

Re: Yet Another Roswell Thread

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- *From:* Ian Parker <ianparker2@xxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 18 Jul 2007 06:48:52 -0700
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On 16 Jul, 23:43, eina...@xxxxxxxx wrote:

Ian Parker wrote:

On 16 Jul, 14:20, eina...@xxxxxxxx wrote:

2) Whether ideology encourages or discourages innovation.

There is an additional factor, which may be even stronger. This is even relevant today. But according to research of poor peasants, and simple farming communities in Africa and elsewhere, it has been concluded that for people living close to bare subsistence levels, any attempt at a change is highly risky for them. As they have so little, they literally can't afford to try out a new thing if there is any risk of failure.

During ancient times most farming communities didn't have a large surplus, though as farming technology improved at a slow pace century after century the wealth of goods being produced by farming improved. That may explain why late stone age farming communities, and bronze age farming communities tended to be replaced rather than evolve.

One of the big changes during the industrial revolution has been the real growth of average wealth, and real increase in opportunities. That may mean also that innovation has become less risky. As we have more, we can afford to lose some without threat of starvation, we can more readily afford to take risks. That may conceivably be the single biggest cause of the change we are speaking about.

Old farming communities while better off than ancient ones, were still significantly poorer than a typical inhabitant of a modern industrial city. That may therefore have been a large reason for their relative much greater conservatism.

I could give a very technical reply to this. In Western societies we have endeavoured to minimise the risk to innovators whose innovations go wrong. I could talk about bankruptcy, discharge from bankruptcy,

Re: Yet Another Roswell Thread

limited liability, public limited liability all of which serve to reduce the risks to the individual of innovation.

There is I think a contradiction here. Societies in the past may have been reluctant to take the risks involved in innovation, but they were prepared to take the even bigger risks involved in war. I suppose élites go to war and subsistence farmers make economic progress. Still if you are an élite on the wrong side you could easily finish up in slavery if not worse.

I think though this does give some hint as to what we should do with third world countries. We need a sharing of risk. In fact Oxfam gives aid directly to farmers whereas government aid goes through the government where it faces a whole lot of corrupt officials.

Ian Parker wrote:

On 16 Jul, 14:20, eina...@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:
I think too we should divide innovation into different types.

- 1) Technological. This tends to be readily taken up.
- 2) Scientific likewise.
- 3) Religious and personal. This depends on whether or not we have a free society. Whether in fact your peer group is tolerant of diversity or not.
- 4) The way society is organized. This depends on the perceptions of the ruling class.

If you apply graph theory to a Western free society, you will find subgroups which are anything but free in their outlook. In fact the characteristics of a jihadi is one who.

- a) Clicks on poisonous sites.
- b) Has a non Western graph of friends who also click on these sites.

It is also not entirely true that pre industrial societies stagnated. They did not advance as fast as post industrial. I am English and more familiar with English history. The Tudors (16th cent) were tyrants. The Stuart dynasty that followed them found out that what was acceptable in the 16th century was not acceptable in the 17th.

Re: Yet Another Roswell Thread

That will depend on the time period in question. Pre-iron age farming communities appear to have been much less productive than iron age farming communities. Being better off, iron-age farming communities and later post Roman era European farming communities may have been less conservative than the older tech. farming communities of the ancient eras.

I was talking, remember, about the first European farming communities which belonged to the late stone age of Europe. They predate even the Egyptian state, even though they last into their era.

Naturally, the European farming communities of the much later post Roman era, were far superior. The reason I went so far back in time was that, even at that very early period there were widespread trade routes, and each year on the relevant season the farming communities put their products aboard their river boats, moved them over to the established trading centers where these goods were traded with goods of the hunting/gathering tribes that then were still around in wide areas in Europe. This situation lasted for thousands of years.

Simply demonstrating the presence of regular communication over a long time period, yet without the transfer of ideas.

I was largely thinking of more modern communities in different parts of the world. Are there metrics that can be applied for innovation? The very big question is how do we get societies in the Middle East, which have a tremendous distrust of the West get themselves in a position where they can start solving their economic problems in what I would term a rational way.

Ian Parker wrote:

On 16 Jul, 14:20, eina...@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

A society controlled in all its aspects by one man can stagnate, but no modern society, in the Middle East or elsewhere is quite like that.

Well, in India the caste system may have discouraged change and encouraged stagnation. In China the traditional Kon-fu-ze philosophy may have done the same thing. In Japan the traditional ancestor religion may have done the same.

In traditional tribal societies, the elders are the leaders, and the emphasis tends to be on the importance of traditions which is taught to the young ones.

I'm not familiar with any muslim or christian religious tenets which may have hampered technological change. I think wealth is a factor. Muslim societies were for a time wealthy and powerful, later when

Re: Yet Another Roswell Thread

Europe took over the trade with India and China by sailing across the oceans they fell on hard times. That may have been the real reason for the stagnation that happened.

There are in fact no specifically religious tenets. That is to say mainstream tenets. The reason for the decline of Islamic societies is not religious. It may well be to do with the fact that societies are controlled by one man. China had, of course, no dominant religion. In 1421 a fleet explored the world. Then the Emperor took the decision to abandon all further exploration. Why didn't the Chinese establish a colony in California in (say) 1425? If they had the whole history of America would have been very different. They knew it was there and had the technology. BTW – 1421 has been criticised by scholars on a number of grounds. One of them being that the author cannot read original sources, even though these were destroyed. The Emperor not only put a stop to further exploration, he specifically destroyed all the data that came back. You can't imagine any Western society doing that can you?

