Clash of civilizations or clash of religions

Which is a more important determinant of ethnic conflict?

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ABSTRACT   Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' argument that in the future most conflicts will be between civilizations has been the source of considerable debate within international relations. Among the criticisms of this argument is the fact that there is a considerable overlap between Huntington's concept of civilizations and religion. In fact, only one of Huntington's eight civilizations has no obvious religious component. This raises the question of whether the concept of civilizations is really a surrogate for religion. Accordingly, this study examines the influence of both religion and Huntington's concept of civilizations on ethnic conflict using data from the Minorities at Risk Phase 3 dataset as well as data on religion and civilizations collected independently. The results show that while there is considerable overlap between religion and civilization, the two are not the same. Also, while it is not clear whether religious or civilizational differences have a greater impact on ethnic conflict, it is clear that neither are they its primary cause. These results cast serious doubt on the validity of Huntington's hypothesis, at least as far as it concerns ethnic conflict.

KEYWORDS   clash of civilizations ● conflict ● ethnic conflict ● ethnicity ● religion ● Samuel Huntington

In 1993, Samuel Huntington (1993a) began a debate within the international affairs community with his 'clash of civilizations' thesis. Huntington (1993b, 1996a, 1996b) has since elaborated upon and defended this thesis. His thesis consists of two main arguments. First, he argues that during the Cold War world conflict was, for the most part, defined by the clash between democracy and communism, both Western ideologies. With the end of the Cold War, however, this ideological conflict has faded and is being replaced by conflicts between civilizations.[1] While these civilizations

are not new, they were overshadowed by the political reality created by the Cold War. Now that the Cold War is over, these civilizations will assert themselves on the world stage, resulting in clashes between these civilizations, both between states and within them. A more detailed discussion of Huntington's notion of civilizations is provided later in this article.

Huntington's second major argument is that the end of the Cold War has accelerated a preexisting trend of the decline of Western (American) power. This makes a major rethinking of Western foreign policy necessary because as Western power recedes, so too does the appeal of Western values and culture, and the West faces the need to accommodate itself to its declining ability to impose its values on non-Western societies. In many fundamental ways, much of the world is becoming more modern and less Western (Huntington, 1996b: 38). Huntington (1996a: 207–44, 1996b) also predicts increasing clashes between the West and both the Islamic and Sinic/Confucian civilizations.

While many argue with this thesis, it is not the goal of this article to rehash this debate.[2] Rather, here I intend to compare the impact of Huntington's civilizations and of religion on ethnic conflict in the post-Cold War era using quantitative methodology. In the course of doing so, this study will also examine the overlap between Huntington's concept of civilization and religion. However, the arguments of some of Huntington's detractors are incorporated into the analysis when the analysis provides results that are relevant to their arguments. This quantitative approach is somewhat novel because few of the many who participate in the debate over Huntington's thesis test aspects of it with quantitative methodology. Furthermore, the findings of the few who do use quantitative methodology tend to contradict Huntington's thesis. Gurr (1994) found that as of the early 1990s, there was no evidence that major ethnic conflicts were becoming more civilizational. Henderson and Singer (2000) found that political differences are a better explanation than cultural differences for civil wars. Russett et al. (2000) found that liberalism and realism provide better explanations for international war than civilizational differences. Henderson (1997, 1998) found that while religious differences are associated with more international war, cultural differences have an indeterminate influence. Price (1999) found that Islam neither undermines nor supports democracy and Midlarsky (1998) similarly found that Islam is associated with autocracy on some measures of autocracy but not others.[3]

Be that as it may, there is one aspect of the debate over Huntington's thesis that must be addressed by any quantitative assessment of the topic. Huntington is accused by many of presenting a theory that is substandard for a variety of reasons beyond the paradigm-based critiques of his theory. These critiques can be placed into several categories. First, many facts do not fit Huntington's theory (Kader, 1998; Walt, 1997). Second, the theory is oversimplified, self-contradictory, and ignores or even bends facts (Pfaff,

1997; Hassner, 1997a, 1997b; Heilbrunn, 1998). Third, Huntington's evidence is completely anecdotal, leaving room for many to cite counter examples, which most of his critics, in fact, do (Gurr, 1994; Halliday, 1997). Fourth, Huntington provides no systematic analysis of the link between civilizational controversies and political behavior (Rosecrance, 1998; Senghass, 1998; Walt, 1997). It also should be pointed out that many who criticize Huntington on these grounds can be accused of many of the same shortcomings. All of this is important to the use of quantitative methodology to test the 'clash of civilizations' argument because it shows that many believe that Huntington's theory is too flimsy for any real quantitative analysis to be performed upon it, both in the sense that it does not merit the effort and in the sense that it is too unclear to rigorously quantify.

It is argued here that these shortcomings, combined with other factors, are one of the reasons that the theory should be subjected to quantitative testing. Huntington's theory, as already noted, has sparked considerable debate and, more importantly, is given considerable weight in many policy-making circles and parts of the policy analysis community. For instance Gregg (1997), Gungwu (1997), Harris (1996) and Walid (1997) all published positive reviews of Huntington's book in publications read by policy makers and suggested that policies be based upon it. Given this, it is important to use a methodology more rigorous than the anecdotal methodology used by most who participate in the civilizations debate in order to assess the validity of the theory.

