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How to Win Hearts and Minds? The Political Sociology of the Support for Suicide Bombing

Abstract

I address a central debate in the theory and practice of U.S. foreign policy, whether affection and popular approval trump fear and self-interest in the promotion of the security of U.S. soldiers in Iraq. Specifically, I assess whether affection, physical in-security, ontological insecurity, and hatred contributed to the alienation of ordinary Muslim people from the United States and the American people to the point of justifying suicide bombing attacks against Americans in Iraq. Methodologically, I employ Classification and Regression Tree (CART) models, a methodology that allows for a parsimonious identification of interactive and non-linear effects in the data. I find that disaffection towards the American people is the strongest predictor of the support for suicide bombing against Americans in Iraq. Fear for one's country and fear for one's identity as a Muslim believer are the second major sources of legitimization for suicide bombing, while anti-Semitism plays a marginal role in shaping the beliefs of those who support suicide bombing against Americans. These findings have implications for U.S. efforts to win hearts and minds in the Islamic world; they support the view of soft power advocates that is better to be loved than feared against the Machiavellian view that fear promotes respect and security.

A copy of the full paper is available to view here:

http://www.elecDEM.eu/events/title_109630_en.html

Background information

Giacomo Chiozza, completed his PhD at Duke University in 2004. He is an expert on public opinion and the study of attitudes towards U.S. power and the study of political leaders in conflict processes. He is the author of *Anti-Americanism and the American World Order* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009). His most recent book, *Leaders and International Conflict*, co-authored with H.E. Goemans, is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press. Before joining Vanderbilt University, he was a faculty member in the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley; and earlier, a post-doctoral fellow at the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University. In 2008-09 he served as a member of the American Political Science Association Presidential Task Force on U.S. Standing in World Politics. In addition to his books, Dr Chiozza has published in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *European Journal of International Relations*, *Journal of Peace Research* and *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (amongst others).

For further details on Giacomo Chiozza please visit:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/political-science/people/bios/?who=7>