**Working title**

The interconnection between dissatisfaction, anti-Americanism, and anti-modernism: A cross-national study

**Abstract**

The proposed study concerns possible interdependence between dissatisfaction, anti-Americanism, and anti-modernism from cross-national perspective. The first goal of the study is to find out whether it is possible to speak about anti-modernism as a universal phenomenon which has similar features in different parts of the world. Another aim of the research is to explore its relationships with dissatisfaction (subjective ill-being) and anti-Americanism. Therefore, the empirical part of the study should involve both factor analysis and path analysis of the cross-national data. Expected results of the study should provide answers to both questions: to what extent anti-modernism is a coherent global trend and which attitudes it is accompanied by.

**Keywords**

Modernization, world-system, ressentiment, anti-Americanism, subjective well-being

**Social Relevance and Research Question**

Governments in many developing countries in the world are now making modernization efforts but not all of them manage to succeed. Russia can be seen as an example here as "modernization" is not only a popular buzzword frequently used in political discussions but also an officially declared goal of Russian government. However, there's a consensus in Russian society that modernization process goes at least not as successful as expected. There are two explanations of such difficulties which are not contradictory. First one refers to people's traditionalist attitudes which hinder modernization process. Another emphasizes corruption among officials and ineffective state administration. Most of the ideas concerning problems with modernization in Russia and people's attitudes to it are summarized in the essay by Inozemtsev (2009). It is easy to assume that various developing and post-Communist countries in different parts of the world are facing similar problems, making anti-modernism an essential social and political topic.

Therefore, the proposed study focuses on anti-modernism as people's attitudes towards changes in different aspects of social life. During the research it is planned to answer the following research questions: *"Does anti-modernism represents a coherent worldview which is similar in different countries? How is it related to dissatisfaction and anti-Americanism?"*

**Anti-modernism: Literature Snapshot**

Surprisingly, in spite of the fact that contemporary literature on modernization is rather substantial, much less attention was given to the issue of anti-modernism. All the three aspects of the latter—namely institutionalized or non-institutionalized movements, ideologies and people's attitudes—are relatively understudied. There are two more or less plausible explanations why contemporary social sciences lacked much research on anti-modernism in last decades. First, according to the "end of history" concept popularized by Fukuyama

(1992), anti-modernism is doomed to historical defeat and gradual decline in support. Second, within the rational choice theory as formulated by Downs (1957), which is extremely influential in contemporary social sciences, it seems difficult to explain resistance to modernization and choice in favor of social backwardness.

Generally speaking, there are two essential independent parts of academic literature on anti-modernism. Historically, the attention of Western social scientists was focused on the far right parties and movements within the developed countries which are usually treated as antimodernists. Far right voters are often labeled as "losers of modernity" (Betz, 1993) and described as people afraid of rapid social changes in postindustrial societies. Being threatened by the economic and social processes of [post]modernization, they look for economic security and strong authority and thus wish to stop or even reverse the changes. Another feature which is closely associated with the far right is discontent, as protest is often considered to be a crucial reason of far right voting (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000). Finally, radical right ideologists tend to find scapegoats who are declared to be "the root of all evil," and this role is often granted to Jews.

Nowadays the most studied movement against modernization in the world is the phenomenon which can be called *Islamic fundamentalism*. Negative attitude towards modernization within Muslim communities which is seen as the Western influence represents one of the core ideas of fundamentalists (Denoeux, 2002). On the contrary, they insist on return to the purity of faith and reliance on established religious tradition. Large scale survey of Islamic countries showed that dissatisfaction in position of Muslims in contemporary world represents one of the key factors of their radicalization (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007). Unsurprisingly, hostility towards the nations which are found guilty in subordinate position of Muslims is an important part of such a worldview.

There are three similarities between the ideological patterns discussed above: resistance to social changes, dissatisfaction, and hostility. Furthermore, there are studies which tried to find some similarities, for instance, between positions towards the use of force among Islamic extremists and religious right in the U.S. (Henry et al., 2005). The goal of this study is to find out whether patterns of anti-modernism have common features in more and less developed countries as well as in Muslim and non-Muslim societies.

**Theoretical Bases and Hypotheses**

The proposed study is interdisciplinary as its hypotheses are based on several contributions which use approaches from different academic fields.

First, defining modernization I accept the classic definition given in the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences: *"Modernization is the current term for an old process—the process of social change whereby less developed societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies"* (Lerner et al., 1968). However, I intend to study modernization as complex phenomenon and thus follow Inglehart (1997) who sees it as a combination of economic, cultural, and political processes. In order to operationalise modernization, three crucial shifts in people's values can be underlined:

- in political sphere: more emphasis on democracy and political participation;

- in cultural sphere: decline of religious morals and traditionalism;

- in economic sphere: importance of self-realization instead of material reasons.