Quantitative methodology is well suited for this for several reasons. First, all cases must be evaluated by the same criteria, whatever those criteria may be. It is not possible to be self-contradictory when using a proper coding scheme in that a case must be either coded as civilizational or not civilizational once and for all and it is not possible to change one's mind when it is situationally convenient. Second, in order to create these criteria, the theory in question must be examined closely and many of its shortcomings and areas in which it is unclear brought to light. Third, it allows an examination of all cases so that general trends can be assessed as opposed to the selective citing of those cases that support a particular viewpoint. Thus if those who contend Huntington's theory is flimsy are correct, the quantitative analysis of the theory, both in the development and execution stages, will bring this to light in an unambiguous and authoritative manner. If these criticisms are correct, this endeavor is particularly important given that many policy makers believe Huntington's predictions, creating the possibility that these predictions can become self-fulfilling prophecies (Hassner, 1997a; Pfaff, 1997; Tipson, 1997; Walt, 1997).

While, as discussed in detail below, there is considerable overlap between Huntington's concept of civilization and religion, it is argued here that the two are not one and the same. This results in the two central questions asked here. First, do civilizational or religious affiliations have a greater impact on

ethnic conflict? Second, since there is considerable, but by no means total, overlap between religions and civilizations, is any influence civilizations may appear to have on ethnic conflict really due to the influence of religion, if any?

THE OVERLAPPING CONCEPTS OF CIVILIZATION, ETHNICITY AND RELIGION

While the following discussion contains definitions of ethnicity and Huntington's concept of civilizations, it contains no detailed definition of religion. This is because, as noted by Fox (2000c: 3–5) religion is notoriously difficult to define. Rather than delve into complicated theological concepts, religion here refers to religious similarities and differences between individual groups. That is, for the purposes of this study the term religion is used to identify whether groups or individuals affiliate themselves with the same or different religions. While this is clearly a simplification of the concept of religion, it is useful in that it allows us to proceed with our discussion of the overlap between religion, ethnicity and civilizations while avoiding many difficult issues which are beyond the scope of this article. Also, the purpose of this discussion is to examine the overlaps and distinctions between the concepts of ethnicity, religion and civilization. That the discussion is focused on this issue is due to limitations on space and is not intended to deny the rich complexity of these topics.

It is clear that Huntington's concept of civilizations includes aspects of both religion and ethnicity from his definition of a civilization as

> . . . the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of what distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined by both common language, history, *religion*, customs, institutions and by the subjective self identification of people. (1993a: 24)

The extent of the overlap between religion and the concept of civilization is made clearer by an examination of the list of civilizations he provides. It is important to emphasize that many, including Nussbaum (1997), Smith (1997) and Tipson (1997), disagree with Huntington's division of the world into civilizations, both in principle and with the specifics of these divisions. This discussion limits itself to how Huntington himself includes religion in his concept of civilizations. This is because the object of this study is, among other things, to compare this concept of civilizations to religion and the only way to do so is to understand and operationalize Huntington's definitions.

Huntington (1993a, 1996a: 45–8) divides the world into eight major civilizations: Western, Confucian/Sinic, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and 'possibly' African. All of these civilizations

as defined by Huntington, save one, include religion in their definition and some seem to be wholly defined by religion. The Islamic and Hindu civilizations bear the name of the religions that appear to be their sole defining trait. The Confucian/Sinic civilization includes Confucianism, and by inference Buddhism (see later), as a 'major component' (Huntington, 1996a: 45). The West is, in part, defined by 'the effects of the Reformation and . . . [its] combined Catholic and Protestant cultures' (Huntington, 1996a: 46). It is also distinguished by its adherence to the concept of separation of church and state (Huntington, 1996a: 70). The Slavic–Orthodox civilization is based, in part, upon the Orthodox branch of Christianity which was shielded from Western Christianity and had 'limited exposure' to important religious and historical experiences including the Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment (Huntington, 1996a: 45–6). Latin American culture is distinguished from the West, in part, by the fact that it is primarily Catholic (Huntington, 1996a: 46). The Japanese civilization has a distinct religious tradition including Shintoism.

The African culture, perhaps, provides the only exception to the rule of civilizations being, at least in part, defined by religion. It is, rather, based on a sense of common identity. Basing a group definition on self-identification has some precedent in the literature on ethnicity. In fact, many definitions of ethnicity are based on the concept of self-perception and definition. For example, Gurr defines ethnicity as follows:

> . . . in essence, communal [ethnic] groups are psychological communities: groups whose core members share a distinctive and enduring collective identity based on cultural traits and lifeways that matter to them and to others with whom they interact.
>
> People have many possible bases for communal identity: shared historical experiences or myths, *religious beliefs*, language, ethnicity, region of residence, and, in castelike systems, customary occupations. Communal groups – which are also referred to as ethnic groups, minorities and peoples – usually are distinguished by several reenforcing traits. *The key to identifying communal groups is not the presence of a particular trait or combination of traits, but rather in the shared perception that the defining traits, whatever they are, set the group apart.* (1993a: 3, italics added.)

Romanucci-Ross and DeVos (1995), among others, similarly argue that self-perception and identity are the most important components of ethnicity.

It is also interesting to note that this definition of ethnicity is strikingly similar to Huntington's definition of civilizations. In fact, there are only two major differences between the two definitions. First that, in practice, Gurr places less emphasis on religion in building his list of ethnic groups than does Huntington in building his list of civilizations. For Gurr, religion is one of many traits which can lead to the formation of a common identity and for Huntington it is a factor in all but one of the identity groupings he lists, and Huntington is unsure whether the exception should really be

considered a true civilization. The second difference is that Huntington's concept of civilizations depicts much broader identity groupings than does Gurr's concept of ethnic identity. In fact, Huntington's concept of civilization can be described as ethnicity on a broader level, in which many ethnic groups with similar traits join to form a few large super-ethnic groups. That is, Huntington predicts that the level of identification which people will perceive as most important in the post-Cold War era will be the broader identity groups he calls civilizations instead of the more narrow ethnic identifications that have been the primary basis of identification in the past.

