as a dependent variable. These elements include satisfaction, alternatives, investments, and commitment to the war on terror. The war on terror investment model scale utilizes a 1 to 9 Likert scaling that ranges from do not at all agree to completely agree. The Religious Commitment Inventory – 10 (Worthington et al., 2003) was used to determine the degree of adherence to religious beliefs and values. This survey employs a 1 to 5 Likert scaling that ranges from do not at all agree to completely agree. The level of religious commitment was used as a covariate. The association tested was between the specific religious affiliation and the participant’s support for the war on terror.

3. Is there a relationship between group size of religious affiliation and civic moral disengagement?

Null Hypothesis ($H_{03}$): Group size of religious affiliation is not significantly related to civic moral disengagement. Alternative Hypothesis ($H_{13}$): Group size of religious affiliation is significantly related to civic moral disengagement.

Group size of religious affiliation was used as the independent variable. This was a variable that measured the size of the participant’s religious group affiliation. The bracketing of this group membership was as follows: 0, >100,100-499, 500-999, 1000-1999, 2000-9999, 10000+. The Civic Moral Disengagement Scale (Caprara et al., 2009b) was used to assess the mitigation of moral consequences of harmful actions. This scale encompassed the eight mechanisms of moral disengagement, the totality of which was used as a dependent variable. These eight mechanisms include moral justification, euphemistic language, advantageous comparison, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, distorting consequences, attribution of blame, and dehumanization. The Civic Moral Disengagement Scale CMDs employs a 1 to 5 Likert scaling that ranges from do not at all agree to completely agree. The Religious Commitment Inventory – 10 (Worthington et al., 2003) was used to determine the degree of adherence to religious beliefs and values. This survey utilizes a 1 to 5 Likert scaling that ranges from do not at all agree to completely agree. The association tested was between the group size of the participants’ religious affiliation and the level of civic moral disengagement.

4. Is there a relationship between group size of religious affiliation and commitment to the war on terror?

Null Hypothesis ($H_{04}$): Group size of religious affiliation is not significantly related to commitment to the war on terror. Alternative Hypothesis ($H_{14}$): Group size of religious affiliation is significantly related to commitment to the war on terror.

Group size of religious affiliation was used as the independent variable. This was a variable that measured the size of the participant’s religious group affiliation. The bracketing of this group membership was as follows: 0, >100,100-499, 500-999, 1000-1999, 2000-9999, 10000+. The war on terror investment model (Agnew et al., 2007b) was used to measure investment in the war on terror, which was a dependent variable in this study. This scale
measured the four elements of satisfaction, alternatives, investments, and commitment to the war on terror. The war on terror investment model scale employs a 1 to 9 Likert scaling that ranges from do not at all agree to completely agree. The Religious Commitment Inventory – 10 (Worthington et al., 2003) was used to determine the degree of adherence to religious beliefs and values. This survey uses a 1 to 5 Likert scaling that ranges from do not at all agree to completely agree. The association tested was between the group size of the participants’ religious affiliation and the participant’s support for the war on terror.

Theoretical Framework

The bystander effect theory (Latane & Darley, 1970) was incorporated into this study as the theoretical framework. This theory examines the psychosocial aspects of bystander intervention in situations where people need help (Latane & Darley, 1970). The theory postulates that when people are in smaller bystander groups, they have more of a tendency to intervene in a conflict situation than when they are part of a larger bystander group (Latane & Darley, 1970). Increases in group size may have the ability to magnify the individual tendency toward passive bystandership. This is believed to be the result of a diffusion of responsibility as the individual diverts this role toward the larger group (Darley & Latane, 1968; Latane & Darley, 1970). Further explanation of bystander effect theory and its origins are discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. This study investigated bystander intervention in relation to terrorism mediation through the environment of religious group affiliation.

This research was an exploratory investigation into the interaction of the individual within a larger group affiliation. Voluntary participants were used in order to ascertain whether or not a relationship exists between the degree of bystander intervention and the size of the religious organization to which they belong. Data were collected specifically regarding the participants’ level of civic moral disengagement and perceptions regarding the war on terror.

The bystander effect theory was tested by comparing the individual’s perception of their level of responsibility and the size of the religious organizations that they affiliate with. A parallel test was conducted to investigate the religious faith itself and the individuals’ perception of their level of responsibility. It was the aim of this research to identify potential relationships between an individual’s perception of responsibility in relation to the terrorist phenomenon and the religious group environments that they associate with. The identification of elements that contribute to prosocial intervention could aid in the mitigation of religiously motivated conflict.

