

Clash or alliance: Civilizations and their meaning in political conflicts.

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Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory gained new topicality through actual events in the political world climate against the background of 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Along with those conflicts, Huntington's theses seem to be more current than ever before and became the focus of the public discourse, in which - it seems - the gap between supporters and adversaries gets bigger every day.

This article aims to evaluate his theory within the context of actual political events in the field of international relations. The empirical attempt of this study will be the presentation and evaluation of conflict statistics regarding the conflict climate in the years 2000 and 2006 in order to confirm or disprove several aspects of the clash of civilizations hypothesis.

1. Introduction

In the summer of 1993, the renowned American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington released his article "The Clash of Civilizations?" (Huntington, 1993: 22-49) in the journal *Foreign Affairs*. According to the *Foreign Affairs* publisher, this article provoked more reactions and discussion from scientific quarters than any other contribution since the 1940's (Huntington, 1996: 13).

Without any doubt, Huntington's theses hit the mark, not least due to the fact that it was published at a strategic wisely chosen moment. Shortly before, the end of the Soviet Union marked the final expiration of a conflict between the two superpowers, which has been dominating the world climate for 40 years. The sudden laps of those concrete points of reference lead to disorientation in politics and science. Nobody could tell what the future in international relations would look like.

At the same time, the shift of global attention from Eastern Europe towards the Middle East during the first Gulf war – where a mostly Western/Christian coalition under command of the USA fought against a Muslim state that had the support from the majority of the Arabic states – indicated a new perspective. At this point, Huntington presented his theory, which claimed that the phenomenon of clash of civilizations would create and dominate a new world order. He therewith hit the nerve of many observers who had already thought, feared or perceived this scenario. In retrospect, Huntington's theory was the first approach that tried to interpret in a comprehensive and systematic way the historical developments after the end of the Cold War.

In 1996, Huntington finally published his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* in which he elaborates on those theses that he could only mention briefly in his article. To intensify his statement, he also removed the question mark in the title.

The clash of civilizations theory gained new topicality through actual events in the political world climate against the background of 9/11, the US invasion of Afghanistan, the Bali bombings, the invasion of Iraq, the cartoon crisis, the bombings in Madrid and London, the ongoing Iranian nuclear threat and the Israel-Lebanon conflict. Along with those conflicts and crises, Huntington's theses are more current than ever before and became the focus of the public discourse, in which - it seems - the gap between supporters and adversaries gets bigger every day.

By now, the term clash of civilizations is a fixed term within the debate about the new world order after the end of the Cold War. Because of this, the influence in cultural variables on political and societal developments can no longer be denied in the scientific discourse. Despite of this, Huntington's radical theory remains very controversial and is challenged not only by other scholars and researchers, but also by international institutions like, e.g., UNESCO, which launched a program called *Alliance of Civilizations* to encourage a cross-cultural dialogue.

1.1. Huntington's hypothesis

To summarize Huntington's work in a hypothesis one can say that Huntington gave a definition of the new world order of world policy in the twenty-first century. He understands the world policy after the end of the East-West conflict, no longer, or at least not in the first place, in categories of political power conflicts, or arms race, or fighting for scarce economic resources or as an ideological system antagonism. Instead, Huntington intended to introduce into the analysis of international policy a completely new way of looking at it as a clash of cultures. Therefore, the future international system - according to Huntington - will be characterized by the clash of civilizations on the macro- as well as on the micro- level. In other words, he defines the major future conflicts no longer between nation states but between civilizations, and defines Islam as the most threatening possible future antagonist of the declining West. Following in this study, it shall be examined if the clash of civilization - constituted by Huntington - really exists or is emerging and if his theory of this clash as well as the attitude of Islam can be proven right or wrong by statistics.

1.2. Research questions and delimitation

The clash of civilizations thesis constitutes an attempt to formulate a new paradigm in international relations after the end of the Cold War, which could be helpful for politicians and scientist to understand and grasp the new developments within the international system (Huntington, 1996: 13).

Huntington's central thesis states that the bipolar age of ideology was displaced by the multipolar age of civilizations. Therefore, conflicts will not longer have ideological or economical reasons, but will arise out of cultural clashes between nations and ethnical groups of different civilizations. Huntington assumes that the clash of civilizations has already started and that it will gain intensity in the future.