This basing of the definition of civilizations on identification supports Huntington's inclusion of the African civilization in his list of civilizations. However, it is telling that Huntington qualifies his inclusion of the African civilization, which is the only civilization that he does not base on religion. That is, it is arguable that Huntington is uncertain whether to include the African civilization in his list of civilizations precisely because it does not have an obvious religious component.

There is ample other evidence that Huntington bases his concept of civilization on religion. He argues that political and social modernization have separated people from their local identities and weakened the nation state. In much of the world, religion has filled this gap for people separated from their roots by modernity (Huntington, 1993a: 25–9; 1996a: 95–9). This argument contradicts the modernization school of thought which was popular in the 1950s and 1960s and predicted that, for various reasons, modernization would cause the decline in ethnicity and religion as important factors in politics.[4] However, events including the Iranian revolution, other Islamic rebellions and resistance movements throughout the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the growth of religious fundamentalism worldwide, have caused a general reassessment of these predictions of the demise of religion. Many like Sahliyeh (1990: 9), Haynes (1994: 7, 34), Shupe (1990: 22–6) and Juergensmeyer (1993) echo Huntington's arguments that modernization has, in fact, caused a resurgence of religion in recent times.

Huntington (1996a: 100–1) further argues that the failure of Communism, socialism, and other Western (economic) ideas has created an ideological vacuum, which religion has begun to fill.[5] Finally, he explicitly states that 'religion is a central characteristic in defining civilizations' (Huntington, 1996a: 47).

While, as noted earlier, there are some who argue that religion is not an important factor in the modern era, these arguments no longer have wide acceptance among researchers. There are many types of arguments concerning the role of religion in conflict, in addition to those discussed above. Rapoport (1991: 446) and Greely (1982: 134) argue that some religions have greater propensity for violence than others. Kowalewski and Greil (1990), Lincoln (1985: 268–81), Durham (1996), Stark and Bainbridge (1985) and

Fox (1999a) examine the role of religious institutions in various forms of conflict. Wentz (1987) and Little (1991: xx-xxi) examine how religious belief systems can cause violence. Juergensmeyer (1993) and Fox (1999b) examine the role of religious legitimacy in conflict. Marty and Appleby (1991, 1993, 1994) focus on fundamentalism. Rapoport (1984, 1988, 1990) and Hoffman (1995) focus on religious terrorism. Smith (1999) connects religion and nationalism. Fox (2000b) examines the role of religion in causing discrimination against ethnic minorities. Finally, there are numerous case studies which focus on the role of religion in specific conflicts.[6]

While these studies are only a small sample of the literature on religion and conflict,[7] they are sufficient to illustrate that there is general agreement among many scholars that religion can be an important factor in conflict. Consequently, the clear and significant overlap between Huntington's concept of civilizations and religion begs the question of whether any perceived influence civilizations have on conflict in the post-Cold War era is really due to religion. That is, is Huntington's concept of civilizations merely a surrogate variable for religion? Or does it have an independent influence on ethnic conflict?

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study examines the comparative influence of religion and Huntington's concept of civilizations on ethnic conflict using data from the Minorities at Risk Phase 3 dataset (MAR3).

Before pursuing this further, it is important to note that some, including Fearon and Latin (1997), have criticized the MAR data on grounds of selection bias. Gurr (2000: 10–13) addresses these criticisms. First, it can be argued that

> . . . the project's roster of groups is not 'complete'. . . . Therefore . . . the study includes some groups that are in the zone of indeterminancy . . . [and] new groups are added from time to time, based on suggestions by users and information from our Web searches. (pp. 10–12)

Given that the project has been in existence since the mid-1980s and has received considerable attention, it is fair to argue that this process has led to a fairly accurate list of the groups that meet the criteria described above. Second, it can be argued that the study focuses only on those groups engaged in collective action and ignores those groups that are more 'politically quiescent'. Gurr (2000: 12–13) argues that 'This criticism is misplaced because the Minority project's principal objective is to identify and analyze only the groups that meet its criteria for political significance, that is, differential treatment and political action.' The presence of either of these

factors means, for the purpose of this study, that a conflict is taking place. Conversely, it is hard to argue that if these factors are not present that any conflict is occurring. Thus, it is argued here that the MAR data contain a reasonably accurate list of all instances of ethnic conflict. A third potential criticism is that in focusing on ethnic conflict the data do not include all domestic conflicts, including civil wars such as the one in Algeria. I argue that this is not a problem when testing Huntington's arguments because nearly all domestic civilizational conflicts are also ethnic conflicts. This is because Huntington's definition of civilizations is basically the aggregation of many more specific ethnic identities into a more general civilizational identity. Thus, any two groups that are of different civilizations should also be of different ethnicities and any conflict within the same ethnic group should also be within civilizations.