Staub (2013b) defined the degree of bystandership as the actions of a bystander in a conflict situation where a reasonable person would believe that intervention is necessary. Terrorism is a global issue that permeates nationalistic boundaries but often adheres to pre-established religious traditions. The identification of motivating factors to encourage prosocial behaviors has a potential to lessen the prevalence of future conflicts.

Nature of the Study

The plan for this study was to conduct analytical research utilizing a quantitative method. The study investigated the relationship between religious group affiliation and the variables associated with civic moral disengagement and perceptions regarding the war on terror. A demographics questionnaire identified the participants’ gender, age bracket, religious affiliation, and size of
religious group affiliation. This research used three validated survey instruments: the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10; Worthington et al., 2003), the Civic Moral Disengagement Scale (Caprara et al., 2009b), and the war on terror investment model (Agnew et al., 2007b). These instruments measured the participants' level of religious commitment, level of civic moral disengagement, and perceptions regarding the war on terror. The data collected from the demographics questionnaire and the three survey instruments were coded and statistically evaluated to determine if a significant relationship exists between these variables.

The independent variables of religious affiliation and group size of religious affiliation were tested with the two dependent variables associated with moral disengagement and investment in the war on terror. The level of religious commitment was used as a covariate. Civic moral disengagement was used in this study as a dependent variable. The eight mechanisms of moral disengagement were each measured. These mechanisms include moral justification, euphemistic language, advantageous comparison, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, distorting consequences, attribution of blame, and dehumanization (Caprara et al., 2009a). The dependent variable of investment in the war on terror was also used. The elements that comprise the investment to the war on terror include satisfaction, alternatives, investments, and commitment to the war on terror. The demographics of gender and age were used as intervening variables.

Scope and Delimitations
The delimitations of this study primarily centered on the thought that in one way or another; the majority of the world’s populations are bystanders to global acts of religious based terrorism. The scope of this study could not account for all of the religious affiliations and numerous conflicts that occur throughout the world. The Abrahamic religions hold a near monopoly on religiously motivated terrorism (Ward & Sherlock, 2013). For this reason, the demographics survey used these three religions and provided “other” for all other religions. This provided perspectives from inside the Abrahamic traditions as well as external perspectives. The complexity of terrorism and the political manipulation of terminology related to terrorism create a confusing landscape. Individuals may support a group labeled as a terrorist while holding that others are criminals. The sampling for this study was conducted from the position of a western democratic society. This excluded some of the most passionate individuals engaged in these conflicts. It is these individuals who have the most to gain or lose as a result of the perpetuation of these conflict situations. At the same time, this included some of the most influential bystanders in the war on terror. The nature of a democratic system of government provides a mechanism for citizen participation. As a result or democratic processes, the actions of a nation are a reflection of the collective will of its citizenry. For those who choose not to participate in the democratic system, they instead assume a passive stance as seen in the concept of passive bystandership. The results of this study may be generalizable to a western democratic society but not necessarily on a society where freedoms are constrained.

Data Collection
The initial data collection began on May 21, 2014 when the survey instruments were placed on the Walden Participant Pool. Data collection using this service concluded on June 26th 2014.
After the initial 2 weeks of data collection, less than 10% of the needed surveys were completed. Due to the slow response rate, a modification to the original data collection plan was made. On June 6th, 2014, a request for change in procedures was sent to Walden University’s IRB. On June 20th, approval was secured by IRB to use the services of the company Survey Monkey to distribute 190 surveys. On June 24th, 2014, the surveys were distributed by Survey Monkey, and on June 26th, 2014, the data collection using this survey concluded.

The use of the Survey Monkey service provided a similar population to the originally anticipated population of Walden University’s Participant Pool. The demographics of Survey Monkey’s distribution pool are reflective of the population of the United States (Survey Monkey, 2014). According to Survey Monkey (2014), this reflection of the United States population is based on criteria such as age and gender distribution. This organization has the ability to further target more selective groups but aims at maintaining a pool of participants that is based off of the population of the United States (Survey Monkey, 2014). One factor of the demographics of these participants that needs to be acknowledged is their access to the Internet. According to Survey Monkey (2014), the respondents’ access to the Internet inherently skew the population toward the higher education and income levels of people within the United States. This may or may not be true. The distribution and accessibility to computer technology in the United States extends through all economic levels. This alleged skew from the overall population of the United States is similar to what would have been expected by solely using Walden University’s Participant Pool.

