

J. Willard Marriott Library
University of Utah
Electronic Reserve Course Materials

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction, which is not to be used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research. If a user makes a request for, or later uses a photocopy or reproduction for or purposes in excess of "fair use", that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

Clear and Present Strangers: The Clash of Civilizations and International Conflict

ERROL A. HENDERSON

Wayne State University

AND

RICHARD TUCKER

Vanderbilt University

Huntington's (1993a, 1993b, 1996) clash of civilizations thesis suggests that states belonging to different civilizations are more likely to become involved in conflict with one another. To evaluate the empirical accuracy of Huntington's claims, we examined the relationship between civilization membership and interstate war between 1816 and 1992. We find that civilization membership was not significantly associated with the onset of interstate war during the Cold War era (1946–1988), which is consistent with one aspect of Huntington's thesis; however, we also find that for the pre-Cold War period (1816–1945) states of similar civilizations were more likely to fight each other than were those of different civilizations, which contradicts Huntington's thesis. Most importantly, our analysis reveals that during the post-Cold War era (1989–1992), the period in which Huntington contends that the clash of civilizations should be most apparent, civilization membership was not significantly associated with the probability of interstate war. All told, our findings challenge Huntington's claims and seriously undermine the policy recommendations that devolve from his clash of civilizations thesis.

A growing literature has emerged on the impact of cultural factors on world politics (e.g., Chay, 1990; Mazrui, 1990; Ryan, 1990; Midlarsky, 1992; Huntington, 1993a, 1993b, 1996; Gurr, 1994; Gurr and Harff, 1994; Carment and James, 1997; Henderson, 1995, 1997, 1998). This renewed focus on culture has become so pronounced that ethnicity has become, for some, the "new master explanatory variable" in world politics (Holsti, 1997:8). Other studies evince an almost "Dr. Strangelove-like" quality in their apocalyptic vision of "seething cultural cauldrons," leading one author to conclude that "animosity among ethnic groups is beginning to rival the spread of nuclear weapons as the most serious threat to

Authors' note: Earlier versions of this article were presented to the International Studies Association, Washington, DC (February 1999) and the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, GA (September 1999). The authors thank Don Babai, Andrew Enterline, Cynthia Ervin, Kristian Gleditsch, Pat James, Volker Krause, Anthony Loh, James Lee Ray, J. David Singer, Michael Tomz, and John Vasquez for comments on earlier drafts.

peace that the world faces" (Maynes, 1993:5).¹ In this context, cultural realists provide a theoretical rationale for explicating the putative processes at work in "cultural conflagrations" occurring throughout the globe.

The clearest and most controversial articulation of cultural realism is found in Huntington's (1993a, 1993b, 1996) clash of civilizations thesis, which posits that conflict is more likely to occur between states of different civilizations (see Henderson, 1997:657; Schulman, 1998:304–305).² Huntington's thesis has become the centerpiece of scholarly discourse on the impact of cultural factors on international conflict, as evidenced by its having been translated into several languages while becoming one of the most cited articles to appear in *Foreign Affairs* in the past decade. In addition, it has become increasingly influential in policy circles, leading Roman Herzog (1999), the former president of the FRG, and four other renowned scholars to pen a recent volume entitled *Preventing the Clash of Civilizations*, which is aimed at providing strategies to prevent the scenario of a clash of civilizations from becoming reality.

In this study we examine Huntington's thesis on the relationship between civilization membership and the likelihood of interstate war. In the first section we review Huntington's basic arguments regarding intercivilizational conflict and derive several propositions from Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis. The second and third sections of our study describe the research design used to evaluate these propositions and contain the findings from our data analysis. In the final two sections we present a discussion of the findings and suggest their implications for subsequent research and policy.

The Clash of Civilizations Thesis

The Main Premise of Huntington's Thesis

The central contention of Huntington's (1993a, 1993b, 1996) clash of civilizations (hereafter, CoC) thesis is that states belonging to different civilizations are more likely to fight each other, while those belonging to the same civilization are less likely to fight each other. According to Huntington (1996), the CoC has emerged in the post-Cold War era as a result of several factors, including: (1) the increased interaction among peoples of different civilizations; (2) the de-Westernization and indigenization of elites in non-Western states; (3) increased economic regionalization, which heightens civilization consciousness; and (4) a global resurgence of religious identity, which is replacing diminishing local and state-based identities. In addition, demographic and economic changes have shifted the balance of power among civilizations as the capabilities of non-Western states—especially Asian and Islamic states—are rising to challenge Western hegemony. The interaction of these factors has resulted in the increased salience of civilization membership in global politics. Since civilizational characteristics are basic and essential, civilizational differences are increasingly likely to generate conflict. The result is that cultural factors have replaced ideological ones as the major source of conflict in world politics.

¹ A growing number of scholars now challenge the view that even prototypical "ethnic conflicts" such as those in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Liberia are "ethnic conflicts" at all (see Banac, 1992:143; Pfaff, 1993; Gagnon, 1995:334; Destexhe, 1994; Schlichte, 1994; Bowen, 1997). Henderson (1997:650–653) maintains that "ethnic conflict" is often a misleading moniker for a variety of conflicts driven by a diversity of issues.

² Cultural realism is a derivative of realism that focuses on cultural factors as determinants of a state's foreign policy; moreover, it posits that, *ceteris paribus*, states belonging to different cultural backgrounds are more likely to become involved in conflict than those that share a common cultural background. This view is contrasted with "cultural idealism" (see Henderson, 1997). This conceptualization of "cultural realism" should not be confused with Johnston's (1995), which derives from his analysis of strategic culture.

For Huntington (1996:43), a civilization is “the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species.” He maintains that a civilization “is a culture writ large” (p. 41) and is “the biggest ‘we’ within which we feel culturally at home as distinguished from all the other ‘thems’ out there” (p. 43). Civilizations are quite diverse in composition and may “involve a large number of people, such as Chinese civilization, or a very small number of people such as the Anglophone Caribbean” (p. 43). The “central defining characteristic” of a civilization is its religion (p. 47), hence, “the major civilizations in human history have been closely identified with the world’s great religions” (p. 42). These civilizations include the Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Western, Latin American, (apparently) Buddhist, and “possibly African” civilizations (pp. 47–48).

Since shared religion is the single most important indicator of a civilization, Huntington maintains that intercivilizational clashes are usually conflicts “between peoples of different religions” (p. 253). That religious difference should be the fulcrum on which the CoC thesis rests stems from Huntington’s view that religion is “possibly the most profound difference that can exist between people.” Therefore, he contends that warfare between states of different civilizations is “greatly enhanced by beliefs in different gods” (p. 254). This leads to Huntington’s most concise statement of the CoC: “[c]ivilizations are the ultimate human tribes, and the clash of civilizations is tribal conflict on a global scale” (p. 207).

The Theoretical Logic of the CoC Thesis

In its basic concern with the impact of culture on interstate conflict, Huntington’s CoC thesis is not wholly divorced from the arguments that are derived from the major paradigms of world politics regarding this relationship. Such arguments have largely centered on the failure to recognize the basic right of national (largely conceived as cultural) self-determination and freedom from alien rule as a precipitant of international conflict. Morgenthau (1985 [1948]:350), for example, insisted that the wars of the nineteenth century “grew out of either different interpretations of the national principle or the refusal to accept it at all” (p. 350). Scholars across the realist-idealist continuum, from Morgenthau (1985 [1948]:180) to Wright (1942:1002), have discussed the role of cultural factors in exacerbating international conflict. However, these scholars do not ascribe to cultural factors the significance that Huntington does. More recently, scholars have given greater attention to the impact of cultural factors in the decision-making process of disputants in interstate conflicts. For example, building on the arguments of Mansbach and Vasquez (1981:186–231) and Vasquez (1993:76–82), Henderson (1998) claims that where cultural factors become increasingly salient in disputes, concrete stakes such as territory become loaded with transcendent values that tend to make territorial issues indivisible and subsequent related disputes less susceptible to compromise. For example, a territorial dispute may be resolved by simply partitioning the disputed territory; however, it is quite another thing altogether to partition Jerusalem to the satisfaction of the disputants. Huntington echoes this view:

Differences in material interest can be negotiated and often settled by compromise in a way cultural issues cannot. Hindus and Muslims are unlikely to resolve the issue of whether a temple or a mosque should be built at Ayodhya by building both, or neither, or a syncretic building that is both a mosque and a temple. Nor can what might seem to be a straightforward territorial question between Albanian Muslims and Orthodox Serbs concerning Kosovo or between Jews and Arabs concerning Jerusalem be easily settled, since each place has deep historical, cultural, and emotional meaning to both peoples. Cultural questions like these involve a yes or no, zero-sum choice. (1996:129–130)

Implicit in Huntington's argument is the conviction that disputes between states of different civilizations are more likely to become culturally loaded in such a way as to exacerbate intercivilizational conflict levels. Where Huntington's primordialist analysis departs from more instrumentalist views is his location of these conflict-enhancing factors in the identities of the disputants themselves, rather than in the nature of the issues in the dispute. The logic of this assumption is simple for Huntington: if difference in cultural identity is conflict laden, and identity is largely exclusive and immutable, then one's identity in a dispute is more important than one's position in a dispute; therefore, disputes related to identity are less likely to be amenable to compromise. Huntington (1996:289–290) implies that culturally dissimilar decisionmakers are likely to employ a “civilizational realpolitik” (i.e., a cultural realist) strategy in their intercivilizational disputes, which, in his view, increases the probability of escalation to a fault-line war.³ Moreover, since civilization membership is rooted primarily in religious identity, this further reduces the likelihood of compromise, and, in fact, intensifies the conflict proneness of intercivilizational disputes.

Huntington (1993a) suggests that compromise in identity conflicts is difficult among religiously dissimilar disputants because of the often unreflective and intransigent nature of territorial claims based on religious beliefs. By comparison, although a cultural characteristic such as spoken language is cumulative in that one can learn to speak several languages, this is not the case with religion. The exclusivity of religion is far more complete than that entailed by race or ethnicity since “[a] person can be half-French and half-Arab and simultaneously even a citizen of two countries”; however, “[i]t is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim” (p. 27). The exclusivity of religious-based differences derives from the fact that they reflect divergent views on fundamental issues of human existence, such as the nature of life and the fundamental ordering principles of self, family, and society, as well as issues of eschatology and salvation. As noted elsewhere, “[u]nderwritten by ‘God,’ political mobilization rooted in religious identification often takes on the aspect of a secular religion that routinely requires human sacrifice” (Henderson, 1997:663–664).

Propositions

The most explicit proposition that one can derive from Huntington's work is that in the post-Cold War era, the most prevalent form of global conflict will occur at the fault lines of the major civilizations.⁴ Huntington stated it unequivocally:

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world [the post-Cold War era] will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. (1993a:22)

³ While empirical evidence (e.g., Leng, 1983) suggests that in repeated disputes with the same adversary the use of coercive bargaining strategies by decisionmakers increases the likelihood of escalation to war, at present, no evidence has been found to support Huntington's “civilizational realpolitik” claims.

⁴ Although the present study is focused on interstate conflict, there is also an intrastate dimension of Huntington's thesis, which posits that the CoC is operative within states where groups representing different civilizations are more likely to fight each other. This intrastate dimension is not systematically examined in this article, although previous empirical studies have examined aspects of it (e.g., Gurr, 1994).

The ascendance of cultural factors in world politics results largely from the view that “[s]tates define threats in terms of the intentions of other states, and those intentions and how they are perceived are powerfully shaped by cultural considerations” (p. 34). Huntington insists that decisionmakers “are much more likely to see threats coming from states whose societies have different cultures and hence which they do not understand and feel they cannot trust” (p. 34). Therefore, states are more likely to “cooperate with and ally themselves with states with similar or common culture and are more often in conflict with countries of different culture” (p. 34). As a response to the changing locus of power in the system, the linkages among states that previously were a function of basic security concerns (Walt, 1987), balance of power considerations (Waltz, 1979), or ideological orientation (Siverson and Emmons, 1991; Simon and Gartzke, 1996; Thompson and Tucker, 1997a, 1997b) have come to reflect the shared cultural orientations of the states. Hence, for Huntington (1993a:31), “the Velvet Curtain of culture has replaced the Iron Curtain of ideology” and “the core states of the major civilizations are supplanting the two Cold War superpowers as the principal poles of interaction and repulsion for other countries” (Huntington, 1996:155). The result is that the wars of ideology that shaped the Cold War landscape have given way to wars of civilizations in the post-Cold War era. Huntington labels these wars between civilizations “fault-line wars.”

Further, in this “new world,” according to Huntington (p. 125), “cultural identity is the central factor shaping a country’s associations and antagonisms” and, therefore, “states increasingly define their interests in civilization terms” (p. 34). In the post-Cold War era, “the question, ‘Which side are you on?’ has been replaced by the much more fundamental one, ‘Who are you?’” and “[e]very state has to have an answer.” For Huntington, “[t]hat answer, its cultural identity, defines the state’s place in world politics, its friends, and its enemies.” Therefore, Huntington’s primary CoC thesis contends that:

Proposition 1.1: During the post-Cold War era, intercivilizational difference is associated with an increased likelihood of interstate war.

Although the post-Cold War focus of Huntington’s (1993a:22–25; 1993b:187; 1996:20) argument is clear, the CoC thesis actually purports to account for the incidence of interstate conflict over a much longer time span. This is implicit in Huntington’s (1996:39, 255) assertion that during the Cold War period the CoC was suppressed by the superpower rivalry. This suggests that during the Cold War the impact of the superpower stand-off effectively mitigated the CoC because alignments were guided largely by ideology (p. 34)—a view supported by empirical analyses of alliance aggregation during the Cold War era (see Siverson and Emmons, 1991; Simon and Gartzke, 1996; Thompson and Tucker, 1997a, 1997b). One may draw two conclusions from the putative relationship between cultural factors and war, which Huntington suggests was operative during the Cold War era. On the one hand, one might maintain that the greater salience of ideological factors during the Cold War era should have vitiated any significant association between cultural factors and interstate war. Therefore, the relationship between civilization membership and war during the Cold War era should have been insignificant. On the other hand, one might contend that the absence of intercivilizational conflict, coupled with intracivilizational cooperation (which is assumed to be the general state of affairs, see below), should have resulted in a negative relationship between civilization membership and interstate war in the Cold War era. Since either of these outcomes is consistent with Huntington’s thesis we propose the following:

Proposition 1.2: During the Cold War era, intercivilizational difference is negatively or insignificantly associated with the likelihood of interstate war.

In addition, the alleged suppression of the CoC during the Cold War assumes that it was operative prior to that era. This implies a much longer temporal pedigree for the CoC. It follows from Huntington's premises that the relationship between civilization membership and conflict that is manifest in the post-Cold War era is, to some degree, an extension of the relationship between joint civilization membership and conflict throughout history. However, one does not have to rely solely on the implications of Huntington's statements to realize that his CoC thesis is assumed to be operative over a much longer time period; he is also quite explicit with regard to his claims of a "longue durée" for the CoC. This is evident in Huntington's (1993a:25) claim that "[o]ver the centuries . . . differences among civilizations have generated the most prolonged and the most violent conflicts." He also notes that "[c]ommon membership in a civilization reduces the probability of violence in situations where it might otherwise occur" and where intracivilizational conflicts occur, he insists that these conflicts "are likely to be less intense . . . than conflicts between civilizations" (p. 38). Huntington (1996:126) adds that "[p]eople rally to those with similar ancestry, religion, language, values, and institutions and distance themselves from those with different ones." Moreover, after delineating the various issues that have been "the sources of conflict between humans throughout history," Huntington (1996:208) avers that "[w]hen states from different civilizations are involved, however, cultural differences sharpen the conflict."

Emblematic of the more protracted nature of the CoC, for Huntington, is his view of the historic conflict between Christian and Islamic societies. Drawing on Richardson's (1960) data, he observes that "50 percent of wars involving pairs of states of different religions between 1820 and 1929 were wars between Muslims and Christians" (Huntington, 1996:210). He insists that the causes of the prolonged conflict between Islamic and Western civilizations "lie not in transitory phenomena such as twelfth-century Christian passion or twentieth-century Muslim fundamentalism," but rather, "[t]hey flow from the nature of the two religions and the civilizations based on them" (p. 210). He forecasts that "[s]o long as Islam remains Islam . . . and the West remains the West . . . this fundamental conflict between two great civilizations and ways of life will continue to define their relations in the future even as it has defined them for the past fourteen centuries" (p. 212). Therefore, beyond his assessments of the factors influencing post-Cold War and Cold War conflicts, Huntington's CoC thesis suggests that, *ceteris paribus*, culturally dissimilar states, throughout history, have been more likely to fight each other than culturally similar states.⁵

Proposition 1.3: During the pre-Cold War era, intercivilizational difference is positively associated with an increased likelihood of interstate war.