In short, while the MAR data may not contain all domestic conflicts, as noted earlier, it is a reasonably accurate list of all ethnic conflicts and, thus, should miss very few, if any, domestic civilizational conflicts. Given this, the MAR data should provide a reasonable basis for testing Huntington's theory. The unit of analysis in this dataset is the minority group within a state. For each of the 275 cases there is a minority and a majority group. As there are often many minorities in a single state and many minorities live in several states, the same majority group and the same minority may appear several times in the dataset. What is unique to each case is that the same pair of majority and minority groups do not appear more than once.[8]

In order to control for religion and civilization, each case is coded along two variables that are not part of the MAR3 dataset and were coded separately for this study. The first measures whether the majority and minority groups belong to the same civilization. The effort to code this variable reveals several shortcomings and ambiguities in Huntington's theory. First, 40 of the minority groups do not fit into any of Huntington's civilizational categories. These groups can best be described as indigenous peoples. Unless otherwise noted, these groups are excluded from the analysis because they are not dealt with in Huntington's civilizations thesis, making them inappropriate cases for assessing the comparative strength of religious and civilizational influences upon them.

Second, Huntington is ambiguous as to whether the Buddhist civilization exists. While it appears on his map of 'The World of Civilizations: Post-1990' (Huntington, 1996a: 26–7), he does not include Buddhism in his listing of civilizations in his *Foreign Affairs* article or in his book (Huntington, 1996a: 45–8) and overtly states that 'Buddhism, although a major religion, has not been the basis of a major civilization' (Huntington, 1996a: 48). Accordingly, for the purposes of this study, Buddhists are considered part of the Sinic/Confucian civilization.

Third, Huntington does not address in which civilization Israel belongs. It is included here as part of the Western civilization because it exhibits

many of the traits of the Western civilization described by Huntington (1996a: 69–72) and Israel is considered to be a Western intruder in the Middle East by many from the region.

Fourth, his inclusion of the African civilization makes it difficult to code black minorities living elsewhere. For the purposes of this study, Islamic black minorities are coded as Islamic because religion seems to be the primary definition of that civilization and all other black minorities are coded as African because the definition of that civilization is based on shared identity.

Fifth, the Druze, Sikhs and Ba'Hai are groups that do not fit well into any of Huntington's categories and are considered Islamic offshoots. Accordingly, they are considered here as part of the Islamic civilizations.

Sixth, there are many minority groups that are of mixed origins. An excellent example are the Roma minorities in Europe. These groups were coded as 'mixed' and clashes between them and other groups are considered non-civilizational conflicts.

The second variable measures differences in religion between the two groups. It has three possible values: no difference; different denominations of the same religion; and different religions.

There are three types of dependent variable used here, all of which are taken from the MAR3 dataset. For more details than those provided below see Gurr (1993a, 1993b, 2000), Gurr and Moore (1997), and the Minorities at Risk website [www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar]. The first type measures the behavior of the dominant group in the form of repression and discrimination. These measures include: repression in 1996;[9] political discrimination in 1994–5;[10] economic discrimination in 1994–5;[11] cultural discrimination in 1994–5;[12] all discrimination in 1994–5.[13] The second type of measure measures the behavior of the minority group. These measures include: political grievances;[14] economic grievances;[15] cultural grievances;[16] autonomy grievances;[17] and protest and rebellion in 1996.[18] The third type of variable measures intervention in the conflict by outside forces. These variables include: political support by kindred groups living elsewhere in the 1990s;[19] political support by foreign governments in the 1990s;[20] military support by kindred groups living elsewhere in the 1990s;[21] and military support by foreign governments in the 1990s.[22] This last variable is also an important addition to the literature on ethnic conflict because the impact of international intervention on ethnic conflict is an issue of growing importance.[23]

There are several additional variables used here as controls. All of these are also taken from the MAR3 dataset. These include: democracy which measures democracy on a scale of 0 to 10;[24] democracy-squared;[25] mobilization for protest;[26] and mobilization for rebellion.[27] In addition, many of the variables that are used as dependent variables are used in other tests as control variables. These include rebellion, protest, lost autonomy, the discrimination variables, and the grievance variables. For a more thorough

discussion of how all of these variables can be placed in a more comprehensive framework to explain ethnic conflict, see Gurr (1993a, 1993b, 2000), Gurr and Moore (1997), and Fox (1999c).

These variables are judgemental ordinal variables, composite variables created from several judgemental ordinal variables, or judgemental categorical variables. That is, the variables were assigned values by a coder using an ordinal scale based on specified criteria. The time-relevant variables used here are taken either from 1996, or from the 1994 to 1995 period, or from the 1990s. This is because the discrimination and grievance variables are only available through 1995, the repression variable was only coded from 1996 on, and the international support variables were only coded once for the entire 1990 to 1995 period. The variables assessing the religious and civilizational differences between the groups are coded once because these factors change little over time.

The analysis here proceeds in two steps. First, we examine the extent of the overlap between Huntington's concept of civilizations and religion. Second, we examine the comparative influence of religion and Huntington's concept of civilizations on ethnic conflict. This includes separate analyses of the behavior of the majority group, the behavior of the minority group, and the behavior of international actors. The methodologies used here are means tests and multiple regressions. These methodologies were chosen because the goal here is to assess whether differences in religion and/or civilization result in higher levels of ethnic conflict, as measured by 15 separate variables; *t*-tests of the means measure which variable, taken alone, has a greater impact. Regression analysis is used to assess the combined impact of the two, while controlling for other factors. It is important to note that since the data used here constitute the entire universe of cases of ethnic conflict, as opposed to a sampling of cases, the relationships shown by the data are real differences. Accordingly, tests of significance are not necessary but are provided here for advisory purposes.