Gathering from this framework it is possible to formulate the first hypothesis of the proposed study: *Attitudes to modernization in different aspects are interconnected, so positions against changes in economy, culture, and/or politics can be seen as manifestations of general stance against modernization* (H1). On the other hand, it is possible that people in some countries tend to accept some modern (Western) values and reject others. For example,

abovementioned study by Esposito and Mogahed (2007) suggests that the majority of Muslims welcome democracy but would like to combine it with Islamic cultural traditions.

In the above cited work by Inglehart (1997) it is possible to find the proposed connection between subjective well-being and adherence to [post]modern values. There are also social psychological contributions which see antimodernization movement as an integrated system of social roots, psychological perceptions, and ideological stances. One of them is the concept of "staircase" developed by Moghaddam (2005). It is formulated in relation to a particular movement—Islamic fundamentalism—but I suggest that its implications are more general. Moghaddam states that subjective interpretation of individual's material conditions is the first stage of gradual radicalization. Many people who live in the developing countries feel themselves deprived in comparison to the citizens of developed countries, and substantial part of them perceive such a situation as the result of unfair policies adopted by the West. Psychological factors play a major role here, as subjective interpretation of material conditions is more important than the actual situation—this assumption is very close to the concept of subjective well-being as formulated by Inglehart (1997). Development of frustration is fostered by ineffective authoritarian governments, which hinder the way of fighting against the perceived injustice through social mobility and political participation— interestingly Inglehart and Welzel (2005) also state the relationship between democracy and happiness. Consequently, dissatisfaction leads to frustration, hostility towards the West—the U.S. in particular—and possible involvement into a radical movement.

Following this logic, I can outline another hypothesis of the study: *Dissatisfaction is the subjective interpretation of actual situation, and respondents' complaints about various aspects of life can be seen as its manifestations* (H2). However, it is also possible to assume that reported ill-being in different spheres is not interrelated, meaning that discontent is based

on reality rather than on psychological perception. Next hypothesis assumes that *there is positive relationship between dissatisfaction and anti-modernism* (H3).

An interesting logic connecting modernization, dissatisfaction, and hostility can be found in a historical analysis conducted by Greenfeld (1992). According to her argument, there is a specific form of nationalism formed within the countries which began modernization later than the leading ones. It is closely related to the phenomenon which Greenfeld calls *"ressentiment"* and defines as *"a psychological state resulting from envy and hatred and the impossibility of satisfying these feelings."* Such feelings are seen as a result of inability to close the gap in social development in the short term and the perception of own historical backwardness. Consequently, hostility which is an integral part of *ressentiment* is always directed against the leading modernized country or countries.

Taking into account that the U.S. represents a major global power nowadays, contemporary *ressentiment* is inevitably contains anti-Americanism. Therefore, if the above logic is true, *both general negative feelings towards the U.S. and opposition to certain American policies represent manifestations of individual's anti-Americanism* (H4). Alternative hypothesis is based on the assumption that general anti-Americanism and opposition to particular actions of the U.S. are two distinct phenomena. Related hypothesis suggests *positive relationship between dissatisfaction and anti-Americanism* (H5).

Very similar logic can be found in a famous story by Gellner (2006) on how citizens of the underdeveloped province (Ruritania) try to integrate into the wider society of modernized center (Megalomania). Their attempts fail as due to irremovable differences Ruritanians are not accepted by the native population of Megalomania. This failure according to Gellner will result in rise of Ruritanian nationalism and hostility towards Megalomanians. Applying Gellner's argument to the global situation as it is described by Wallerstein (1976), it

is possible to conclude that Ruritania is the developing periphery, while Megalomania represents the modernized core, mainly the West.

Therefore, finally, it can be hypothesized that *there is a positive relationship between anti-Americanism and anti-modernism* (H6).

**Model and Databases**

The model based on the theoretical background discussed above and the respective hypotheses is represented on Figure 1. According to it and to the goals of the proposed study, I need a rather complicated model which unites path and factor analyses. All three major study variables are to be operationalised as latent ones, which are manifested in answers for particular survey questions. Path analysis, in turn, is required to check assumed relationships between the latent variables. Possibly, it will be also necessary to compare the fit of various models in order to conclude which directions of statistical relationships are more plausible. Another important feature of the study is its cross-national character, and there are basically two ways of implementing it. First is multilevel analysis with individuals as the first level and countries as the second one, while another way is comparative analysis of several cases (countries).