All told, Huntington's CoC thesis makes three clear, empirical assumptions: (1) in the post-Cold War era, states of different civilizations have been more likely to fight each other; (2) during the Cold War era, the superpowers constrained intercivilizational conflict; and (3) throughout history states of different civilizations have been more likely to fight each other than have those that share a common civilization. These empirical claims beg systematic examination, and

⁵ The only temporal exception to this generalization is the Cold War period (discussed above).

Huntington, as well as others, has provided some empirical analyses of these relationships. We turn to a discussion of several of these studies in the next section.

Previous Empirical Tests of Huntington's Thesis

Huntington (pp. 257–258) conducts some cursory analyses of the relationship between civilization membership and involvement in “ethnopolitical conflicts.” However, his findings are unpersuasive since his analysis is devoid of relevant controls. It focuses primarily on intrastate rather than interstate conflict, and it is temporally restricted to the 1993–94 period. It also appears that Huntington’s utilization of Richardson’s (1960) findings to support his contentions regarding the enduring conflict between Islam and Western Christendom ignores the more complex relationships uncovered by Richardson. First, it is important to remember that Richardson’s (1960) study, which provides the earliest systematic treatment of the impact of cultural similarity on international conflict, focuses on disparate types of conflicts (most of which are not interstate wars) and is restricted to the period from 1820 to 1929. Second, Richardson (1960:223–230) found that, in the main, common religion did not have a dampening effect on the incidence of war (nor did common language). Although shared Confucianism appeared to be associated with a decreased likelihood of war, no such relationship obtained for Islam or Christianity (pp. 238–239). While there appeared to be a relationship between religious dissimilarity and conflict in the case of Christianity versus Islam (p. 245), Richardson also found that Christianity more than Islam was subject to internecine conflict (pp. 235–239). Therefore, Richardson’s (1960) findings do not provide the unequivocal support for either the CoC thesis, in general, or Huntington’s conception of “Islam’s Bloody Borders,” specifically. In fact, a casual review of the relationship between religious similarity and interstate war using Correlates of War Project data reveals that of the 30 dyadic interstate wars between states of different civilizations from 1816 to 1992, only 11 (37%) were between Islamic and Christian states, and of those only 4 (13% of the total) were between Islamic and Western states, the others occurring between Islamic and Orthodox Christian states. These relationships seem to challenge the view that a disproportionate amount of intercivilizational wars has occurred between Islam and Western Christendom. Moreover, they encourage a more informed systematic examination of the CoC thesis.

In addition, Henderson’s (1997, 1998) empirical analysis of the relationship between cultural similarity and interstate war found that while common religion is associated with a decreased likelihood of interstate war, both shared ethnicity and shared language are associated with an increased likelihood of interstate war. Although the findings with regard to the impact of religious dissimilarity on interstate war may provide support for one aspect of Huntington’s thesis, nevertheless, the overall relationship between cultural similarity and the likelihood of war in these studies seems to militate against the sweeping generalizations of the CoC thesis. More tellingly, Gurr’s (1994) analysis of “ethnopolitical conflicts,” which utilizes the same Minority at Risk data that Huntington (1996:257–258) relies on to support his CoC claims, largely gainsays Huntington’s contentions. In fact, Gurr’s (1994:347) empirical analysis indicates that the primary culprit in ethnopolitical conflicts among groups of different civilizations in the post-World War II era is the transformation of the political system of the states in which they are located. Specifically, he demonstrates that the presence of a political transition within countries undergoing state formation, revolution, or democratization is the most important factor in intercivilizational disputes within states. The end of the Cold War simply increased the number of such transitions as new states were added to the system. What is more, Gurr (p. 347) insists that although

"[c]ommunal conflicts across fault lines between civilizations and religious traditions are more intense than others," nevertheless, they "have not increased in relative frequency or severity since the end of the Cold War."

However, it is important to note that none of these studies that are critical of Huntington's thesis has explicitly tested the CoC thesis. For example, Henderson's (1997, 1998) studies focus on the religious, ethnic, and linguistic characteristics of states rather than on the broad civilizational characteristics emphasized in the CoC thesis. Also, the temporal domain of those studies ends with observations in 1989, therefore they do not examine the post-Cold War relationships that are important to the CoC thesis. In addition, Gurr's (1994) analysis focuses primarily on intrastate rather than interstate conflict. Two other studies (Chiozza, 1999; Russett et al., 2000) provide more straightforward tests of Huntington's thesis explicitly; however, they both focus on international conflict short of war.⁶

To be sure, Huntington (1996:262) himself acknowledges that the evidence required to support his claims is beyond that which he provides in his primarily anecdotal conceptualization of the CoC thesis. He also states that his study is "not intended to be a work of social science" (p. 13), although this does not prevent him from making forecasts and developing testable propositions from his self-described "civilization paradigm" (pp. 13–14, 35, 37), which he argues is superior to universalist as well as realist and other state-centered theoretical frameworks (pp. 34–39). Even a cursory review of Huntington's claims reveals that despite his assertions to the contrary, he is clearly promulgating testable propositions that are appropriate subjects of social-scientific analysis.⁷ Therefore, our objective in the present study is to provide a rigorous examination of Huntington's claims using a research design that explicitly tests his CoC thesis over several spatial-temporal domains while employing relevant controls that impact on the presumed relationship between civilization membership and interstate war. In the next section we delineate our research design that we utilize to evaluate the propositions that devolve from the CoC thesis.

Research Design

Outcome Variable

The outcome variable in this study is the presence/absence of an interstate war for the state dyad. If the dyad experienced an interstate war, it is coded as "1"; if it did not, it is coded as "0". The outcome variable does not include wars involving nonstate actors, such as colonies, but only those recognized states according to COW criteria (Small and Singer, 1982).⁸ The primary predictor

⁶ Specifically, Chiozza (1999) focuses on international crises and Russett et al. (2000) focus on militarized interstate disputes.

⁷ Huntington (1996:37) not only clearly formulates propositions—even predictions—derived from the CoC thesis, he even conducts empirical tests of those propositions derived from his "civilizational paradigm" (see above). Further, he states that not only do paradigms inform foreign policy, but "[p]aradigms also generate predictions, and a crucial test of a paradigm's validity and usefulness is the extent to which the predictions derived from it turn out to be more accurate than those from alternative paradigms." He then attempts to show how the predictions that are derived from his CoC thesis are more accurate than those from a statist perspective drawing on, *inter alia*, the relationship between Russia and the Ukraine as a case in point. Therefore, his comments to the contrary notwithstanding, it is clear that even Huntington seems to agree that one can derive testable propositions from the CoC thesis.

⁸ The COW project defines an interstate war as an armed conflict involving the regular armed forces of two recognized states in which a participant incurs a minimum of 1,000 battle deaths. For some, this coding rule arbitrarily excludes what are clear "clashes of civilizations" between imperialist powers and their subjects; however, since there is a dearth of data on the relative capabilities, regime-type, etc., of the nonstate actors, then their inclusion would militate against the type of analysis we wish to conduct. Further, Huntington's "cultural realist" thesis, in its international (as opposed to domestic) variant, focuses on the behavior of states more than the interaction of state and nonstate actors. For an analysis of the correlates of extrastate wars, see Henderson, 2000.

variable is civilization membership, with additional controls for geographic proximity, regime-type, and power parity.

Predictor Variable

Civilization membership follows the criteria outlined in Huntington (1996:45–48, Map 1.3). The civilization categories include Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Western, Latin American, African, and Buddhist civilizations. States that do not fall within these categories are classified as “Other.” Ten codings are used for civilization type: the nine specific civilizations, and an “Other” category. Each state is classified by its civilization type; a dummy variable (Mixed Civilization) is coded “1” if the states in the dyad represent different civilizations; “0” if they share a common civilization. The civilization coding for each state can be found in the Appendix.

