French politics and the emergence of homegrown jihadism : 2012-2016
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Follow up of our recent book on the French djihadist movement
Analysis based on the DYNAMOB project


DYNAMOB
Dynamiques
de mobilisation

Figure 2:
Dynamob timeline:

- V1 - V7: before 2015
- V8 - V11: between January and November 2015
- V12 - V13: since November 2015
The emergence of homegrown jihadism in France

- 03/2012: Mohammed Merah
- 05/2014: Mehdi Nemmouche
- 01/2015: Charlie Hebdo and Jewish supermaker Hyper Cacher
- 11/2015: Bataclan shooting
- 07/2016: Nice attack
- Summer 2016: Local attacks in Magnanville (couple of policemen), Saint Etienne du Rouvray (Catholic Priest)
- Several aborded plots: Thalys, Gay clubs, Churches
How does the threat of terrorism impact political attitudes and behavior in France?

- Attacks that were different in nature: (lonewolf attack, different techniques, different targets from mass shooting to bombing to targeted assassination).
- January 2015: dividing the french society by targeting specific groups.
- Fall 2015 and 2016: Mass shootings and suicide bombing, no specific targets or targets that are disapproved by a significant number of djihadist groups across the globe.
- Underlying issues in the french context: Immigration and xenophobia, violence in deprived neighborhoods, postcolonial issues, expression of faith (so called “islamophobia debate”).
Hypothesis: non linearity of the political impact of terrorism

There is no linear nor continuous impact of terrorism on French citizens attitudes and behavior.

- The general impact in changing through times as attacked are repeated while evolving in their nature.
- Specific subgroups may react in different ways.
Long term trends in attitudes towards muslims in France

Figure 3: EVS trends
A rise in authoritarianism after 2015?

- Threat should increase authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 2006)
- There may be some kind of “authoritarian dynamic” (Stenner, 2005)
- Yet first survey ran after the January attacks show a decrease in prejudices (Mayer, Tiberj, May 2015)
- Likely: different effects on different parts of the population
- Consequence: increased polarization by reinforcing existing positions
Dynamob: no significant impact on “traditionnal” authoritarianism

- Death Penalty (Cramer’s V 0.03 from v1 to v13)
- Immigration (Cramer’s V 0.04 from v1 to v13)
- French muslims are as french as anyone else (Cramer’s V 0.04 from v1 to v13)
Yet high *levels* in authoritarianism

- 30 % believe that French Muslims are *not* as French as anyone else
- 37 % support death penalty
- 60 % say there are too many migrants in the country
Who would you vote for if the presidential election were held today?

Declared voting intention for 2017 first round

- Charlie
- Bataclan

Time

Le Pen  Hollande  Sarkozy  nhleft  nsright
Combined results:

Figure 5: cumulative choices
General trends: gaps relative to the national front:

Figure 6: vote choice
Google trends of french internet users (90% market share)

Figure 7: Internet trends
Why should we care?

- Those trends are likely to shape the next presidential election.
- They are splitting up existing political parties that have to manage huge internal tensions.
- Strategic issues: how to reach to Muslim voters? Can it be done? Is it worth it?
- Long term vs short term impact of terrorism: France is entering a new era.
Recent evolution (summer 2016) in perspective

- Decline in support for the government (not doing enough, “weak on terror”)
- Seemingly uncorrelated to international issues (hawkish international policy by F. Hollande: Mali, Lybia, Syria)
- Terrorism mainly perceived as a domestic issue
- Consolidated vote for the far right yet no specific rise
- Issue evolution in the context of the economic crisis (security vs jobs)
To conclude

- Increase in support for National Front came *before* 2015 terror attacks
- Support for main candidates increased after the January 2015 attacks
- But has been declining since November 2015 attacks, voters are looking for alternatives
- Defiance against Hollande and Sarkozy does *not* translate into higher support for the National Front
- Increased saliency for security and cultural issue, yet the economy remain the most important factor
- Non-linearity of terrorism effects on attitudes: 2015-16 attacks were different in nature, had different impact
- Cumulative impact of different trends lead to consolidation in the FN electorate