

I recommend that the BBCSS's decadel survey put primary emphasis on research guided by practical theory. Most SBS research on Anti-American Extremism and Terrorism (AAET) is correlational, unguided by theorized causal mechanisms. Correlational research can yield only speculation as to the causes of, and solutions to, AAET, and therefore can be a dangerous guide for policymaking. In what follows, I develop this argument and identify the most promising theory for AAET that should guide academic and policy investment decision-making over the next decade.

There is a myriad of SBS research reporting correlations of various phenomena related with AAET. There is also a wide assortment of SBS research carried out by area experts. However, much of this research is strictly observational, unguided by theory. Typical correlational studies link AAET with developing nations that have states which are weak, failed, corrupt, autocratic, and repressive. Popular intuition leads many to conclude that these correlations are causal, with the policy implication that to combat AAET we should provide more economic assistance to developing nations to promote the capability of their states, the rule of law, human rights, and democracy. However, lacking rigorous theory, there is nothing in our research that precludes some other factor or condition that causes both AAET and weak, corrupt, and repressive states. For all we know, economic assistance and the promotion of democracy, rights, and the rule of law may even exacerbate AAET. As we will see below, this may in fact be happening.

As in most physical sciences, in the social sciences research is guided best by theorized causal mechanisms. In all sciences, we can have the strongest confidence in theorized causal mechanisms that tell us what we should observe about the world that must be true if the theory is true. If such predicted observations are novel, important, and corroborated, we have evidence for the causal mechanism. The most promising research in any field is guided the theory or theories that have the most corroborated evidence for them. In the area of Security Studies, the most promising theories must also yield practical policy implications.

In the area of AAET there is one theory that stands ahead of the others in its production of novel and important facts that have been corroborated: economic norms theory (Mousseau 2000; 2002/03; 2009; 2011; Meierrieks 2012; Boehmer and Daube 2013; Krieger and Meierrieks 2015). This theory draws on the well-established fact of two kinds of economic cultures in history: "contractualist" and "clientelist" (Mause 2000[1924]; Polanyi 1957[1944]).

Contractualist societies have advanced markets, characterized with extensive flows of "non-self-

enforcing” contracts (North 1990), meaning those where the commitment of one party does not coincide in time with the commitment of the other (see Table 1 in Mousseau 2016 for a complete list of nations with contractualist economies). Clientelist societies are characterized with weak markets: most transactions occur in personal relationships, usually in families linked with larger groups that have various clannish, tribal, ethnic, religious, class, political, or criminal identities.

Economic norms theory identifies contractualist societies as characteristically democratic with highly-capable rule of law states. This is because no one can automatically trust the commitments of strangers. Since most economic activity involves trusting strangers in contract, these societies have strong preferences for corrupt-free states that effectively enforce contracts and property rights with impartiality. To keep their states constrained towards these ends, the people in these societies demand democracy and the freedoms of speech and assembly (Mousseau 2000).

The states of clientelist societies, in contrast, are characteristically autocratic, weak, repressive, and corrupt. This is because most transactions occur in personal relationships linked with larger groups that have some militant capability. Feudal Europe was highly-clientelist, with protection obtained by pledging loyalty (tribute) to persons of higher rank. The pattern is similar in most developing nations today, with the exception that hierarchies are normally arranged not with the distribution of agricultural produce but with the distribution of state rents. This can explain why most states in the developing world are not only weak but also highly corrupt. If democracy exists it is unstable and illiberal, as majority coalitions of groups must repress minorities seeking access to state rents (Mousseau 2002/03).

How does the theory explain anti-American extremism and terror? A complete explanation for AAET should address four puzzles: 1) how a person can value murder as a political strategy; 2) how a person can choose to put themselves at extreme risk by supporting or engaging in terror; 3) how AAET varies over time and space; and 4) why the West is a target (Mousseau 2011).

I believe only economic norms theory offers an answer for all four puzzles. Starting with the first, clientelist culture is identified as a necessary pre-requisite for popular approval of terrorism. Many agree that economic norms are habit-forming and affect our values and world views (Simon 1955; North 1990). Terror cannot be an acceptable political strategy for anyone who values the presumption of innocence. This presumption is arguably rooted in contractualist

culture, where respect for individual rights and the rule of law are highly-internalized norms and values. The opposite is true in clientelist societies, where the norm is loyalty to collective groups that compete, zero-sum-like, over state-rents. Rather than the presumption of innocence, there is the presumption of guilt, as all members of out-groups are presumed guilty of the perceived crimes of their leaders. This clientelist presumption of collective guilt is arguably a necessary condition for popular approval of terror and genocide (Mousseau 2002/03; 2005; 2011).

It is one thing to value the murder of others: it is another to put oneself at risk by supporting it or engaging in it. To understand how a person can support and join dissident groups that adopt terrorist tactics, it is essential to grasp that in clientelist culture members of groups are loyal to group leaders, not their states. As such they are obligated to abide by the orders of group leaders to provide succor and join insurgencies, just as individuals in contractualist cultures are obligated to abide by the orders of state leaders to pay taxes and join the military.