DATA ANALYSES

The overlap between religious differentiation and Huntington's concept of civilizations is shown in Table 1. The results show that while there is considerable overlap between the two variables, civilizations and religion are not one and the same. About 75.5 percent of conflict between groups of different religions (including different denominations) are also civilizational conflicts but this means that about 24.5 percent are not. Similarly, 83.2 percent of non-religious conflicts do not involve civilizations, but this means that 16.8 percent do. Also, that about 55.7 percent of these conflicts are not civilizational confirms arguments made by Beedham (1999),

Table 1 Cross-tabulation of religious differentiation and civilizational conflict

Civilizational conflict	Religious differentiation		
	None	*Different denominations*	*Different religions*
None	104	17	10
Civilizational	21	12	71

Note. $\chi^2 < .000$

Kirkpatrick et al. (1993), Halliday (1997), Heilbrunn (1998), Kirth (1994), Rosecrance (1998), Tipson (1997) and Yamazaki (1996), among others, that the majority of world conflicts will be *within* civilizations rather than between them. Also, 53.2 percent of the conflicts are between groups of the same religion. Thus, conflicts between ethnic groups of the same religion are more common than those between groups of different religions. This result is similar to the findings of Fox (1997).

The comparative impact of religion and civilizations on the behavior of majority groups is shown in Table 2. All of the variables included here measure some form of discrimination or repression. Civilizational conflicts score higher than non-civilizational conflicts on four out of five variables but these results are only statistically significant for cultural discrimination. Majority groups whose religion differs from that of the minority group engage in higher mean levels of discrimination and repression than those whose religion is the same as that of the minority groups according to all five variables. These results are statistically significant for repression and cultural discrimination. Additionally, the mean levels of repression and discrimination by religiously differentiated groups are higher than the mean levels of these variables for conflicts involving groups of different civilizations. This indicates that religious differences have a greater impact on majority group ethnic conflict behavior than do civilizational differences.

The combined impact of religion and civilizations on the behavior of majority groups is shown in Table 3. This table shows a multiple regression including the civilizations and religion variables. In addition it includes democracy as a control variable because democratic governments are less likely to engage in discrimination and repression. The results show that the religious differences have a significant influence on repression and cultural discrimination, but not any other kind of discrimination. Civilizational differences, however, do not play a significant role in any of the multiple regressions. This confirms the findings from the means tests that religious differences have a greater impact on majority group ethnic conflict behavior than do civilizational differences. However, when the religious differences

Table 2 Mean levels of ethnic conflict variables, controlling for civilization and religion

	Civilizational clash		Religious differentiation		
	No	Yes	Same religion and denomination	Different denom.	Different religion
Ethnic majority behavior					
Repression against minority groups in 1996	2.11	2.74	1.67	1.59	3.78**
Types of discrimination against minority groups in 1994–5					
Political	2.77	2.97	2.73	2.93	3.04
Economic	3.21	3.11	3.39	2.07*	3.22*
Cultural	0.50	1.18**	0.39	0.93*	1.41***
All	6.69	7.81	6.36	7.57	8.32
Ethnic minority behavior					
Types of grievances expressed by minority groups in 1994–5					
Political	2.12	3.15***	2.29	2.79	2.94*
Economic	1.60	2.40***	1.82	1.30	2.41*
Cultural	1.92	2.98***	1.92	2.23	3.16**
Autonomy	1.28	1.86*	1.13	1.97	3.01**
Conflict behavior by minority groups in 1996					
Protest	1.33	1.71*	1.34	1.43	1.76*
Rebellion	1.13	0.76*	0.98	1.12	0.89
Intervention in 1990–5					
Military intervention					
By kindred groups	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.00**	0.211
By foreign gov.	0.34	0.34	0.30	0.31	0.41
Political intervention					
By kindred groups	0.22	0.42**	0.22	0.21	0.49***
By foreign gov.	0.19	0.32	0.17	0.15	0.40**

Notes. All significance tests are *t*-tests and measure the difference between the indicated mean and the mean for 'no' in the same row and category (control variable by column)
* Significance (*t*-test) < .05; ** Significance (*t*-test) < .01; *** Significance (*t*-test) < .001.

variable is removed from the multiple regression, the civilizations variable becomes more important, but it is only significant in the regression for cultural discrimination. It is also important to note that although in all of these regressions the adjusted R^2 is low, the goal here is not to maximize the R^2, but rather to assess the interaction between civilizational and religious differences on ethnic conflict. Also, the low R^2 is an important finding since

Table 3 Multiple regression predicting repression and discrimination

| | Dependent variable (beta value) | | | | |
| | Repression 1996 | Political discrim. 1994–5 | Economic discrim. 1994–5 | Cultural discrim. 1994–5 | All discrim. 1994–5 |
Independent variables					
Civilization	−.076	.030	−.020	−.083	−.006
Religion	.236**	.046	−.002	.354***	.119
Democracy	−.155*	−.201**	.072	−.155*	−.212**
Adjusted R^2	.060	.033	−.010	.121	.053

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

it indicates that while religious differences may have a greater impact than civilizational ones, these religious differences are not the major driving force behind repression and discrimination.

The comparative impact of religion and civilizations on the behavior of minority groups is shown in Table 2. The variables examined here include grievances expressed by the minority group as well as the level of protest and rebellion in which they engage. The mean level of grievances significantly increases for all four grievance variables both when the conflict is civilizational and when it is between groups of different religions. The level of grievances when the groups are religiously differentiated is also approximately the same as when the groups are of different civilizations. In other words, this test shows that civilization and religion have a similar impact upon grievance formation by ethnic minorities.