The questions, this paper aims to answer, will therefore be: What does the conflict situation look like in 2000 and 2006 according to the HIIK (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research) conflict barometer and are there any changes in the world-conflict-climate between 2000 and 2006? What kind of variants can be detected? Is the immanent relation between civilization and conflict that Huntington postulates, provable by empirical means?

Regarding the time limitation, I have chosen to focus on the years of 2000 and 2006. Huntington's theory predicts a new world order for the 21st century. Therefore I have chosen the year 2000 as the first year of the 21st century, which seems to be a good starting point for my analysis. The second year, which will be analyzed is 2006. This is not only due to the fact that it is the latest statistic available, but also because a period of 6 years is a suitable span for being able to identify possible changes and similarities. One will be in the position to talk about variances during that period and might be able to give an outlook for the future.

1.3. Comparative research design

As conceptual framework of this paper, a *simple comparative research design* will be applied. We need such a roadmap because collected data evidence reclusively means very little until they are analyzed and evaluated (Bell, 2005: 201).

Hall claims, that making comparisons, and tracking differences and similarities means moving from simply describing to looking at how several variables are related (Hall, 2004: 147). This brings us to one weakness of this experimental design. It is not good at establishing *why* things have changed (DeVaus, 2002: 315). The facts therefore have to be analyzed and interpreted.

By analyzing and comparing the conflict statistics of 2000 and 2006, this paper aims to identify possible changes in the world-conflict-climate over a period of six years. The thesis wants to determine to what extend this conflict-situation of the world is congruent with Huntington's prognosis regarding the future conflict-situation. Observing and comparing the statistics of 2000 and 2006 is therefore considered to be an excellent means to combine Huntington's theory with empirical findings.

Furthermore, the comparative design can encourage us to seek explanations for similarities and differences or to gain a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of social reality in different contexts (Hantrais, 1996: 13).

To stress those differences, the intention is to use cross-cultural research (Bryman, 2004: 53) coming from an unusual direction. Instead of comparing two different regions at the same point in time, we will look at five different regions all around the world in two different moments and circumstances. The special criteria that will be used are going to be presented later on.

2. (Neo-)Realism as historical background

Samuel P. Huntington was influenced and embossed by the neo-realistic approach, which emerged from classical realism. Hence, the neo-realistic theory can be seen as the fundament of Huntington's clash of civilizations approach. It is important for the further understanding of Huntington's train of thought, to be familiar with (neo-) realism as a main theory in international relations.

The realist theories of international relations describe the international system as anarchic and look at nation-states as the primary constituent units of that system. J. Morgenthau – one of the first scholars of the realistic approach - saw international politics as a struggle for power between states: the pursuit of national interests was a normal, unavoidable and desirable activity (Burchill et al, 2005: 80). That means that, from a realist point of view, states are fundamentally engaged in the struggle for survival through maximizing power.

The fact that there exist numerous states in this anarchic international system renders an acute problem of insecurity for each one of them. This phenomenon is described by the security-dilemma that leads to permanent threat for the nation-states. The security dilemma encourages a constant competition for power, particularly between the great powers (Baylis, 2005: 162-165).

Since there is no effective authority, which acts as a mediator in conflict resolution between states in the international system, it is considered to be a self-help system. In the context of explanatory realism, this fact is seen as a secondary reason for the state of affairs (Sandole & van der Merve, 1993: 4). In general, realism wants to detect actual and concrete facts and phenomena of international politics.

2.1. (Neo-)Realism and the "clash of civilizations"

After having understood Huntington's theoretical background, an important question for this paper will be, where his theory ties with realism.