In these ways clientelist economy and culture are arguably necessary pre-requisites for popular support for terror of others. This does not explain, however, why some developing societies are more at risk than others. To explain this, the theory draws on exogenous shocks. In clientelist economy groups form coalitions based on personal relationships of leaders, with hierarchies among them negotiated according to their capacities to accrue and pass on tribute. Changes in balances of power among groups destabilize the order, increasing the likelihood that some may perceive that more can be gained from fighting than from not fighting.

In the modern era exogenous shocks have been largely associated with war (e.g., Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq) and urbanization (e.g., Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan). With demographic transition, migrants from the countryside effectively exit the protections of their rural groups. Habituated to seek security in groups, the new urban dwellers desperately seek new ones. This gives rise to political entrepreneurs who compete over their loyalties. In this competition contenders offer not only economic succor but new identities and values. Winning identities tend to be those that promulgate convincing scapegoats for the desperate circumstances of the urban poor.

In Europe urbanization in the early twentieth century gave rise to communist and fascist identities and values; a generation later in Latin America urbanization gave rise to revolutionary communism. Today in the predominately-Muslim world urbanization has given rise to a religious, anti-modern, and anti-Western identity. The religious component likely emerged as a

result of the democratic nature of Sunni Islam. Since imams compete for followers, with urbanization imams realized incentives to fill the urban anomie with a religious identity. Anti-modernism and anti-Westernism likely emerged because the primary opposition to the urban poor and their quest for state rents usually came from ruling groups long entrenched in power. These groups had often long-ago usurped secular, modern, and Western images and life styles, so the new winning identities were those that countered these images with anti-modern and anti-Western ones.

Accordingly, when an imam preached that the crass materialism of urban life is a Westernization of their societies, or the result of a Western conspiracy to destroy Islam (meaning them), for many the message rang true. This can explain how a mutated in-group version of Islam—Islamism—could strike a chord in several large cities around the globe at the same time. It can explain too how Islamism took root among Muslim immigrants in the large cities of the West as well as the East: migrants from the countryside went not only to Cairo and Islamabad but also to Paris and London (Mousseau 2002/03; 2005; 2011).

In these ways, attacks on the West make strategic sense: they serve to bolster the claims of Islamists that the West is intent on destroying Islam, thus increasing demands for their protection. The logic is the same for criminal gangs: rob and burn businesses to increase demands for their protection. International terrorism is, in short, the continuation of domestic politics of developing economies across borders in the age of globalization.

If the theory is correct, the solution to AAET is clear and practical: create jobs in the markets of nations at risk. Individuals who can provide for their families are less desperate than those who cannot, and when they can provide for their families with jobs obtained in the equitable and impersonal marketplace they are free from having to pledge loyalty to group leaders. To make this happen, the contractualist nations need only help nations at risk achieve full-employment labor markets. They can open their markets to whatever exports are produced by private enterprises in nations at risk (even if we do not need them), and provide assistance for a guaranteed minimum wage (distributed with impartiality). It was jobs that explains the success of the Anbar Awakening in Iraq (and subsequent lack of jobs its failure), and jobs in the marketplace that will in time convert nations at risk to societies immune from AAET.

The evidence for the economic norms explanation for AAET is overwhelming. Muslim-majority nations did in fact experience above-average levels of urbanization in the last decades

of the twentieth century (Mousseau 2011:40). We now know that in the developing world it is urban, but not rural, poverty that fuels domestic and anti-U.S. terrorism (Mousseau 2011; Meierrieks 2012). We now know that contractualist societies are largely immune from anti-American extremism and popular support for groups that adopt terrorist tactics (Boehmer and Daube 2013; Krieger and Meierrieks 2015).

All of these crucial facts were predicted ex-ante (Mousseau 2002/03), and thus provide highly-corroborative evidence for the theory. Other ex-ante predictions include that contractualist nations, compared with clientelist ones, have higher levels of impersonal trust (Mousseau 2009:61); more capable states (Mousseau 2012:479); better records on human rights (Mousseau and Mousseau 2008); and are more likely to be democratic (Aytac, Mousseau, and Orsun 2016). Contractualist nations are also immune to the resource curse (ibid.); immune from civil war and insurgency (Mousseau 2012); and never fight each other (Mousseau 2009). No other explanation for AAET comes close to this level of corroboration, and no other explanation offers an account for all four puzzles of AAET.

If the theory here is correct, then the myriad of studies reporting correlations of AAET with poverty, weak states, corruption, and repression are also explained, since all of these factors are predicted consequences of clientelist economy. This means also that policy driven by these correlations will not reduce AAET: such policies may even make it worse. This is because economic assistance to clientelist states aimed at reducing poverty can destabilize nations by increasing the value of the prize being fought over (i.e., the state). In this way economic aid can actually worsen corruption and fuel insurgency and terror. It can also encourage repression, since any strengthening of the state increases its capacity to repress out-groups.

For these reasons, I recommend that the BBCSS's decadel survey put primary emphasis on research guided by theory, not speculations formed ex-post from correlations. I have shown how economic norms theory has a great deal of corroborative evidence for it (more than any other theory, but this could not be shown in five pages). It also explains the well-known correlations with AAET, appears to fully account for AAET, and yields practical policy implications. I am unaware of any society with a robust labor market that ever had popular support for terrorism of out-groups. As a guide to academic and policy investment decision-making over the next decade, I recommend that the BBCSS give economic norms theory its serious consideration.

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