The results for protest are similar. Civilizational differences and religious differences both have a similar and statistically significant impact on the mean level of protest by ethnic minorities. The results for rebellion, however, do not follow this pattern. Both civilizational and religious differences are actually associated with a drop in the level of rebellion by ethnic minorities. None of the results for rebellion statistically significant.

The combined impact of religion and civilizations on grievances expressed by minority groups is shown in Table 4. This table shows a multiple regression including the civilizations and religion variables. In addition it includes the presence of the appropriate type of discrimination as a control variable. This is because Gurr (1993a, 1993b) found that, with the exception of autonomy grievances, the most important cause of grievances is the presence of discrimination. Autonomy grievances are the exception because autonomy discrimination is not a realistic concept. Most ethnic minorities lack autonomy and could accordingly be considered autonomy deprived. In addition, those who consider this lack of autonomy to be

Table 4   Multiple regression predicting grievances

	Dependent variable (beta value)			
	Grievances 1994–5			
Independent variables	*Political*	*Economic*	*Cultural*	*Autonomy*
Civilization	.282**	.228**	.150	.022
Religion	−.054	.012	.066	.136
Discrimination 1994–5				
Political	.406***	–	–	–
Economic	–	.334***	–	–
Cultural	–	–	.258***	–
Lost autonomy	–	–	–	.428***
Adjusted R^2	.225	.152	.126	.214

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

discrimination are precisely those who express grievances over autonomy. That is, minorities who feel autonomy discrimination in doing so express autonomy grievances. Thus, the two potential measures of autonomy discrimination are either nearly identical for most ethnic minorities or synonymous with autonomy grievances. This disqualifies either from being used to predict autonomy grievances. The variable that is used here instead of autonomy discrimination is whether the group had some form of autonomy in the past. Gurr (1993a, 1993b) found this to be the single best predictor of autonomy grievances.

The results show that discrimination, or lost autonomy, are the most significant variables in all four multiple regressions. Also the civilizational differences variable is significant in the multiple regressions for political and economic grievances. Religious differences do not play a significant role in any of the multiple regressions, indicating that civilizational differences are more important in determining grievance formation than religious differences. However, when civilizational differences are removed from the regression, religious differences become significant for all of the regressions. As is the case with the regressions for discrimination, the R^2 is low in these regressions. This indicates that while civilizational differences have an impact, they are not the major driving force behind ethnic grievance formation.

The combined impact of religion and civilizations on protest and rebellion is shown in Table 5. This table shows a multiple regression including the civilizations and religion variables. In addition it also includes several control variables. Democracy is included because Gurr (1993a, 1993b), among others, argues that protest is more likely in democratic states and

Table 5   Multiple regression predicting protest and rebellion in 1996

	Dependent variable (beta value)	
Independent variables	*Protest 1996*	*Rebellion 1996*
Civilization	.052	−.042
Religion	.048	−.096
Democracy	.083	.036
Democracy^2	−.004	−.060
Repression 1996	.282***	.259***
Mobilization for protest 1990s	.272***	–
Mobilization for rebellion 1990s	–	.439***
Grievances 1994–5		
Political	.136	.126
Economic	.005	−.042
Cultural	−.024	.009
Autonomy	.211**	.048
Adjusted R^2	.266	.390

Note.* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

rebellion is more likely in autocratic ones. Democracy-squared is included because it was found in previous studies, including Hegre et al. (1998), Ellingsen and Gleditsch (1997), and Fox (1999b), that domestic conflict is more likely in semi-democratic countries. Repression, mobilization, and grievances are included because Gurr (1993a, 1993b) and Gurr and Moore (1997) found them to be important factors in predicting protest and rebellion. The results show that neither civilizational nor religious differences have a significant impact on protest and rebellion.

The comparative impact of religion and civilizations on the behavior of international actors is shown in Table 2. The variables examined here include both military and political intervention by kindred groups to the minority living elsewhere and by foreign governments. The results show that while the differences are statistically significant only for political intervention, religious differences result in slightly higher levels of intervention than do civilizational differences.

The combined impact of religion and civilizations on the behavior of international actors is shown in Table 6. This table shows multiple regressions including the civilizations and religion variables. In addition it includes protest and rebellion in 1990 as control variables because outside support is more likely when there is some form of political action to support. The results show that neither civilizational nor religious differences have a significant impact on military intervention. However, religious differences are the most significant predictor of political intervention, both by kindred

Table 6 Multiple regression predicting ethnic conflict behavior by international groups

	Dependent variable (beta value)			
	Intervention 1990–5			
	Military		Political	
Independent variables	By kindred groups	By foreign governments	By kindred groups	By foreign governments
Civilization	−.064	−.049	.065	.015
Religion	.095	.099	.208*	.215*
Protest 1990	.132*	.033	.174**	.106
Rebellion 1990	.224***	.401***	.092	.173*
Adjusted R^2	.068	.158	.103	.082

Note.* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

groups and foreign governments. As is the case with the regressions for discrimination, when religious differences are removed from the regression, civilizational differences become a significant factor. Also, the low R^2 indicate that neither religious nor civilizational differences are the primary factors in the decision by kindred groups and foreign governments to intervene.