One of the most obvious points, which shows Huntington's relation with neo-realism is his claim that nation-states remain the main actors in the international system even after changes in the world order. However, he states that their interests, associations, and conflicts are increasingly shaped by cultural and civilizational factors (Huntington, 1996: 36). Thus, he predicts that future conflicts will be between civilizations and not between nation states and this is the point, where he differs from classical realism. In the realistic view, cultural factors are irrelevant, if not perturbing, when it comes to the definition of state interest. In contrast to the political realistic belief, nation-states in the

clash of civilizations are not longer considered to be rational actors in that sense that they all act equally rational. In fact, Huntington's emphasis on cultural factors implies that different states react differently in the exact same situation due to their specific cultural background. Considering the plurality of civilizations, this necessarily leads to a very complex sphere of interests in the international system. How to deal with this complex world - in which every civilization considers its values as binding - and how to reach common decisions is, however, not explained by Huntington.

Other statements from the clash of civilizations, however, can be clearly and easily related to political realism. Huntington is concordant with the classical theory when he underlines that the structures in the international system are anarchic. Furthermore, his statement that "the world is divided between a Western one and a non-Western many" reminds us easily of the former bipolarity in the world system (Huntington, 1996: 36).

3. The HIIK conflict barometer

Following, this paper aims to detect, to what extend the de facto conflict situation is congruent with Huntington's theory about future conflicts.

The HIIK (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research) conflict barometer and its statistics from the years 2000 and 2006 will serve as fundamentals, as they document all conflicts around the world (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 2000 & 2006).

In listing the conflicts, there will be a four-level distinction of conflict intensity. Level 1 of intensity concerns a latent conflict that is completely non-violent. Level 2 appoints predominantly non-violent crisis, whereas level 3 is about severe crisis with reappearing use of violence. Finally, level 4 describes wars with systemic and collective dedication to violence and regular troops.

The charts are tabulated according to five geographical regions (Europe, America, Middle East and Maghreb, Asia/Oceania, Sub-Sahara Africa) and show in a chronological manner:

- § where the conflict takes place
- § who the participating central actors are
- § which intensity level can be allocated to the conflict
- § which is the primarily conflict cause according to the Heidelberg Institute for International conflict research
- § if the conflict is occurring along the civilizational fault lines (as defined by Huntington) or not.

Since Huntington did not define the borders between the civilizations explicitly, we will attempt to evaluate - in terms of Huntington's theory - if it is a fault line clash or not.

3.1. Empirical conflict analysis of the year 2000

3.1.1. Armed Conflicts in 2000

The following chapter deals with all conflicts of level 3 and 4 from the year 2000, because the primary focus shall first be on those conflicts, which were carried out in a violent way.

To summarize the empirical findings, one can state that in the year 2000, the world had to face 36 violent conflicts (12 wars and 24 severe crises), whereupon already 25 of those conflicts occurred in Sub-Sahara Africa and Asia/Oceania. One can observe ten cases of civilizational fault line wars, which is equal to a percentage of 27,8%. This statistical outcome does not show any tendency that the international system is dominated by clashes of civilizations.

Besides, there is no indicator or evidence for involvement of the core states in the way Huntington postulated it. First of all, there was no clash between one core state and another core state and secondly, those conflicts, where core states were involved (Russia, India, USA) occurred exclusively due to own national interests. There are also no combat operations carried out for loyalty reasons from core states or their fellows.

Moreover, it is remarkable that most conflicts were intrastate struggles and only four out of the 36 severe and violent crises occurred between different nation states. Thus, states or even civilizations are only marginal actors and the main actors are representatives of conflict groups of different civilizational groups.

A look on the conflict causes shows that the reasons are very variable and complex. The main emphasis however, is on attempting autonomy, national power and territory. Additionally, one can identify that, even though religion does not dominate the conflict situation, it is nevertheless an important factor and contributes definitive to the extension and intensification of wars. Cultural and religious issues can however not be considered to be direct activators of conflicts. In fact, it is more ethnical factors as well as authority- and distributional injustice that play an important role hereby.

3.1.2. Latent Conflicts in 2000

The conflict barometer documents in total 144 conflicts in 2000 (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 2000: 3) whereof 36 are categorized as wars (level 4) and severe crises (level 3). By means of the remaining 108 latent conflicts and crises (level 1 and 2), this study aims now to illustrate what could be expected in the future regarding civilizational clashes in terms of Huntington. Therefore, it is important to notice that the following results will show only those latent conflicts and crises, in which members of different civilizations are involved.