The population that is used by Survey Monkey can be narrowed depending on the needs of the study. The parameters for this study were set to accept only participants that were at least 18 years of age. Other than this criterion, there were no other targeting criteria used. All of these participants voluntarily took this survey and were not directly compensated for their time (Survey Monkey, 2014). There is a built in incentive structure, which provides a $.50 contribution to a charity of their choice (Survey Monkey, 2014). This cost was absorbed as a portion of the fee paid by the researcher to use this service.

At the completion of data collection, a total of 18 surveys were collected from the Walden Participant Pool and 200 from Survey Monkey for a total of 218 completed surveys. The data were cleaned through removal of 12 surveys that were found to have multiple answers chosen for the same question.

Results of the Study
The first two researched questions were tested using the statistical test analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). There are six assumptions when using ANCOVA as analysis. These assumptions include outliers, normality of dependent variables, homogeneity of variance, multicollinearity, and sensitivity to missing data (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). All of these assumptions were met in this study. The second two research questions use Spearman’s Rho, which has two assumptions. These are that the two variables used are ordinal, interval, or ratio and that these variables have a monotonic relationship (Field, 2013). Both of these assumptions have been met in this study.

The data analyzed included a total of 206 surveys from 88 males and 118 females. The age bracket of this sample included 50 between 18 and 29 years of age, 30 between 30 and 39
years of age, 47 between 40 and 49 years of age, 46 between 50 and 59 years of age, 17 between 60 and 69 years of age, and 16 who were 70+ years of age (see Figure 1).

There was an overrepresentation of Christian participants (69.9%) and an underrepresentation of both Jewish (.009%) and Muslims (.02%) The participants included five Muslims, 144 Christians, two Jewish, 33 Other, and 22 Atheists.

The size of religious group membership was well dispersed. This included 80 (group size of 0), 31 (group size <100), 29 (group size 100-499), 6 (group size 500-999), 6 (group size 1,000-1,999), 11 (group size 2,000-9,999), and 43 (group size 10,000+). Figure 3 displays the distribution by religious group size.

The age distribution of the survey participants was distributed relatively similar to the United States adult population. This country’s adult population consists of approximately 21.9% between the ages of 18 to 29, 25.8% between the ages of 30 to 34, 29.1% between the ages of 45 to 60, and 23.2% above age 60 (Survey Monkey, 2014). The religious group affiliation was also fairly representative of the United States where it is estimated that 77% identify themselves as Christian, 1.7% Jewish, and .6% Muslim (Newport, 2014). The results of group size are more subjective as they represent a perception from the survey participant themselves.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for age bracket and group size. The age bracket variable had a range from 1 to 6 with a mean of 2.99 and a standard deviation of 1.543. The group size variable had a range from 1 to 7 with a mean of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 2.382.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age bracket</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>1.543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group size</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2.382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>206</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this study are provided below. These results are organized by each of the four research questions. Tables detailing the results of these tests are provided.

**Research Question 1**

For Research Question 1 (Q1) the statistical test of ANCOVA was used. The independent variable of religious group affiliation (IV) was tested with the dependent variable of civic moral disengagement (DV). The relationship between these variables may be influenced by the degree of religious commitment that the participants have. Therefore, the degree of religious commitment was controlled during this test.

As shown in Table 2, the Levene’s test was not significant ($p>$.05). This means that the variances in the different experimental groups are not significantly different.
Table 2
Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1.652</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Dependent variable: civic moral disengagement. Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. Design: Intercept + Total Sum RCI + Group Affiliation

ANCOVA results indicate a non-significant main effect for religious group affiliation, $F(4,199)=.892$, $p=.470$, partial $\eta^2=.018$. The covariate of religious commitment did significantly influence the dependent variable, group affiliation, $F(1,199)=8.411$, $p=.004$, partial $\eta^2=.041$. The amount of variation accounted for by the model or $SS_M$ was calculated at 5919.960. The unexplained variance or $SS_R$ was 108800.362. The effect size was calculated using the Partial $\eta^2$ value of .052. Therefore, the null hypothesis $H_0$ cannot be rejected. These results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial $\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected model</td>
<td>5919.960</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1183.992</td>
<td>2.166</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>62606.680</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>62606.680</td>
<td>114.510</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious commitment</td>
<td>4598.778</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4598.778</td>
<td>8.411</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Affiliation</td>
<td>1949.877</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>487.469.892</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>108800.362</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>546.735</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Corrected total</td>
<td>114720.322</td>
<td>204</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .052$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .028$).