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this study has been to test some aspects of Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis, specifically those pertaining to ethnic conflict, and to compare the impact of civilizational and religious differences on these conflicts. However, the results show that it is difficult to discuss the comparative impact of these two factors on ethnic conflict without first addressing the overlap between them. The extent of this overlap is shown clearly in Table 1. Most civilizational conflicts also involve religious differences and most conflicts involving religious differences are also civilizational. However, the two are not exactly the same. About 20.4 percent of the conflicts involve only one of these two factors. Further evidence of the overlap between these two factors is the fact that in no multiple regression performed in this analysis are both variables significant. Furthermore, when the more significant of the two variables is removed from the regression, the other often becomes significant.

This overlap between civilizational and religious differences lends credence to the argument that Huntington's concept of civilizations is mostly a surrogate variable for religion. This argument is further strengthened by the fact that religious differences are more important factors in the conflict behavior of majority groups and international actors than are civilizational differences. However, civilizational differences seem to be more important factors in determining the behavior of minority groups. Thus, the results here cannot provide a definitive answer to the question of whether Huntington's concept of civilizations is really a surrogate variable for religion, or perhaps whether religion's impact on ethnic conflict is really due to civilizational differences. However, the overlap between the two, and the fact that religion tends to be the more important of the two variables considerably more often, does suggest that any perceived influence of civilizational differences on ethnic conflict may really be due to religious differences, rather than the other way around. It is also possible that both religion and civilizations are surrogate variables for culture and it is cultural differences that are the true source of any perceived impact of religion or civilization on ethnic conflict.

In any case, the question of which is more important, religion or civilizations, may be a moot point, at least for ethnic conflict. This is because neither factor appears to be the primary driving force behind ethnic conflict. Variables in this study including discrimination, repression and mobilization often have a greater impact. This finding is consistent with those of Fox (1997) that religion is an important factor only in a minority of ethnic conflicts. However Fox (1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2000b) shows that where it is an important factor, religion can have a significant impact on a conflict, especially when isolating the influence of certain aspects of religion, including religious institutions and religious legitimacy.

This suggests the possibility that civilizational differences may also be an important factor in a minority of ethnic conflicts. However, the results here clearly lead to the conclusion that while this is possible, neither civilization nor religion are the major driving force behind most ethnic conflicts. This, combined with the fact that only a minority of the ethnic conflicts in the MAR dataset are civilizational, clearly contradicts Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' argument which depicts civilizational differences as the definitive explanation for conflict, including ethnic conflict, in the post-Cold War era. Huntington (1993b, 1996a), citing Kuhn's (1970) famous argument, argues that his 'paradigm' is superior to others because it has greater explanatory value than any other potential explanation. Perhaps this may seem to be the case when, as Huntington does, one cites mostly anecdotal evidence.[28] However, the fact that the civilization variable used in this study does not seem to have strong explanatory power suggests that those among Huntington's detractors who argue that post-Cold War conflicts will more often occur within civilizations than between them are correct.[29]

In addition, Russett et al.'s (2000) quantitative study confirms this conclusion. Furthermore, the empirical evidence presented here coincides with Gurr's (1993a, 1993b, 2000) findings. Gurr, using the same data used in this study, found a strong relationship between domestic factors including discrimination, grievances, and mobilization and ethnic conflict. Other more standard explanations of ethnic conflict such as those of Horowitz (1985) are also more in line with the facts than is Huntington's theory. In fact, Horowitz's findings are strikingly similar to those of Gurr. Thus, based on Kuhn's criteria, which Huntington himself invokes, Gurr's explanation for ethnic conflict, as well as other more classic explanations, are superior to Huntington's civilizational explanation.

Another point against Huntington's theory is revealed in its operationalization. The effort to place various groups into civilizational categories revealed that Huntington's description of his civilizations is ambiguous with regard to many types of groups, and does not apply at all to a major category of minority group, indigenous minorities. This ambiguity allows for Huntington and his supporters to cite cases as either civilizational or not civilizational as is situationally convenient. For example, Huntington (1996a: 48) states that 'Buddhism, although a major religion, has not been the basis of a major civilization' yet later in the same book criticizes Gurr's (1994) analysis of the 'clash of civilizations' theory for not including the Chinese–Tibetan conflict as a civilizational conflict because Tibet is part of the Buddhist civilization which Huntington previously declared to be nonexistent (Huntington, 1996a: 257)!

Thus, Huntington's theory is both ambiguous and less accurate than other more classic theories of ethnic conflict. Either one of these faults is enough to call into question the use of the 'clash of civilizations' theory as a basis for policy. By Huntington's own criteria the more classic theories of ethnic conflict are more accurate and should be the basis for a proper understanding of ethnic conflict, and policy should be based on that understanding. Also, it is ill-advised to base policy on a theory that is so ambiguous that the policy maker has the choice of seeing a large percentage of situations in any way she or he chooses. This allows policy makers to do whatever they wish, then use the theory to justify it afterward.

It is important to emphasize that these results pertain only to ethnic conflicts within the state. Such conflicts are a subset of a type of conflict Huntington calls fault line conflicts which are conflicts between civilizations where they happen to border each other. This analysis does not address fault line conflicts between states of different civilizations which border each other. Nor does it address what Huntington calls core state conflicts, which are conflicts between the core states of civilizations (for example, the United States vs China). Accordingly, the evidence presented here does not warrant rejecting Huntington's entire hypothesis.