It is important to note that there are several inconsistencies in Huntington’s designation of major civilizations and the states that fall within them. For example, he is ambivalent as to whether there is an African civilization although he begrudgingly includes it in his list of major civilizations (p. 47). At times he suggests that Buddhism is a civilization (pp. 109, 137–138, 176, 219, 257), while in other places he suggests that it is not (pp. 45, 47), and in still others he is ambivalent about it (pp. 47–48). In the end, Huntington appears to include Buddhism as a major civilization since he includes it in Map 1.3, which depicts the world’s civilizations. Therefore, we code it as such.⁹ It also is not clear where some of the Caribbean states fall in the civilizational spectrum; that is, are they Western or Latin American? For example, while Huntington includes Cuba and the Dominican Republic in the Latin American civilization, Haiti appears to be neither Latin American nor Western; therefore, we place it in the “Other” category. There are also several countries such as Guyana, Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, Surinam, and others listed on Map 1.3 that are torn between civilizations and we coded these as “Other.” In the case of Comoros and Mauritius, which are primarily Islamic and Hindu states, respectively, we follow Huntington’s classification and code them as members of the African civilization. In addition, Huntington excludes Judaism from his list of civilizations. At first blush this might appear to have major repercussions for our analysis since it will force us to include Israel in the “Other” category and risk losing the conflicts between Israel and several of its Islamic neighbors. In practice, though, this coding should not skew our results because conflicts between Islamic states and Israel will be captured as conflicts between Islamic and “Other” states.¹⁰

To be sure, one may take issue with Huntington’s classificatory scheme, and in several cases we do; however, in order to assess the CoC thesis properly it is important that we stay as close to Huntington’s typology as is reasonable. Without doing so we run the risk of failing to test Huntington’s thesis explicitly.

⁹ In its latest incarnation, Huntington’s (1999:18) discussion with regard to Buddhism is just as inconsistent as that found in his earlier work. For example, he states: “What can legitimately be described as a Buddhist civilization, however, does exist in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia; and Tibet, Mongolia, and Bhutan.” He then adds that “the virtual extinction of Buddhism in India and its incorporation into existing cultures in other major countries means that it has not been the basis of a major civilization.”

¹⁰ On the other hand, since Huntington does not include Judaism as a civilization, then one might contend that the Middle East Wars cannot, therefore, represent clashes of civilizations in the strict sense. Nevertheless, the removal of cases that involve Israel—as well as the removal of the category “Other” as a whole—from our analyses does not have a significant impact on our findings. Also, since Huntington seems to view civilization membership as relatively time invariant—although he intimates that during the nineteenth century the U.S. was not as firmly situated in the West as it is now—we assume that states belong to the same civilization during the entire 1816–1992 period.

Therefore, although our codings of states in their respective civilizations do not necessarily conform to our definitions, they closely conform to Huntington's.¹¹

Control Variables

Our study is not designed to evaluate the full range of relevant counterarguments to Huntington's thesis, some of which focus explicitly on the CoC thesis (e.g., Ajami, 1993; Bartley, 1993; Mahbubani, 1993; Rubenstein and Crocker, 1994; Mottahedeh, 1995; Walt, 1997; Midlarsky, 1998; Rosecrance, 1998; Senghaas, 1998). Others address the larger relationship between cultural similarity and conflict (e.g., Gleditsch and Singer, 1975; Henderson, 1998). Instead, we focus on the empirically based—rather than the more policy oriented—counterarguments to the CoC thesis. Therefore, the control variables we utilize in this study are derived from theoretical counterarguments to the CoC thesis which insist that in the presence of relevant “non-civilization-based” factors, the impact of civilization membership on international conflict will be vitiated. By refuting the empirical basis of Huntington's thesis, we would also undermine the policy recommendations that derive from it. On the other hand, if the impact of civilization membership is significant in light of these “non-civilization-based” control variables, we would have gone far in corroborating the CoC thesis. Further, by substantiating Huntington's empirical claims one would buttress his policy prescriptions. The three “non-civilization-based” factors that we include as controls are geographical proximity, regime-type, and relative capability.

Geographic Proximity. We assume that the impact of civilizational difference on war will be manifest only among proximate civilizations. It is not surprising that states in noncontiguous civilizations (e.g., Latin American and Sinic states) are less likely to fight since they rarely have an opportunity to interact. The major alternative empirical thesis on the relationship between cultural similarity and the likelihood of interstate war centers on the role of geographic proximity as a mitigating factor in intercultural conflicts. Richardson (1960) concluded that territory was an important mitigating factor in the “deadly quarrels” of culturally dissimilar disputants. This view is supported by Holsti (1991), who concluded that concerns over territory have generated more wars than any other issue for the period 1648–1989. Diehl (1985) and Vasquez (1993) showed that 59 of the 67 (88%) interstate wars between 1816 and 1980 involved neighbors; and Bremer (1992) has found that contiguity has a greater impact on the likelihood of war within state dyads than alliance membership, regime-type, levels of development, extent of militarization, power status, and differentials in relative capabilities.

Singer (1981) reminds us that neighbors are more likely to be both culturally similar and prone to conflict. Gleditsch and Singer's (1975) study of the impact of distance on interstate war concludes that proximity more than culture is a predictor to war onset. They reason that since cultural cousins are more often neighbors, and neighbors are more likely to fight, distance rather than culture is the significant variable in interstate conflict. But, even controlling for contiguity, Henderson (1997, 1998) has found that religious, ethnic, and linguistic factors are significantly associated with the likelihood of war onset. However, since

¹¹ One may quarrel with Huntington's classificatory schema on a number of levels and with respect to a number of cases. Beyond the issue of whether it is accurate to conceptualize civilizations at all, in the way that Huntington does, clearly several cases are contentious. For example, although there is a majority Christian population in the Philippines, Huntington classifies this as a hybrid state with Sinic, Christian, and Muslim characteristics. Kazakhstan is heavily Orthodox and Muslim, but Huntington codes it as an Orthodox state. Israel is coded as a “Western” civilization by Russett et al. (2000) but this classification is inconsistent with Huntington's (1996) thesis, which, although at times is ambivalent as to whether Judaism represents a major civilization (contrast p. 48 with p. 317), is quite clear that Israel is not a Western state (see pp. 71, 90, 186).

previous studies have not specifically tested the CoC thesis, the alleged mitigating effect posed by distance on relationships between civilization membership and interstate conflict remains plausible. In our analysis we utilize a distance variable that is constructed using a capital-to-capital measure to capture the proximity (in kilometers) of states in the dyad; however, if two states are contiguous by land, the distance is zero regardless of the distance between their respective capitals (see Bennett and Stam, 1998). Distance between national capitals is calculated using the Great Circle distance formula as delineated in Fitzpatrick and Modlin, 1986:xi.¹²

Regime-Type. In addition, the conflict-dampening impact of joint democracy appears to be evident across cultural spheres (Russett, 1993; Ray, 1995; Maoz, 1997). It follows that regardless of civilization membership, democracies of diverse civilizations will be less likely to fight one another, a claim that is at odds with the CoC thesis. The findings of the relationship between cultural factors and the democratic peace seem to support this viewpoint (Henderson, 1998). In order to examine the mitigating impact of joint democracy on intercivilizational conflict, we include a joint democracy variable (Joint Democracy), which is computed from the values of the individual states' democracy and autocracy scores using the Polity III data set (Jaggers and Gurr, 1996). It is coded "1" if both states in a dyad score greater than "6" on individual state scores; otherwise, it is coded "0". Our regime-type indicator is assigned a one-year time lag.

Capabilities. Lastly, realists contend that relative power capabilities are more salient than cultural (or civilizational) factors in a state's decision to go to war. Findings on the relationship between the relative power capabilities of states support the contention that power parity between states is associated with an increased likelihood of war, while asymmetries of power between states are associated with an increased likelihood of peace (Weede, 1976; Bremer, 1992). We construct our power parity variable in two steps. First, we draw our asymmetry scores for each dyad using Beck and Tucker's (1998) measure of asymmetry, where a total score of "1" on the asymmetry scale indicates a completely asymmetrical dyad and a value of "0" represents a perfectly symmetrical dyad. Second, we subtract the asymmetry score from "1" and the resultant score is our power parity score. Since our power parity variable takes the value of "1 - the asymmetry score," then the greater the value of this variable (i.e., the more equal the two states in terms of their relative capabilities), the greater the likelihood of war (Organski and Kugler, 1980; Kugler and Lemke, 1996). The power parity variable (Power Parity) is also assigned a one-year time lag.