There are several databases which can be used for the cross-national analysis of values and ideological preferences but gathering from the goals of the proposed study two of them seem to be the most suitable. First one is the World Values Survey (WVS) which includes a lot of indicators for modern/anti-modern values and subjective well-being. Wide collection of data and presence of various countries and cultural groups is another strong feature of WVS. However, it definitely lacks indicators of anti-Americanism. Good measures of it can be found in Pew Global Attitudes dataset for year 2007 which includes respondents from 47 countries, thus allowing for multilevel analysis. Finally, it will be necessary to choose the one dataset and possibly use proxies for the underrepresented measures.

**Steps of Analysis**

The first step of empirical work is planned to be the factor analysis which carries two important tasks. First one is to understand whether initial assumptions about major [latent] variables were right:

- opposition to modernization in different spheres is interconnected;

- dissatisfaction represents a phenomenon of subjective ill-being;

- anti-Americanism is a form of *ressentiment*.

Another task is to explore whether the weights of the factors are more or less similar within different countries or, in other words, whether these phenomena are universal or not. Second step is path analysis as such which necessary to support or reject hypotheses concerning relationships between dissatisfaction, anti-Americanism, and anti-modernism. Multilevel or comparative approach will also help to understand whether such statistical relationships are universal across countries and/or cultures.

Finally, I will make a conclusion about all the study hypotheses and respectively about level of found support for the theoretical assumptions.

**Plans till April 2011**

There are at least two books which I would like to read in nearest months. First one is "From Terrorist Point of View" by Fathali Moghaddam in which he further develops his ideas about the staircase concept. Second book is "Unmodern Men in Modern World" by Michael Mazarr in which addresses the concept of "war on modernity" in which, according to him, militant Islam is only one more actor.

Concerning statistical knowledge, I plan to follow the course on "R" which is an advanced statistical package allowing more complex analyses and more precise results. As for now I use "Mplus" which generally performs factor analysis on two or more levels but becomes more and more demanding as soon as models become more complicated.

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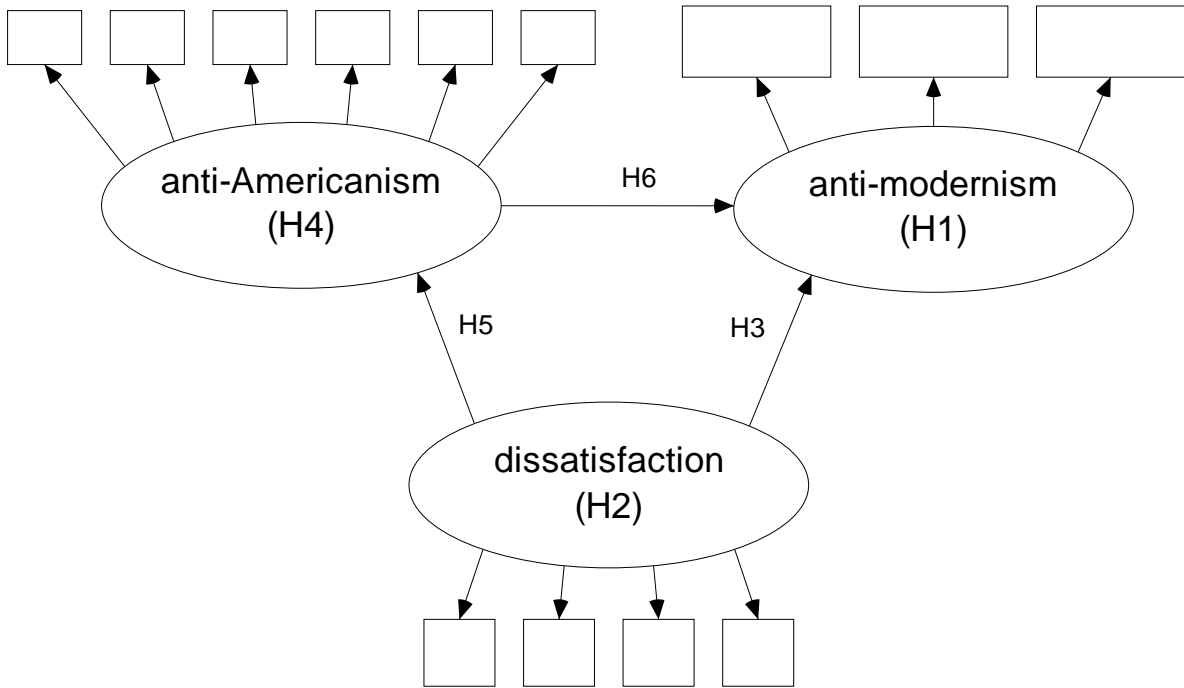
*Figure 1.* Proposed analytical model with hypotheses and major variables.