This distinction is not easy since the index of European latent conflicts and crises shows many struggles between members of the (Slavic-)Orthodox and the Western civilization. To label those conflicts as clashes of civilizations, however, seems insofar problematic as Huntington defined the Slavic-Orthodox civilization as a civilizational group that is undetermined regarding the question if it is a self-contained civilization or if it can be attributed to the West.

A similar problem occurs looking at the American continent because the Latin American civilization has – according to Huntington – its roots in the Western civilization.

As a summary of the conflict situation, one can claim that among the 108 latent conflicts and crises in 2000, there were 24 cases with participants from different civilizations, which corresponds to 22,2 %.

Since, however, some conflicts on the European and American continent are problematic to be classified as civilizational clashes (as pointed out before), one must speak of a maximal percentage of 22,2 %. Not taking the latent conflicts and crises on those two continents into consideration would minimize the percentage to 15,7 % in total.

Those numbers, which are supposed to give us a hint about the future developments regarding civilizational conflicts, lie below the percentage of 27,8 %, which illustrates the actual clashes of civilizations in 2000, as we found out before. Hence, following those numbers, one could predict that there will be less civilizational conflicts in the future.

Having a closer look at the latent conflicts and crises in 2000, it is remarkable that there occur more quarrels between different states, than it is the case in wars and violent conflicts, which emerge mostly within a single state.

Concerning causes for latent conflicts and crises, one can notice that even if the quest for autonomy is a very common reason to struggle, the fight for territory and resources remarkable gains importance as a conflict cause in comparison to the conflicts on the third and fourth intensity level.

3.1.3. Conflict-Summary of 2000

The following figure will summarize once more the overall conflict situation in 2000 and the percentaged share, the members of different civilizations pertain in those conflicts.

CONFLICTS...	With participants from different civilizations	With participants from one civilization	Total
Number of Conflicts	34	110	144
Percentaged Share	23,6 %	76,4 %	100 %

Wars and Severe Crises	10	26	36
Percentaged Share	27,8 %	72,2 %	100 %
Latent Conflicts and Crises	24	84	108
Percentaged Share	22,2 %	77,8 %	100 %
Latent Conflicts and Crises (allocating the Slavic-Orthodox and the Latin American civilizations to the Western)	17	91	108
Percentaged Share	15,7 %	84,3 %	100 %

As one can see in the table, more conflicts are fought within a civilization than between different civilizations in the year 2000. Besides, most of the wars are intrastate wars and the only interstate war occurs between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Most violent conflicts (level 3 and 4) are carried out in Sub-Sahara Africa (13) and Asia/Oceania (12). By far the most wars – eight out of twelve - can be observed in Africa, whereas one can identify only a small number of violent conflicts in Europe and on the American continent.

The most common conflict causes for political clashes in 2000 are autonomy, national authority, and territory. The most violent conflicts, however, are fought for national authority, the political system, or secession. (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 2000: 3-5)

3.2. Empirical conflict analysis of the year 2006

3.2.1. Armed Conflicts in 2006

The following chapter presents all conflicts of level 3 and 4 from the year 2006, because this chapter shall follow the same structure as the chapter 3.1.1, in order to be able to make a comparison of the two points in time.

In 2006, one can identify 35 violent conflicts worldwide, whereof 6 can be classified as wars and 29 are severe crises. By far the most violent crises (15) occur in the Sub-Sahara Africa region. Both, Asia/Oceania and Middle East/Maghreb face each nine violent conflicts. The European and the American continents are the most stable and peaceful regions. 11 of the 35 mentioned wars and severe crises can be classified as conflicts along civilizational fault lines. This corresponds to a percentage of 31,4 %. This means that 1/3 of all violent conflicts in 2006 occur along civilizational fault lines.

In 2006, one cannot observe any clash between two core states and those core states that are involved in crises fight for national reasons only. Regarding the combat operation in Afghanistan – *Operation Enduring Freedom* – one could claim that it is a loyalty alliance of Western forces. The same could be said about President Bush’s *Coalition of the Willing* in 2002 during the second Iraq war. This fact supports Huntington’s thesis about loyalty clusters within the same civilization.