Research Question 2

For Research Question 2 (Q2), the statistical test of ANCOVA was used. The independent variable of religious group affiliation (IV) was tested with the dependent variable of investment in the war on terror (DV). The relationship between these variables may be influenced by the degree of religious commitment that the participants have. Therefore, the degree of religious commitment was controlled during this test.

As shown in the Table 4, the Levene’s test was not significant ($p>=.05$). This means that the variances in the different experimental groups are not significantly different.
Table 4
Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.257</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>0.288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Dependent variable: Investment in the War on Terror
Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + TotalSumRCI + GroupAffiliation

ANOVA results indicate a non significant main effect for religious group affiliation, $F(4,200)=.810, p=.810$, partial $\eta^2=.008$. The covariate of religious commitment did significantly influence the dependent variable, investment in the War on Terror, $F(1,200)=21.887, p=000$, partial $\eta^2=.099$. The amount of variation accounted for by the model or $SS_M$ was calculated at 14992.634. The unexplained variance or $SS_R$ was 116952.279. The effect size was calculated using the Partial $\eta^2$ value of .114. Therefore, the null hypothesis $H_0$ cannot be rejected. These results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects
Dependent variable: TotalSumWOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III $df$</th>
<th>Mean squares</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial $\eta^2$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected model</td>
<td>14992.634$^a$</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2998.527</td>
<td>5.128</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>46952.507</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46952.507</td>
<td>80.293</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious commitment</td>
<td>12798.620</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12798.620</td>
<td>21.887</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GroupAffiliation</td>
<td>931.207</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>232.802</td>
<td>.810</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>116952.279</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>584.761</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1154266.00</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>584.761</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected total</td>
<td>131944.913</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a. $R$ squared = .114 (Adjusted $R$ squared = .091).

Research Question 3
A correlation was conducted for research question 3 (Q3) using the statistical test of Spearman’s rho ($\rho$). The independent variable, group size of religious affiliation (IV) was tested with civic moral disengagement (DV). This test was not significant ($p=.491$). The null hypothesis ($H_0$) cannot be rejected. These results are displayed in Table 6.
Table 6
Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group Size</th>
<th>TotalSumCMD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sperman’s rho group size</td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2 tailed)</td>
<td>.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CivicMoral disengmt</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2 tailed)</td>
<td>.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 4
A correlation was conducted for research question 4 (Q4) using the statistical test of Spearman’s rho (ρ). The independent variable, group size of religious affiliation (IV) was tested with, dependent variable of commitment to the war on terror (DV). This test was not significant (p=.268). The null hypothesis (H₀⁴) cannot be rejected. These results are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7
Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group size</th>
<th>TotalSumWOT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sperman’s rho group size</td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2 tailed)</td>
<td>.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to the War on Terror</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2 tailed)</td>
<td>.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary
The purpose of this study was is to investigate the nature of bystander intervention as it relates to religious group affiliation within the context of terrorism. This was done by examining the relationship between religious group affiliation, civic moral disengagement, and commitment to the war on terror. Religiously motivated terrorism transcends national boundaries and often aligns itself within the boundaries of religious ideological traditions. Although the current trend in addressing terrorist acts is through political mechanisms, the role of the organized religions themselves are not as eagerly approached. The deep religious content for which these events pull inspiration and motivation may also be where the effective diffusion mechanisms exist.

The bystander effect theory makes observations that individuals may in fact diffuse their own responsibility onto the larger organization that they are affiliated with (Darley & Latane, 1968; Latane & Darley, 1970). The mobilization of religious followers can have large scale impacts on how these events are confronted. Ward and Sherlock (2013) presented substantial evidence that supports the relationship between religious group affiliation and the phenomenon of terrorism. However, this evidence focuses on the acts of violence itself and not the diffusion of...
violence by bystanders associated with these religious groups. Al Ramiah and Hewstone (2013) supported the strategy of increasing intergroup contact as a way in which to reduce conflict. Further understanding of individual behavior within groups can offer a foundation for which to build strategies that support peace. This knowledge can also be leveraged to nurture environments that repel tendencies toward intergroup conflict. The identification of elements associated with bystander intervention as they find themselves in religious group affiliation may present opportunities for conflict mitigation and response. This more holistic approach to understanding can be used to seek out more peaceful resolution of religiously motivated conflict.