Methodology

The spatial-temporal domain of the analysis encompasses all state dyads observed annually for the period 1816–1992 (Tucker, 1998). Since our outcome variable—the onset of international conflict—is a binary choice (0 or 1), estimations are made using logit regression (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984). The baseline model takes the following form: $Pr(\text{War}_{i,t}) = 1/(1 + e^{-Z_i})$; where $Pr(\text{War}_{i,t})$ is the probability that the outcome variable (the onset of interstate war) equals 1; and Z_i is the sum

¹² Distance between national capitals is calculated as: $\text{Cos}(D) (\text{Sin}(L1) * \text{Sin}(L2)) + (\text{Cos}(L2) * \text{Cos}(DiffLo))$; where $L1$ is the latitude of the capital of state A; $L2$ is the latitude of the capital of state B; $DiffLo$ is the difference in longitude between the respective capitals; D is the arc distance (in degrees) between the respective capitals. Within the formula, northern latitudes are specified as positive values and southern latitudes are negative; eastern longitudes are specified as positive values and western longitudes are negative. Given the arc distance D , distance in miles is computed by multiplying D by the average number of miles per degree, 69.16 (see Bennett and Stam, 1998).

of the product of the coefficient values (β_k) across all observations of the predictor variables ($X_{i,t}$), that is: $\alpha + \beta_1$ Mixed Civilization + β_2 Distance + β_3 Joint Democracy + β_4 Power Parity. We report both bivariate and multivariate findings on the relationship between civilization membership and interstate war (with the multivariate regression including our control variables) for each time period. Beck and Tucker (1997) and Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1998) stress the importance of accounting for spatial and temporal dependence in binary time-series cross-section analysis and suggest a variety of ways to detect, and correct, for such dependencies. The most straightforward method they propose is the addition of a set of dummy variables, constructed from an indicator of the length of time since the last outcome (in this case, the length of time since the previous war onset) to the original specification. Another correction employs the use of natural cubic splines in the logit estimation. The following analyses correct for specifications that exhibit temporal dependence by including the time counter variable (Peace Years) and its accompanying spline variables.¹³ In addition, we calculate robust standard errors, as discussed in Beck and Tucker, 1997, to control for potential problems of spatial dependence. Having discussed the basic research design, in the next section we evaluate the propositions outlined above.

Findings

Post-Cold War

One of Huntington's primary claims is that the CoC is operative in the post-Cold War era, and therefore civilization difference should be associated with an increased likelihood of interstate war in this period. An examination of the results found in Column I, Table 1, however, suggests that states of different civilizations are actually less likely than states of the same civilization to fight one another. This finding is inconsistent with Proposition 1.1 and appears to turn Huntington's thesis on its head. This finding suggests that we are not witnessing the emergence of a "new era of clashing civilizations" in world politics; however, simple bivariate regressions cannot provide definitive support for or against the relationship between a particular factor and the onset of international violence. A multivariate analysis will allow us to determine if the relationship between civilization membership and conflict holds when controlling for potentially mitigating factors (specifically, those discussed above).

When we control for geographic distance, joint democracy, and power parity, there is no statistically significant relationship between civilization membership and the likelihood of interstate war as revealed in the multivariate findings in Column II of Table 1. These findings reveal that states belonging to different civilizations are neither more nor less likely to fight one another during the post-Cold War era. On the other hand, both joint democracy and geographic distance clearly reduce the likelihood of interstate conflict ($p < 0.001$) and these two findings corroborate two of the most consistent findings in international relations research. We found no statistically significant relationship between power parity and war onset during this period. Altogether the results in Table 1 indicate that when we control for other important factors, the effect of civilization membership during the post-Cold War era is not statistically significant.

A counterargument to these conclusions is that our data analysis only examines the relationships between 1989 and 1992 and therefore fails to take into

¹³ Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1998) suggest that the choice of either approach (temporal dummies or splines) has "almost no consequences" for the estimation of the parameter estimates. Tucker (1999) contains a set of *Stata* functions used here to produce the Peace Years variable, and the accompanying temporal dummies and splines described in Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1998).

TABLE 1. Logit Analysis of the Clash of Civilizations, 1989–1992

	<i>Column I</i>	<i>Column II</i>
Mixed Civilization	-2.11*** (.53)	-.96 (.67)
Distance	—	-.34* (.19)
Joint Democracy	—	-.33*** (.13)
Power Parity	—	1.01 (.98)
Constant	-6.91*** (.33)	-4.69*** (.83)
-2LL	-131.23	-91.15
χ^2	131.23***	33.94***
N	58,274	36,168

Huber/White RSEs are in parentheses; *p < .05 level, **p < .01 level, ***p < .001 level.
 *significant below .08 level; all p-values are estimated using two-tailed tests.

account those that have emerged since then, which may provide support for Huntington's thesis. Of course, data limitations render this an empirical issue that cannot be put to rest directly at this juncture because our findings are temporally bounded by observations ending in 1992. However, 1992 is also the last full year from which Huntington could draw his observations on which he could base his initial CoC contentions, which were first published in the summer of 1993. Therefore, the time frame for both analyses is generally the same, and if the CoC thesis is accurate, it should certainly not be falsified over the range of cases that its progenitor had to draw on in order to promulgate it in the first place. From where can one derive evidence to support claims that clashes of civilizations lead to wars if not in the historical record? Clearly, Huntington argues that the historical record reveals that "differences among civilizations have generated the most prolonged and the most violent conflicts" and for him this historical current is especially (though not exclusively) evident since the end of the Cold War. In order to substantiate such a claim, he assesses the salience of these civilizational factors in world politics. Therefore, if the findings from the post-Cold War era are inconsistent with the CoC thesis—considering that the period encompasses the full range of empirical observations the author could draw on in promulgating his thesis in the first place—then by refuting his claims for the time period 1989–1992 one has seriously challenged a very important aspect of the CoC thesis.

Cold War

Huntington also argues that the superpower stand-off kept a lid on intercivilizational clashes in the Cold War era. According to this logic, the impact of the CoC should have been either negative or insignificant. The results in Columns I and II in Table 2 reveal that this aspect of Huntington's thesis has some support since the relationship between mixed civilizations and the probability of war is statistically insignificant (although the coefficient is positive). However, it is not clear whether Huntington is correct in his view that the superpowers effectively "suppressed" intercivilizational conflict since there was hardly an absence of such conflict during the Cold War era. Rather, it appears that our results simply reflect the coincidence of both intracivilizational and intercivilizational conflicts

TABLE 2. Logit Analysis of the Clash of Civilizations, 1946–1988

	Column I	Column II
Mixed Civilization	.33 (.43)	.55 (.41)
Distance	—	-.30*** (.07)
Joint Democracy	—	-3.12*** (1.03)
Power Parity	—	1.17** (.46)
Peace Years	—	-1.60*** (.13)
Spline 1 ^b	—	-.21*** (.02)
Spline 2 ^b	—	.15*** (.02)
Spline 3 ^b	—	-.40*** (.09)
Constant	-8.81*** (.39)	-2.70*** (.45)
-2LL	-638.02	-1,053.52
χ^2	.58	857.96***
N	338,976	267,315

Huber/White RSEs are in parentheses; *p < .05 level, **p < .01 level, ***p < .001 level.

^asignificant below .08 level; all p-values are estimated using two-tailed tests.

^bCoefficients of Peace Years cubic spline segments

throughout the Cold War era, which served to wash out any significant relationship between civilization membership and war. Conflicts during this period such as wars in the Middle East, South Asia, Korea, and Vietnam, which involved states of different civilizations, were contemporaneous with conflicts such as those between Ethiopia and Somalia, Uganda and Tanzania, China and Vietnam (twice), and Iran and Iraq, which pitted states of similar civilizations against each other.