It is remarkable that in 2006 there is only one interstate conflict (Israel vs. Lebanon) worldwide and all other struggles are intrastate conflicts. This shows that states become more and more insignificant as actors and that ethnical and religious groups gain importance in the conflict context.

The main conflict causes for wars (level 4) are either power or system/ideology. When it comes to the reasons for violent conflicts in general, one can see a strong tendency to national and regional predominance and power as conflict reasons, followed by autonomy/secession ambitions and system/ideology issues. Resources play a very marginal role in 2006.

Furthermore, even though religion still does not dominate the conflict situation, it gains however importance and contributes to a large extension to the intensification of conflicts. Nevertheless, ethnical factors as well as authority- and distributional injustice are still the dominant variables in this context.

3.2.2. Latent Conflicts in 2006

The conflict barometer documents in total 278 political conflicts in 2006 (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 2006: 1), whereof 35 are categorized as wars (level 4) and severe crises (level 3). By means of the remaining 243 latent conflicts and crises (level 1 and 2), this study aims now to illustrate what could be expected in the future regarding civilizational clashes in terms of Huntington. Therefore, it is important to notice that the following figures will show only those latent conflicts and crises, in which members of different civilizations are involved.

To summarize, in the year 2006 the world has to face 160 latent conflicts and 83 crises. Among those 243 level 1 and 2 conflicts one can identify 37 cases with participants from different civilizations, which corresponds to 15,2 %. This percentage, however, includes also the clashes between the Western and the Orthodox as well as between the Latin American and the Western civilizations, which have been classified as problematic due to identical origins. Excluding those conflicts the percentage of civilizational clashes decreases to a percentage of 11,9 %.

Those numbers, which are supposed to give us a hint about future developments regarding civilizational conflicts, lie below the percentage of 31,4 %, which illustrates the actual violent clashes of civilizations in 2006, as we found out before. It is remarkable how much the percentages regarding

civilizational conflicts differ between level 3 and 4 (31,4%) and level 1 and 2 (15,2 % or 11,9 %). This allows the interpretation that civilizational issues matter more in violent conflicts and wars than in latent crises. Latent conflicts and crises occur mostly within a civilization. This supports Huntington’s theory that civilizational affiliations and convictions can reinforce a conflict and that clashes of civilizations are the most violent ones.

Furthermore, one can identify more interstate quarrels on level 1 and 2 than on the violent levels. Having a closer look at the conflict causes for latent conflicts and crises, one can notice a clear tendency to fight for territory and power reasons.

3.2.3. Conflict-Summary of 2006

The following figure will summarize once more the overall conflict situation in 2006 and the percentaged share, the members of different civilizations pertain in those conflicts.

CONFLICTS...	With participants from different civilizations	With participants from one civilization	Total
Number of Conflicts	48	230	278
Percentaged Share	17,3 %	82,7 %	100 %
Wars and Severe Crises	11	24	35
Percentaged Share	31,4 %	68,6 %	100 %
Latent Conflicts and Crises	37	206	243
Percentaged Share	15,2 %	84,8 %	100 %
Latent Conflicts and Crises (allocating the Slavic-Orthodox and the Latin American civilizations to the Western)	29	214	243
Percentaged Share	11,9 %	88,1 %	100 %

In 2006 one can find a big number of conflicts, especially on level 1 and 2. As one can see in the table, the percentage of clashes of civilizations in wars and severe crises (level 3 and 4) is double as high as the percentage of civilizational conflicts in latent crises (level 1 and 2).

One third of all violent conflicts are fought between members of different civilizations. This fact supports Huntington’s theory that civilizational clashes

tend to have a very violent character. However, one can claim that there are still more conflicts fought within a civilization than between different civilizations in the year 2006. The big amount of latent conflicts in the world could be an indicator for a future intensification of the worldwide conflict climate.

With a total number of 90 conflicts, Asia/Oceania is the region where the most conflicts occur. Most wars (level 4), however, take place in the Middle East/Maghreb region. Even though, America is the most peaceful region regarding political conflicts, it has to face an increase in violent criminality. Europe has to deal with a total amount of 45 conflicts, whereof most are intrastate struggles for autonomy and secession.

In general, one can identify 196 intrastate conflicts and 76 fights between different states (the other 6 states do not fit into this scheme).