This was an analytical research study that used a quantitative method. The study investigated the relationship between religious group affiliation and the variables associated with civic moral disengagement and perceptions regarding the war on terror. A demographics questionnaire was used to identify the participants’ gender, age bracket, religious affiliation, and size of religious group affiliation. This research also used three validated survey instruments: the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10; Worthington et al., 2003), the Civic Moral Disengagement Scale (Caprara et al., 2009b), and the war on terror investment model (Agnew et al., 2007b). A detailed summary of these survey instruments was presented in Chapter 3. These instruments measured the participants’ level of religious commitment, level of civic moral disengagement, and perceptions regarding the war on terror. The data collected from the demographics questionnaire and the three survey instruments were coded and statistically evaluated to determine if a significant relationship existed between these variables.

The independent variables of religious affiliation and group size of religious affiliation were tested with the two dependent variables associated with moral disengagement and investment in the war on terror. The level of religious commitment was used as a covariate. Civic moral disengagement was used in this study as a dependent variable. The dependent variable of investment in the war on terror was also used. The elements that comprise the investment to the war on terror include satisfaction, alternatives, investments, and commitment to the war on terror. The demographics of gender and age were both used as intervening variables.

This research asked four distinctly different questions. The first question asked if religious group affiliation impacted civic moral disengagement after controlling for the degree of religious commitment. The answer to this question was that there was no significant impact. The second research question asked if religious group affiliation impacted commitment to the war on terror after controlling for the degree of religious commitment. The answer to this question was also that there was no significant impact. The third question asked if a relationship exists between group size of religious affiliation and civic moral disengagement. This study found that no relationship exists between these variables. The final question asked if a relationship exists between group size of religious affiliation and commitment to the war on terror. For this question the answer was also that no relationship was found between these variable.

Four questions were asked in this study. After analyzing the data corresponding to the collected surveys, the following conclusions were made: Religious group affiliation does not significantly impact civic moral disengagement after controlling for the degree of religious commitment; religious group affiliation does not significantly impact commitment to the war on terror after controlling for the degree of religious commitment; group size of religious affiliation
is not significantly related to civic moral disengagement; and group size of religious affiliation is not significantly related to commitment to the war on terror.

These results have to be taken within the context of the study itself. The survey participants were nearly all, if not all, from the United States. There was also an overrepresentation of Christians, while Muslims and Jews were underrepresented in the sample population. Therefore, these results are heavily skewed toward a pool of western Christian culture. This element regarding Christian influence of western societies has been a point of contention between many terrorist groups such as al Qaeda (Charron, 2011) and al-Shabaab (Holseth, 2012). This narrow pool is not insignificant given the influence of Christianity within the United States. The boundaries of this study focused on religious group affiliation as an inhibitor of bystander intervention. The results of this study suggest that bystander effect does not play a significant role regarding religious group affiliation as it relates to terrorism. This conclusion tends to support the idea that religious group affiliation does not have any impact on bystander intervention within a western society such as the United States. This is significant in that religious affiliation remains a fulcrum where individuals can individually or collectively effect positive social change. Therefore, the individual should not be expected to independently mobilize in support of conflict mitigation. This mobilization would need the influence and guidance of the moral leadership within these religious groups.

This study began with the understanding that there would be limitations related to direct and indirect exposure to terrorist incidents. This would include such aspects as knowing people who were wounded or perished in an attack or being the target of discriminatory acts following a terrorist incident. A clear limitation was the inability to readily survey individuals who would be considered to live within the various war zones or in distant places throughout the world.

After reviewing the returned surveys, additional limitations became clear. The most obvious issue was the lack of diversity among the religious group representation. The vast majority of participants were of Christian (69.9%) faith with a very low representation of the Muslim (.02%) and Jewish (.009%) faiths. Another limitation that surfaced was the perception of group size. This can be seen as not adequately representing the population who is engaged in religious conflict associated with terrorism. Modern religiously motivated terrorism often involves struggles between the Muslim faith and western societies. Both the Muslim and Jewish faiths are not adequately represented in this study and therefore skew the results.