Certainly without the need for middlemen Islamic society was in deep trouble. It should have invested in new technology when it did have the wealth. Lepanto was in fact a victory for new naval technology.

The wealth of European societies began to grow at the same time. That greater wealth effect may have begun to speed up technological change as early as the 16th. century.

Ian Parker wrote:

On 16 Jul, 14:20, eina...@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:
If you had AI and applied graph theory the results I think would be illuminating and I think anyway would give an insight into the way change might be brought about.

The only way for peace is the acceptance by both parties they have a right to be where they are at the present time. That means Palestinians have to give up the hope of pushing Jews into the ocean, and also at the same time Jews have to stop pushing Palestinians off their land with their settlement policy.

Along with the peace plan the economic situation has to be dealt with,

Re: Yet Another Roswell Thread

as far as I can see the only other way to reduce the power of the extremist factions is to make the overall situation of the Palestinian people less bleak.

With current policies Israel is constantly deepening the hole in which the overall situation appears stuck. With most Palestinians being out of work, extremists have got an almost limitless recruitment pool. That has resulted in a growing instability among the Palestinians. That recruitment pool of out of work young people needs to be shrunk rapidly as possible as a part of the overall peace settlement strategy so may have any hope whatsoever of success.

I think a third thing has to happen. The Palestinians must have economic progress. Politicians often miss the link between politics and economics. On the military side there is one issue the Palestinian fringe groups. The only military force on the Israeli side is the IDF. This is a disciplined force that does what the government tells it to. The "Swords of Islam" or some other fringe group would continue fighting even if Fatah stopped.

This is what I was talking about when I said that you needed (in the present state of technology) a disproportionate security response for a small group. This wrecks economics which is in fact the main basis for a settlement.

67 borders, end of belligerency and a bit of haggling over that status of East Jerusalem must be the components of any settlement. Barak nearly achieved this. Basically if Israelis really thought there was a chance of peace, the IDF would come in and demolish all settlements. It is just not worth the price. The settlers are in fact relying on the fact there is no prospect of peace and so they will bag what they can.

Re: Yet Another Roswell Thread

There must be a realization that terrorism can't be ended in a moment. That can only be done gradually by reducing the pool of potential recruits for terror, which appear primarily to be young people with little hope of jobs. There must be a realization that methods that harm the average well being of the Palestinian people are only likely to increase the influence of radical terrorist organizations. It will have to be accepted that for some time afterwards there will be a degree of terrorism, which hopefully over time will fade away.

It would be a really bad thing if al-Qaeda got a foothold among the Palestinians. So far the different groups, the Hamas and the PLO along with their respective umbrella groups, have been able to keep other groups more or less out.

I'm actually in the minority position that think that takeove of Hamas on the Gasa Strip may actually provide some side benefits. During the months of struggle for control between PLO and Hamas there it really looked like both groups were losing control over that area, i.e. that other perhaps even nastier groups were gaining a foothold. Now, with a single group in power there, they may be able to keep a lid on things. It will though depend on what the Hamas does think to be in its interest.

I have an opinion which is very much a minority one. One that CERTAINLY will never be endorsed by our military friends. Hamas and Hezbollah are controlled by Iran. So what they do is very much influenced by what happens in Tehran. As I think I said earlier the war in Iraq is certain (pretty well) to have one clear victor. What will Iran do if and when she has effective control over most of the Middle East? I personally think it might be a good thing if Israel got one powerful negotiating partner. Would Israel be destroyed? Israel has a very considerable nuclear arsenal and when countries have power they start thinking realpolitikally.

In terms of realpolitik Iran wants to consolidate its hold on Iraq, is actually far more interested in Lebanon and Syria than in Israel. Holocaust denial goes down well in the Arab street, but as soon as you have to take decisions which could possibly lead to nuclear war you play a different tune.

There is yet another question, Central Asia. Iran could play a role in the stabilization of the former Soviet Union. Russia has constructive relations.

There is a considerable irony here. Iran is the baddest of the bad in US demonology. Yet the US military have in fact facilitated the creation of Iranian power. This leads one to have an extreme lack of confidence in anything they tell us.

Iran does not want terrorist groups, particularly Sunni ones. It is

Re: Yet Another Roswell Thread

far too much at risk itself. Hamas will first concentrate on eliminating all power sources but itself in Gaza. Then it will start of the West bank. In point of fact the quickest way to stop the insurgency in Iraq is to let the Iranians in. An Iranian victory will mean that Al Qaeda will certainly not be tolerated. In fact Iraq look likes being the biggest single defeat for the Arabs AND Al Qaeda that there has been for some time. The Saudis are extremely alarmed.

Personally I think the Hamas will now concentrate on the West Bank. In the meantime they will prefer the Gasa Strip to be quiet. It will be very interesting to watch what will happen next.

Clearly the government of Israel is worried. Precident Bush has also been making noises about support to the Palestinian Authority. But, I actually doubt that will really aid the PLO in its struggle against the Hamas. The contrary may acually prove to come true. I wonder what will happen if the Hamas gains control over the West Bank as well. That outcome may not be very unlikely.

Israel and the US will be forced to negotiate with Iran.

– Ian Parker

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