Pre-Cold War

In addition, Huntington's CoC thesis implies that intercivilizational difference, *ceteris paribus*, is associated with an increased likelihood of interstate war during the pre-Cold War era. We tested this aspect of his thesis by analyzing data for the entire 1816–1945 period, from the Congress of Vienna to the end of World War II. An examination of Column I in Table 3 indicates that during this period, states of different civilizations were actually less likely to engage in conflict with each other than were those from similar civilizations, refuting Proposition 1.3 of the CoC thesis. Moreover, controlling for geographic distance, joint democracy, and power parity (Column II) did not cancel out this relationship. Contrary to the CoC thesis, it appears that in the pre-Cold War era, common civilization membership is associated with an increased likelihood of interstate war. Thus, in the only time period in which the relationship between civilization membership and war is statistically significant below the conventional .05 level threshold, the general relationship between civilization membership and interstate war is the *opposite* of that suggested by Huntington (1993a, 1993b, 1996). On the whole, our

TABLE 3. Logit Analysis of the Clash of Civilizations, 1816–1945

	<i>Column I</i>	<i>Column II</i>
Mixed Civilization	-.60*** (.15)	-.59** (.23)
Distance	—	-.30 (.40)
Joint Democracy	—	-2.37*** (.52)
Power Parity	—	.17 (.24)
Peace Years	—	-1.50*** (.13)
Spline 1 ^b	—	-.81*** (.07)
Spline 2 ^b	—	.40*** (.03)
Spline 3 ^b	—	-.50*** (.04)
Constant	-5.80*** (.10)	-.43*** (.17)
-2LL	-1755.06	-2089.57
χ^2	15.82***	1,835.20***
N	118,648	97,901

Huber/White RSEs are in parentheses; *p < .05 level, **p < .01 level, ***p < .001 level.

^asignificant below .08 level; all p-values are estimated using two-tailed tests.

^bCoefficients of Peace Years cubic spline segments

findings indicate that Huntington's CoC thesis is incorrect for two of the three time periods to which it is applied. Most importantly, it is not supported for the post-Cold War era, which is the time period for which it is assumed to be particularly relevant.

Discussion

In largely refuting Huntington's (1993a, 1996) empirical claims, our findings undermine the salience of the policy prescriptions that he proffers in light of his CoC thesis. Since our results indicate that civilizational differences are not associated with the fault-line wars of the post-Cold War era that Huntington anticipates (1993a:39) and prefigures (1996:313–316), then his foreign policy prescription of cultural containment appears ill-advised, at best. That is, viewing the world through civilizational lenses is more likely to blind decisionmakers to both the divisions within civilizations (including their own) and the cross-cutting cleavages among them, which might provide opportunities for cooperation (Deutsch and Singer, 1964). Moreover, a policy of cultural containment is probably likely to foment interstate conflict by encouraging more aggressive policies toward states of different civilizations while creating a false sense of security that members of the same civilization will have convergent interests.¹⁴ Walt (1997:189) concurs

¹⁴ One of the earliest critics of the CoC thesis, Mahubani (1993:13) emphasized this point with regard to Huntington's speculations with regard to a "Confucian-Islamic connection," of which he noted that "[t]he real tragedy of suggesting a Confucian-Islamic connection is that it obscures the fundamentally different nature of the challenge posed by these forces."

that “the civilizational paradigm that Huntington has offered is not a sound basis for making foreign policy” and that “[r]elying upon an overly broad category like ‘civilization’ would blind us to the differences within broad cultural groups” and “might unwittingly rob policymakers of the flexibility that has always been a cardinal diplomatic virtue.” Therefore, “if we treat all states who are part of some other ‘civilization’ as intrinsically hostile, we are likely to create enemies that might otherwise be neutral or friendly.”

Much of the problem lies in Huntington’s (1996) extreme cultural relativism where civilizations are viewed as largely incommensurable and bound by fundamental traditional values that differentiate them. Huntington (pp. 69–72) is struck by the alleged mutual receptivity of democracy and Western Christendom and the apparent mutual exclusivity of democracy and Islam that he calls “the inhospitable nature of Islamic culture and society to Western liberal concepts” (p. 114). A strong critique of his views about Islam’s presumed antidemocratic bias and inherent propensity to violence is provided by recent systematic evidence that challenges the mutual exclusivity thesis with regard to Islam and democracy (Midlarsky, 1998). Specifically, Midlarsky’s (p. 504) study of the relationship between Islam and democracy across 97 states over the period 1973–1987 finds that although Islamic societies appear to be less inclined toward liberal democracy, “[d]emocracy itself and Islam are not mutually exclusive” where democracy is measured using a political rights index such as Gastil, 1988. Wedding these results to democratic peace findings, which demonstrate that democracies rarely fight each other (Russett, 1993; Ray, 1995)—and the findings in this study, which indicate that civilization membership is not a significant predictor to war involvement but joint democracy is—it follows that, were Islamic states to develop democratic regimes, then the likelihood of warfare between Islamic states and Western democracies would diminish substantially (or disappear altogether if the thesis that democracies never fight each other is accurate; see Rummel, 1979). Aware of the implications of his findings for clashes between Islamic and Western states, Midlarsky (1998:505) asserts that civilizational conflict between Islamic and Western states “is not likely in the foreseeable future, if only because there are certain compatibilities between democracy and Islam that deny the mutual exclusivity hypothesis.”

Focusing on more rigorous treatments of the relationship between cultural factors and conflict/cooperation reveals just how much Huntington’s CoC thesis relies on anecdote and selective (in)attention to the historical record. For example, throughout his text, Huntington appears to have little problem taking the mutterings of government leaders at face value where they provide support for his thesis; however, Walt (1997:184–185) reminds us that “political rhetoric serves many functions” while “[t]he real issue is what these leaders (or their countries) will actually do, and how much blood and treasure they will devote to ‘civilizational’ interests.” As a case in point, Walt (1997:185) challenges Huntington’s (1996:246–252) depiction of the Gulf War as a harbinger of the fault-line wars that the latter presumes will prevail in the post–Cold War era. First, Walt reminds us that the Gulf War did not begin as a dispute between states of different civilizations but as an intracivilizational dispute between two Islamic states: Iraq and Kuwait. In this “clash of civilizations” Western states allied with one Islamic state, Kuwait, with tacit support from Israel, and repulsed another Islamic state, Iraq. Undeterred by these peculiarities, Huntington (1996) attempts to salvage his thesis by focusing on the sentiments of select individuals and groups from among the Islamic populations, which he argues favored Iraq. Second, Walt (1997:185) counters that “even if this were true, it merely underscores the fact that state interests mattered more than loosely felt and politically impotent loyalties to a particular ‘civilizational’ entity.”

Turning to another post-Cold War “clash of civilizations,” Walt (p. 185) points out that although the war in the former Yugoslavia manifests some of the trappings of a fault-line war, it ultimately fails as an intercivilizational conflict because the more than 50,000 U.S.-led troops that were deployed to Bosnia in 1996 were not there to defend Western interests (represented by Croatia) but Muslims (as is the case in the recent NATO intervention in Kosovo, which is aimed at protecting ethnic Albanians who are primarily Muslim). Further, he contends that while modest sums of aid for Bosnian Muslims were sent by Islamic countries, the lion’s share of support was provided by Western states. “Similarly, Russia offered some rhetorical support to the Serbs, but it backed away from its ‘Orthodox’ brethren when Serbian bellicosity made Belgrade an unappealing ally. Even the Western states failed to line up according to cultural criteria, with Britain and France being more sympathetic to the Serbs, Germany backing the Croats, and the United States reserving most of its support for the Muslims.”¹⁵

The major critique of the CoC thesis is that it ignores the persistent role of nationalism in world politics. Clearly, although nationalist conflict may resemble intercivilizational conflict at times (e.g., in independence struggles or colonial wars), nationalist interests often work at odds with civilizational ones, leading to intracivilizational wars (e.g., the wars of Italian and German Unification). For example, Walt (1997:183–184) states that “[b]eing part of some larger ‘civilization’ did not convince the Abkhaz, Armenians, Azeris, Chechens, Croats, Eritreans, Georgians, Kurds, Ossetians, Quebecois, Serbs, or Slovaks to abandon the quest for their own state.” Contrary to Huntington’s thesis, the nation, and not the civilization, appears to be the largest identity group to which people consistently swear fealty in the post-Cold War era.