The dominant conflict reason in 2006 is ideological differences between the several parties with the aim to change the existing political system. Another important reason to fight is the quest for national power. It is remarkable that conflicts are often caused by more than one reason. Common combinations in this context are resources with territory/authority as well as system/ideology with authority.

4. Analysis and evaluation

In the following analytical part, the empirical research results shall be evaluated with special regard to Huntington’s theoretical framework. In this context the analysis will support the attempt to answer the research questions.

4.1. Variances and similarities between 2000 and 2006

	2000	2006
Total Number of Conflicts	144	278
Wars and Severe Crises	36	35
Latent Conflicts and Crises	108	243
Fault Line Conflicts (all levels)	23,6 %	17,3 %
Main Conflict Causes	Autonomy, National Authority, Territory	Ideology/Political System
Region with the most conflicts	Asia/Oceania	/Oceania
Region with the most violent conflicts	Sub-Saharan Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
Most Peaceful Region	America and Europe	America
Fault-Line Conflicts with Islamic Civilization involved	21	35

As one can see in the table above, there was a remarkable increase in the total number of conflicts between the years 2000 and 2006. This is mainly due to a rise in the total number of latent conflicts and crises in 2006. The amount of wars and severe crises however, remained constant during those six years. This means that even though the world faces more non-violent struggles in 2006, a more responsible exposure to violent wars and crises is obvious. This claim is supported by the fact that the number of level 4 wars declined from 12 to 6 between 2000 and 2006.

Although the number of latent conflicts increases, the amount of open and violent wars is more or less stable and has even decreased a bit. The Human Security Centre in Vancouver sees the explanation for this decline of violent wars not in the rise of peacemaking but in the descent of war-making. In other words, the experts do not see the aim for worldwide democracy, but the end of colonization as a reason (Hillenkamp, 2007: 45).

Even if one can identify an increasing total number of conflicts between different civilizations, it turns out to be a descent from 23,6 % to 17,3 % once taking into consideration the rising amount of conflicts in total. Thus, the figures do not necessarily show any evidence of an imminent clash of civilizations. Moreover, there is no tendency of core states to fight other core states, or solidarity combat operations, which is contradictive to Huntington's statement about core states.

One can identify no changes when it comes to the region with the most conflicts (Asia/Oceania) and the region with the most violent conflicts (Sub-Saharan Africa). America remains the most peaceful region over the years, whereas Europe has to deal with a slight increase in conflict numbers from 2000 to 2006.

It seems remarkable that the main conflict causes change from autonomy, territory, and national authority towards ideology and political system, since Huntington predicted that the future conflicts will no longer include ideology as a primary reason to fight.

Another interesting point is the tendency towards intrastate conflicts, even though Huntington postulated that states will remain the main actors.

Regarding the involvement of the Islamic civilizations into conflicts, one can identify a remarkable increase. In 2000 the Islamic civilization was involved in 21 out of 34 struggles between different civilizations, which corresponds to a percentage of 61,8%. In 2006 the percentage rose to 72,9% (35 out of 48). This supports Huntington's predictions about Islam's bloody borders.

The most obvious difference occurs however evaluating the percentage of civilizational wars. In 2000 only 2 out of 12 level 4 wars were fought along civilizational fault lines, which corresponds to 16,7 %. In 2006, however, the percentage increased to 50% since 3 out of 6 level 4 wars occur between different civilizations. This numbers support Huntington's claim that conflicts

between different civilizations tend to have a more violent character. Thus, even if the former figures showed a decline in the total percentage of civilizational fault line conflicts, one can identify a remarkable percentual increase when it comes to wars between different civilizations on the most violent level. However, one must see that many of those struggles, notably in the Middle East region, began as secular tribal disputes and gained the religious component only after a while. Yet that they include this religious component, they are harder to solve.

5. Conclusion

Huntington postulates that the clash of civilizations is the latest phase of modern history. In publishing his thesis he is completely aware of the fact that he will have to mention good reasons why this clash of civilizations will happen exactly in the present point in time. In this context, his assumption prevails that the ongoing globalization does not lead to a greater mutual intercultural understanding, but to a reinforced emphasis on the own civilizational values. Since this is a very complex assumption, it is hard to answer it in a sufficient way with the empirical findings of this study. Since there is a percental decrease of conflicts between different civilizations, however, one could claim this statement to be wrong.