This study tested the bystander effect theory (Darley & Latane, 1968; Latane & Darley, 1970) on the variables of civic moral disengagement and commitment to the war on terror. The results of this study determined that religious group affiliation and group size of religious affiliation have no impact on these two variables. Further research should test alternative theories associated with group dynamics. The theory of groupthink (Janis, 1972) may be an avenue to explore. This theory centers on the decision making process of groups whereby poor decisions are collectively made in an effort to support the group itself (Janis, 1972). Pervasive arguments theory (Pruitt, 1971) also offers potential in understanding the decision making process within groups. This theory investigates the presentation of arguments to support group goals in an extreme way (Pruitt, 1971). The extremity of the arguments is used in a way to generate support from group members for their positions (Pruitt, 1971).
This study used preexisting validated survey instruments. Further research would benefit by the creation of a refined survey targeted specifically at a conflict situation whereby terrorist acts are likely. For instance, a survey could be designed that is specific to the Syrian conflict-taking place between Bashar al-Assad’s progovernment forces and the Syrian opposition. This investigation narrowed the scope of terrorism to religiously motivated terror, but further refinement could provide a richer understanding of the interaction of group dynamics and the phenomenon of terror.

Public policy is a mechanism that can be leveraged to address the issue of terrorism. However, the available literature supports the unwavering relationship between the faiths of the Abrahamic religions and the violent tactics used by terrorists. The doctrines of these religious traditions transcend the geographic boundaries of nation states and reach to all areas of the world. Therefore, public policy must be developed in a way that acknowledges and incorporates this reality. This would include the development of partnerships between governmental organizations and religious institutions. Public policy must more effectively engage religious leadership in order to address religious conflict such as terrorism. These two organizational types cannot effectively confront the challenges in isolation of one another. The bystander effect theory and potential connections to religious faith were tested in this study. It was determined that bystander effect does not play a significant role regarding religious group affiliation as it relates to terrorism. This supports the idea that religious affiliation does not impact bystander intervention.

The implications of this study center on the development of public policy in a way that effects positive social change. Cultivating an awareness of the complexity of bystander social dynamics can leverage positive social change. There is no easy way to stratify potential reactions based upon religious affiliation. The factors that influence the reactions of the individual regarding acts of terror thrive in a highly complex environment. It is likely that a host of factors play a role in the manifestation of individual response, both independently of one another as well as in aggregation. This is true even when the center of focus is placed on factors associated with the individual’s narrowly defined religious affiliation. It is difficult to place potential individual responses into status groups.

Conclusions
Human ideological conflict manifests itself within opposing groups of individuals during competition for land, power, and resources. The individual can gain strength, guidance, and material support through group affiliation. Religious doctrine adds to this dynamic and creates additional complexity. Human history shows that as these conflicts escalate the phenomenon of terrorism arises. Scholars of public policy must examine these dynamic forces that influence the emergence and responses to acts of terrorism. By researching these elements and how they relate to one another, policy makers can articulate their goals and capitalize on strategies that encourage reductions in conflict and the inevitable emergence of terrorist acts.

This study focused on bystander effect theory as a potential component of the conflict cycle of religiously motivated terrorism. As a result of this study, four determinations were made. Religious group affiliation does not significantly impact civic moral disengagement after controlling for the degree of religious commitment. Religious group affiliation does not significantly impact commitment to the war on terror after controlling for the degree of religious
commitment. Group size of religious affiliation is not significantly related to civic moral disengagement. Group size of religious affiliation is not significantly related to commitment to the war on terror. This does not demonstrate an exhaustive look into the potential relationship of bystander effect and religious group affiliation but does provide indication that there is no significant influence present. The lack of influence suggests that religious group affiliation may not be an inhibiting factor in regards to bystander intervention.

These findings can be of particular interest to policy makers by raising awareness of the complexities in attempting to stratify the potential reaction of the individual bystander. The individuals’ reactions may be influenced by numerous factors working independently and in conjunction with one another. This presents a highly dynamic environment that complicates the researchers’ ability to categorize potential responses.

References

Research Centre for Management and Social Studies


Appendix A: Tables

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics
Table 2. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variancesa for Research Q1
Table 3. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Research Q1
Table 4. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variancesa for Research Q2
Table 5. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variancesa for Research Q2
Table 6. Spearman's rho Correlation for Research Q3
Table 7. Spearman's rho Correlation for Research Q4