Huntington is correct that states continue to be the major actors in world politics (and for the foreseeable future); however, he seems to have ignored the reason their influence persists: the enduring salience of nationalism in international relations. This “neglect of nationalism,” for Walt (p. 187), “is the Achilles’ Heal of the civilizational paradigm” (see also Ajami, 1993). Since civilizations are more or less ideational constructs rather than political agents, they are devoid of decision-making power or control over political or economic resources. By comparison, states “can mobilize their citizens, collect taxes, issue threats, reward friends, and wage war; in other words, states can act”; moreover, “[n]ationalism is a tremendously powerful force precisely because it marries individual cultural affinities to an agency—the state—that can actually do something” (Walt, 1997:187). To be sure, nationalist struggles may engender intercivilizational conflicts such as those that Huntington foresees; however, cultural differences, in the future as in the past, are likely to remain one of several factors including political, military, economic, and demographic ones that give rise to international conflict.

For example, Senghaus (1998:130) insists that socioeconomic factors are the primary culprits in the onset of ostensibly “intercivilizational” conflicts. He also maintains that cultural variables are, at best, secondary factors in the onset of wars and probably play a greater role in the (de)escalation of conflict once it has begun (p. 131). Moreover, scholars have also suggested that the CoC thesis neglects important conflict-dampening aspects of intercivilizational contact such as trade (Rosecrance, 1998). Earlier Bartley (1993) argued that the CoC thesis failed to take into account sufficiently the role of economic development, the spread of liberal democracy, and the expansion of communications networks as factors that will diminish the likelihood of intercivilizational clashes. In addition,

¹⁵ Even Huntington’s (1996:313–316) hypothetical case of an intercivilizational World War III in 2010 begins as a conflict between China and Vietnam, both of which Huntington includes in the Sinic civilization; therefore, even this hypothetical “clash of civilizations” is a “clash within civilizations.”

Katzenstein (1996:533–534) decries the narrow range of outcomes (i.e., fault-line wars) that Huntington associates with intercivilizational clashes and he makes the point that less bellicose outcomes often result from the interaction of civilizations.¹⁶ In sum, by focusing on theoretical and empirical blind spots in the CoC thesis such as noted in the critiques cited above, we are better equipped to respond to Huntington's (1993b) query, "If not civilizations, what?" Our findings suggest that evidently it is not civilizations; therefore, we need to proceed in a systematic way toward uncovering the actual correlates and causes of war so that we can employ more effective strategies to prevent them. Rather than simply trying to "build new bogeymen" as Walt suggests Huntington endeavors to do, we should build on extant research on the causes of war and peace (e.g., Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman, 1992; Russett, 1993; Vasquez, 1993) and put forward empirically grounded and rigorously substantiated theoretical models to inform foreign policy.

Conclusion

In this study we found that, contrary to the primary assumptions of Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis, civilization difference is not significantly associated with an increased likelihood of interstate war, when controlling for the proximity, regime-type, and relative capabilities of two states. In fact, our findings indicate that where civilization membership is associated with the onset of war, the relationship is basically opposite that which Huntington's CoC thesis suggests. Although our findings largely disconfirm the CoC thesis, we do not deny that cultural factors play a role in world politics; however, we conclude that they do not appear to play the role that Huntington assumes for them, nor do they suggest the need for a policy of cultural containment. To be sure, our findings indicate that Huntington's CoC thesis does not appear to provide a novel and auspicious direction for the study of international war; instead, our analysis reveals that relationships that derive from extant research programs such as those focusing on the conflict-dampening impact of joint democracy or the conflict-exacerbating tendency of power parity among dyads garner more consistent and significant empirical support than the clash of civilizations thesis.¹⁷

A major implication of this study is that future research on the relationship between cultural factors and international conflict should focus on integrating cultural factors into extant models of conflict (and cooperation) in world politics. International relations scholars lag behind comparativists in integrating cultural variables into their models of international conflict (particularly models of interstate war); in fact, much of the more rigorous work in this area is being done by scholars who straddle the bridge between comparative politics and world politics (e.g., Gurr, 1994; Fearon and Laitin, 1996; Davis and Moore, 1997). We contend that the most propitious path in this regard is to examine systematically the role of cultural variables on the process of elite decisionmaking. Their most obvious role in political outcomes is to provide a context for foreign policy decisionmaking (Hunt, 1987; Sampson, 1987). Analyses of the impact of such contexts will allow us to discern the (de)escalatory tendencies among decisionmakers across cultural divides and increase our understanding of the correlates of war and peace, providing a more sound basis for foreign policy.

¹⁶ Katzenstein (1996:535–537) also disagrees with Huntington on the composition of civilizations and the impact of diversity in the U.S. on the likelihood of clashes between the "West and the Rest."

¹⁷ The finding that joint democracy is a more robust predictor to interstate war involvement than civilization membership is consistent with the results of Henderson, 1998, which focused on the ethnic, linguistic, and religious similarity of states. Also Chiozza (1999) and Russett et al. (2000) find that joint democracy more than civilization membership accounts for states' involvement in international crises and militarized interstate disputes, respectively.

To be sure, conflicts among states of different civilizations will likely occur in the future, as they have in the past. While Huntington's CoC thesis has the "merit of simplicity, and it seems to make sense of some important contemporary events" (Walt, 1997:181, 188-189), its allure appears to rest more on a "call for new enemies" and its partial resemblance to classical realist tenets (Rubenstein and Crocker, 1994) than its empirical evidence. All told, the empirical findings from our study lead us to believe that Huntington's *Foreign Affairs* article of 1993, in which he first promulgated his clash of civilizations thesis, is not the post-Cold War equivalent of Kennan's "Long Telegram"; instead, it resembles a post-Cold War Schlieffen Plan that, if followed, is likely to provide the same result in the future as its namesake provided in 1914.

Appendix: Civilization Membership

African

Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Liberia, Malagasy Republic, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome-Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia, Zanzibar, Zimbabwe

Buddhist

Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand

Hindu

India, Nepal

Islamic

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Yemen Arab Republic, Yemen People's Republic

Japanese

Japan

Latin American

Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela

Orthodox

Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Rumania, Russia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia

Sinic

China, North Korea, South Korea, Republic of China, Dem. Rep. of Vietnam, Republic of Vietnam

Western

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Austria-Hungary, Baden, Bavaria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, German Federal Republic, Germany, Hanover, Hesse Electoral, Hesse Grand Ducal, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mecklenburg Schwerin, Modena, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papal States, Papua New Guinea, Parma, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Saxony, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tuscany, Two Sicilies, United Kingdom, United States of America, Wuertermberg

Other

Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Benin, Chad, Cyprus, Dominica, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Nigeria, Palau, Philippines, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Surinam, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu, Western Samoa