However, speaking about globalization as a source of conflict in general, one could refer to the area of security policy where globalization is seen as a direct or indirect threat to national and international security and therefore a possible source of conflict. In the course of globalization, one can identify several concrete security risks, such as demographic, technological, and economic changes. Demographic changes include for example an increasing urbanization and the resulting imbalance through population clusters. The increased spread of technology has also not just positive outcomes, since it facilitates networking and transnational communication of terrorists and criminals.

The consequences of globalization can be noticed all over the world, but its effects are stronger in those parts of the world, where phenomena, such as better technologies are newer. This leads us the Asia/Oceania and the Middle East/Maghreb regions, where we found the biggest number of fights and the most violent conflicts in the world. Europe and America are traditionally more modernized regions, where urbanization and an increased spread of technology are rather old phenomena. The claim that regions, in which globalization has further reaching and more drastic effects on stability and security, are possible more susceptible to conflicts might therefore be right.

Moreover, Huntington analyzed the international relations in categories of cooperation and conflict. According to the American scholar, future conflicts in the international system will be fought for cultural and civilizational differences rather than for ideological or economical causes. And in the same time, culturally similar actors show a stronger tendency to cooperation than culturally different actors do. To put it in other words, it can be said that conflicts between groups and states of different civilizations will occur more often than

struggles between members and groups of the same civilization. As mentioned before, a decrease in the percentage of intercivilizational conflicts proves this claim to be wrong and the shift towards ideology as the main conflict cause in 2006 does not exactly support this statement either. However, one can identify a recent tendency towards religious wars and this is one of the important reasons why a future clash of civilizations cannot be excluded per se.

Even though one cannot identify a remarkable increase of intercivilizational conflicts since the Cold War era – which means that Huntington’s main thesis cannot be proven right by empirical means – there are still some aspects of his theory that can be supported and proven to be right. As Henderson points out, it is true that the combatants belong to different religions surpassingly often (Henderson, 1997: 649-668). Fox (2001: 459-472) complements an interesting perspective to this discussion in claiming that, even if the occurrence of civilizational conflicts did not change significantly over the years, there is however a remarkable increase in conflicts between the Western and the Islamic civilization since 1989. This statement is supported by the statistics of this study as well, which show an obvious increase in the number of conflicts where members of the Western civilization fight against members of the Islamic civilization. According to Fox, those developments could have influenced Huntington when he launched his theory about Islam’s bloody borders and the clash between the Western and the Islamic civilization. In this part of his theory Huntington argued that the Islamic civilization has experienced a drastic population explosion, which is encouraging instability both on the borders of Islam and in its interior, where fundamentalist movements are becoming increasingly popular. Besides he stated that civilizational conflicts are particularly prevalent between Muslims and non-Muslims and identified the bloody borders between Islamic and non-Islamic civilizations. As a consequence, he claims that the current global war on terror between the West and Islam is not a new outcome of the behavior of some radicals, but rather a reflection of the problematic history between those two civilizations.

The new world order in Huntington’s analysis is necessarily multipolar, since every civilization has its own center of power and competence (usually the most powerful state of the civilization). This core state hold a crucial double role in the international system: on one hand side, they represent the interest of their civilization against extern powers, and on the other hand side they incur the power function to control, order and organize. According to the empirical findings of this study, there is no evidence for the clash between different core states or solidarity actions of other members of the same civilization that was predicted by Huntington.

Another problem is Huntington’s concept about the relation between state and civilization and the obvious tense relation between both entities. To keep it short, the problem is that the state is an actor within the international system and the civilization not. Huntington claims that the nation state will remain the dominant actor in the international system in the future and will take over all the interests of the civilization bit by bit. This process is difficult to imagine, however and seems rather impossible to realize. Additionally, there exist some

essential differences between the concepts of states and civilizations: states have borders, civilizations have frames; states are actors, civilizations are entities; states have interests, civilizations have cultural similarities. Nevertheless, it is not generally to doubt that nation states could also represent the interests of bigger entities such as civilizations.