References

- AJAMI, F. (1993) The Summoning. *Foreign Affairs* 72(4):2-9.
- ALDRICH, J. H., AND F. D. NELSON (1984) *Linear Probability, Logit, and Probit Models*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- BANAC, I. (1992) The Fearful Asymmetry of War: The Causes and Consequences of Yugoslavia's Demise. *Daedalus* 121(2):141-174.
- BARTLEY, R. (1993) The Case for Optimism. *Foreign Affairs* 72(4):15-18.
- BECK, N., J. KATZ, AND R. TUCKER (1998) Taking Time Seriously in Binary Time-Series-Cross-Section Analysis. *American Journal of Political Science* 42(4):1260-1288.
- BECK, N., AND R. TUCKER (1997) Conflict in Time and Space. Working Paper 97-8. Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. <http://www.cc.columbia.edu/sec/dlc/ciao/wps/tur01>.
- BECK, N., AND R. TUCKER (1998) Democracy and Peace: General Law or Limited Phenomena. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April. <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~rtucker/papers/dempeace/demgam.html>.
- BENNETT, D., AND A. STAM (1998) *EUGene: Expected Utility Generation and Data Management Program*. Version 1.15. <http://wizard.ucr.edu/cps/eugene/eugene.html>.
- BOWEN, J. (1997) The Myth of Global Ethnic Conflict. *Journal of Democracy* 7(October):3-14.
- BREMER, S. (1992) Dangerous Dyads: Conditions Affecting the Likelihood of Interstate War, 1816-1965. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36:309-341.
- BUENO DE MESQUITA, B., AND D. LALMAN (1992) *War and Reason: Domestic and International Imperatives*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- CARMENT, D., AND P. JAMES, EDs. (1997) *Wars in the Midst of Peace: The International Politics of Ethnic Conflict*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- CHAY, J., ED. (1990) *Culture and International Relations*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- CHIOZZA, G. (1999) Is There a Clash of Civilizations? Evidence from Patterns of International Crisis Involvement 1918-1994. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Los Angeles, March.
- DAVIS, D., AND W. MOORE (1997) Ethnicity Matters: Transnational Ethnic Alliances and Foreign Policy Behavior. *International Studies Quarterly* 41:171-184.
- DESTEXHE, A. (1994) The Third Genocide. *Foreign Policy* 97(Winter):3-17.
- DEUTSCH, K., AND J. D. SINGER (1964) Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability. *World Politics* 16(April):390-406.
- DIEHL, P. (1985) Contiguity and Military Escalation in Major Power Rivalries, 1816-1980. *Journal of Politics* 47:1203-1211.
- FEARON, J., AND D. LAITIN (1996) Explaining Interethnic Cooperation. *American Political Science Review* 90(4):715-735.
- FITZPATRICK, G., AND M. MODLIN (1986) *Direct-line Distances*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- GAGNON, V. (1995) "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict." In *Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security*, edited by S. Lynn-Jones and S. Miller, pp. 331-367. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- GASTIL, R. (1988) *Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1987-1988*. New York: Viking.
- GLEDITSCH, N. P., AND J. D. SINGER (1975) "Distance and International War, 1816-1965." In *Proceedings of the International Peace Research Association, Fifth General Conference*, edited by M. R. Khan, pp. 481-506. Oslo: International Peace Research Association.
- GURR, T. R. (1994) Peoples Against States: Ethnopolitical Conflict and the Changing World System. *International Studies Quarterly* 38:347-377.
- GURR, T. R., AND B. HARFF (1994) *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*. New York: Westview Press.
- HENDERSON, E. (1995) *Afrocentrism and World Politics: Towards a New Paradigm*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- HENDERSON, E. (1997) Culture or Contiguity: Ethnic Conflict, the Similarity of States, and the Onset of Interstate War, 1820-1989. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41:649-668.

- HENDERSON, E. (1998) The Democratic Peace Through the Lens of Culture, 1820–1989. *International Studies Quarterly* 42(September):461–484.
- HENDERSON, E. (2000) Is the Democratic Peace an Imperialist Peace? Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September.
- HERZOG, R. (1999) *Preventing the Clash of Civilizations: A Peace Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- HOLSTI, K. (1991) *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648–1989*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- HOLSTI, K. (1997) International Theory and Domestic War in the Third World: The Limits of Relevance. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Toronto, March.
- HUNT, M. (1987) *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- HUNTINGTON, S. P. (1993a) The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs* 72(3):22–49.
- HUNTINGTON, S. P. (1993b) If Not Civilizations, What?—Paradigms of the Post-Cold War World. *Foreign Affairs* 72(5):186–194.
- HUNTINGTON, S. P. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- HUNTINGTON, S. P. (1999) "The Many Faces of the Future: Why We'll Never Have a Universal Civilization." In *Annual Editions: Global Issues 99/00*, edited by R. Jackson, pp. 15–18. Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill.
- JAGGERS, K., AND T. GURR (1996) *Polity III Data*. May. <http://wizard.ucr.edu/~wm/polity/polity.html>.
- JOHNSTON, I. (1995) *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Ming China*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- KATZENSTEIN, P. (1996) "Conclusion: National Security in a Changing World." In *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, edited by P. Katzenstein, pp. 498–537. New York: Columbia University Press.
- KUGLER, J., AND D. LEMKE, EDs. (1996) *Parity and War: Evaluations and Extensions of The War Ledger*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- LENG, R. (1983) When Will They Ever Learn? Coercive Bargaining in Recurrent Crises. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 27:379–419.
- MAHBUBANI, K. (1993) The Dangers of Decadence: What the Rest Can Teach the West. *Foreign Affairs* 72(4):11–14.
- MANSBACH, R., AND J. VASQUEZ (1981) *In Search of Theory: A New Paradigm of World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- MAOZ, Z. (1997) The Controversy over the Democratic Peace: Rearguard Action or Cracks in the Wall? *International Security* 22(1):162–198.
- MAYNES, C. (1993) Containing Ethnic Conflict. *Foreign Policy* 90:3–21.
- MAZRUI, A. (1990) *Cultural Forces in World Politics*. London: James Currey.
- MIDLARSKY, M., ED. (1992) *The Internationalization of Communal Strife*. New York: Routledge.
- MIDLARSKY, M. (1998) Democracy and Islam: Implications for Civilizational Conflict and the Democratic Peace. *International Studies Quarterly* 42(3):485–511.
- MORGENTHAU, H. (1985 [1948]) *Politics Among Nations*, 6th ed. New York: Knopf.
- MOTTAHEDEH, R. P. (1995) The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist's Critique. *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 2(1):1–26.
- ORGANSKI, A. F. K., AND J. KUGLER (1980) *The War Ledger*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- PFUFF, W. (1993) Invitation to War: Conflict in the Balkans. *Foreign Affairs* 72(3):97–109.
- RAY, J. L. (1995) *Democracy and International Conflict*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- RICHARDSON, L. F. (1960) *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels*. Pacific Grove, CA: Boxwood Press.
- ROSECRANCE, R. (1998) The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order (Book Review). *American Political Science Review* 92(4):978–980.
- RUBENSTEIN, R., AND J. CROCKER (1994) Challenging Huntington. *Foreign Policy* 96(Fall):113–128.
- RUMMEL, R. J. (1979) *Understanding Conflict and War*, vol. 4. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- RUSSETT, B. (1993) *Grasping the Democratic Peace*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- RUSSETT, B., J. ONEAL, AND M. COX (2000) Clash of Civilizations, or Realism and Liberalism Déjà Vu? Some Evidence. *Journal of Peace Research* 37(5):583–608.
- RYAN, S. (1990) *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*. Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth.
- SAMPSON, M. (1987) "Cultural Influences on Foreign Policy." In *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, edited by C. Hermann, C. Kegley, and J. Rosenau, pp. 384–405. Boston: Allen and Unwin.
- SCHLICHTER, K. (1994) Is Ethnicity a Cause of War? *Peace Review* 6(1):59–65.

- SCHULMAN, S. (1998) The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order (Book Review). *Journal of Politics* 60(1):304–306.
- SENGHAUS, D. (1998) A Clash of Civilizations—An *Idée Fixe*? *Journal of Peace Research* 35(1):127–132.
- SIMON, M., AND E. GARTZKE (1996) Do Democracies Flock Together, or Do Opposites Attract? *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40(December):617–635.
- SINGER, J. D. (1981) Accounting for International War: The State of the Discipline. *Journal of Peace Research* 18(1):1–18.
- SIVERSON, R., AND J. EMMONS (1991) Birds of a Feather: Democratic Political Systems and Alliance Choices in the Twentieth Century. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35(June):285–306.
- SMALL, M., AND J. D. SINGER (1982) *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816–1980*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- THOMPSON, W., AND R. TUCKER (1997a) A Tale of Two Democratic Peace Critiques. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41(3):428–454.
- THOMPSON, W., AND R. TUCKER (1997b) Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered: A Reply to Farber and Gowa and to Mansfield and Snyder. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41(3):462–477.
- TUCKER, R. (1998) The Interstate Dyad-Year Dataset, 1816–1997. Version 3.0. <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~rtucker/data/dyadyear>.
- TUCKER, R. (1999) BTSCS: A Binary Time-Series-Cross-Section Data Analysis Utility. Version 3.0.3. <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~rtucker/programs/btscs/btscs.html>.
- VASQUEZ, J. A. (1993) *The War Puzzle*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- WALT, S. (1987) *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- WALT, S. (1997) Building Up New Bogeymen. *Foreign Policy* 106(Spring):177–189.
- WALTZ, K. (1979) *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- WEEDE, E. (1976) Overwhelming Preponderance as a Pacifying Condition Among Contiguous Asian Dyads, 1950–1969. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 20:395–411.
- WRIGHT, Q. (1942) *A Study of War*. Chicago: University of Chicago.