A closer look at the present conflict panorama shows us that peace is prevailing mainly in industrialized areas and democracies. Susceptible for conflicts are dictatorships, states in which the public order failed, third world countries with big raw material deposits, and regions along civilizational fault lines. This proves that civilization do matter when it comes to conflict issues, but there are still other important conflict causes. Thus, although the clash of civilizations cannot be totally excluded, it is definitely not necessarily imminent. The fact that complicates foreign policy enormously these days is that culture wars are now global (The Economist (special), November 2007: 12).

Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the rising number of religious conflicts all around the world. After having played a rather marginal role in the 20th century politics, religion holds a central role in the 21st century. Outside Western Europe, religion has gained remarkable importance. An Islamist party rules once-secular Turkey; Hindu nationalists may return to power in India's next election; even more children in Israel and Palestine are attending religious schools that tell them that God granted them the whole Holy Land and on present trends, China will become the world's biggest Christian country (and perhaps its biggest Muslim one too). How should those developments be evaluated? First of all (as *The Economist* claims), the idea that religion has recently re-emerged in public life is clearly wrong. It never really went away. In this context, one can state that the religion that influences public life the most is Islam. At its most theocratic, Islam forces people to follow *sharia* laws, sometimes with cruel penalties. Yet, Islam can clearly co-exist with a modern liberal state, as the democracies in Malaysia and Indonesia show. Thus, one could consider Turkey to be a test case since it is a secular state currently ruled by Islamists whose progress is being watched with nervous attention (The economist, November 2007: 13).

As the previous chapters have shown, one could conclude saying that most of Huntington's theses are disprovable. Furthermore, his theory reflects the reality sometimes in a blurry manner. Especially his concepts of culture, civilizations, core states and conflicts request further questioning and explanations.

Nevertheless, it seems that Huntington is well aware of the fact that his picture of future world politics is not complete, and thus, a bit distorted. He actually points out that his paradigm is not more than a framework for reflecting about international system. It is, in fact, a theoretical construct that cannot (and does not aim to, either) explain everything.

The reactions towards Huntington's theory vary from appreciating affirmation to categorical refusal. There is, however, an accordance about the fact that it is

Huntington's credit to put the meaning, difficulties, and endangerments of civilizations into worldwide focus.

Another important term in this context is the new form of international terrorism. This international terrorism derives mostly from religious fundamentalism. Noticing an increase in religious fundamentalism and thus international terrorism may, however, not be mixed up with civilizational conflicts. Religious fundamentalism is not necessarily directed against another civilization, but happens also within the same civilizations (e.g. Islam). It is therefore important to keep these two terms separated. Having a closer look on those conflicts in which the Islamic civilization is involved, one will notice that the statement that Islam is stuck in a clash of civilizations with the West is rather unconvincing. One irony of the war on terror is e.g. that although George W. Bush has declared war upon jihadism, his enemies invest very little energy to fighting him. The jihadists fight their main war not against Westerners but against apostate Muslim regimes. In cases where they do fight against outsiders (America in Iraq, India in Kashmir, Russia in Chechnia, and Israel in Palestine), they fight mainly against occupying powers (The Economist (special), Nov 2007: 15).

Besides, one should pay more attention to the rather unexpected last part of Huntington's book, where he advocates in a quite conciliatory way a multicultural world.

Since one of the most important outcomes of this paper is the tendency towards intracivilizational conflicts, a suggestion would be, to have those conflicts on focus for future research. Are those wars compatible with theories about the fragmented society or which other reasons and issues can be detected? It therefore could be very interesting to have a closer look at specific intracivilizational conflicts in future research papers.

To conclude, it remains to say that the empirical analysis of this paper could not find sufficient evidence for an imminent clash of civilizations. However, it is obvious that several aspects of his thesis could be proven right by the analysis of this study.

Nevertheless, one has to be aware of the fact that this paper examines a very short span of time only and that it would request a far larger and more detailed study to gain further reliable results.

Regarding future developments in the world system, one probably can neither expect the ultimate clash of civilizations nor a unique and unified world civilization. Thus, most likely the reality will lie somewhere in between.

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