However, the findings of other quantitative studies contradict Huntington's

predictions with regard to international conflict. Russett et al. (2000) find that classical explanations for international conflict such as realism and liberalism are better explanations than Huntington's theory. Henderson (1997, 1998) indirectly tests Huntington's theory and finds that while religious differences increase international conflict, the impact of culture on conflict is not unidirectional. Davis et al. (1997) and Davis and Moore (1997) also indirectly test Huntington's arguments and find that the mere presence of cross-border ethnic linkages alone is not enough to influence international conflict and foreign policy behavior but they can be of influence when combined with other factors. In addition, other studies of domestic conflict, including those of Gurr (1994) and Henderson and Singer (2000), contradict Huntington's theory. Thus, it is fair to say that the growing body of quantitative evidence, including the evidence presented in this study, is sufficient to cast considerable doubt on major elements of Huntington's clash of civilizations hypothesis.

Notes

1 The concept of dividing the world according to culture is not a new one. See, for example, Deutsch (1981) and Russett (1968).

2 For a more complete discussion of those who argue with Huntington, see Fox (2001a, 2001b).

3 Others quantitatively address the role of culture in conflict but do not directly address Huntington's theory. These include Auvinen (1997), Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1997), Davis and Moore (1997), Davis, Jaggers and Moore (1997), and Fox (2000a).

4 For a survey of the literature on modernization, see, among others, Almond (1960), Apter (1965), Deutsch (1953), Kautsky (1972), Rostow (1959), Smith (1970, 1971, 1974) and Sutton (1968). This argument is echoed in the field of sociology where it is known as secularization theory. For a survey of the literature on secularization see, among others, Beckford (1985), Cox (1965), Martin (1978) and Wilson (1966, 1976). For a discussion of all this literature see Fox (1997).

5 Similar arguments are made by Juergensmeyer (1993), Esposito (1998: 21), Haynes (1994: 7), Nasr (1998: 33) and Williams (1994: 803).

6 For example, many case studies have examined the role of religion in Israeli politics and conflict. For more on this topic, see Cohen and Susser (2000), Don-Yehiyah (1999), Liebman (1997) and Sandler (1996).

7 For a more detailed review of the various theories of religion and conflict, see Fox (1998, 1999c).

8 The version of the MAR3 data used here is the one made available in August 1999. For more details on the MAR3 dataset see Gurr (1993a, 1993b, 2000) and Gurr and Moore (1997), as well as the Minorities at Risk webpage [www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar]. Copies of the MAR3 dataset as well as the additional data used in this study are available at this website.

9 This variable is a composite variable combining 23 individual measures of

repression including: small scale arrests of group members; large scale arrests of group members; the arrest of group leaders; show trials of group leaders; torture of group members; execution of group leaders; execution of group members; reprisal killings of civilians; killings by death squads; property confiscated or destroyed; restrictions on movement; forced resettlement; interdiction of food supplies; ethnic cleansing; domestic spying; states of emergency; saturation of police/military; limited use of force against protestors; and unrestrained use of force against protestors. Each of these factors is coded on the following scale and summed: 0 = tactic not used; 1 = tactic used against group members systematically engaged in collective action; 2 = tactic used against group members in ambiguous situations; 3 = tactic used against group members not engaged in collective action.

10 This variable, ranging from 0 to 9, is a composite variable measuring the level of political discrimination against a minority. It is based on two factors. First, the presence and strength of political restrictions on: freedom of expression; free movement; place of residence; rights in judicial proceedings; political organization; restrictions on voting; recruitment to the police and/or military; access to the civil service; and attainment of high office. Second, whether the government's policies are intended to improve the minority's political status or are discriminatory.

11 This variable, ranging from 0 to 9, is a composite variable measuring the level of economic discrimination against a minority. It is based on the level of the minority group's poverty compared to other groups and whether the government's policies are intended to improve the minority's economic status or are discriminatory.

12 This variable, ranging from 0 to 12, is a composite variable measuring the level of cultural discrimination against a minority. It is based on the presence and strength of restrictions on: speaking, instruction, and publishing in a group's language or dialect; the celebration of group holidays, ceremonies, and/or cultural events; religion; the group's dress, appearance, and/or behavior; marriage and family life within the group; and organizations that promote the group's cultural interests.

13 This is a composite indicator of all types of group discrimination recorded (political, economic and cultural). It is derived from a pooled factor analysis of the three above indicators. Each of these indicators is rescaled to 0 to 10 and the results are summed.

14 This variable, ranging from 0 to 15, is a composite variable measuring the grievances expressed by the minority group over political issues. It is based on the strength of grievances expressed in general as well as over the following issues: political rights in the minority's own community or region (own leaders, assembly, legal system, end to military rule, etc.); participation in politics and decision-making at the central state level; civil rights and status; and unpopular local officials or policies.

15 This variable, ranging from 0 to 15, is a composite variable measuring the grievances expressed by the minority group over economic issues. It is based on the strength of grievances expressed in general as well as over the following issues: the group's share of public funds and services; the availability of economic opportunities including education, higher status occupations and

other resources; improved working conditions; better wages; and the protection of the group's land, jobs, and resources being used for the advantage of other groups.

16 This variable, ranging from 0 to 15, is a composite variable measuring the grievances expressed by the minority group over cultural issues. It is based on the strength of grievances expressed in general as well as over the following issues: religion; group culture and lifeways; language issues; and protection from threats and attacks by other communal groups.

17 This variable, ranging from 0 to 12, is a composite variable measuring the grievances expressed by the minority group over autonomy and self-determination issues. It is based on the strength of grievances expressed in general as well as over the following issues: union with kindred groups elsewhere; political independence; and regional autonomy.

18 For a full description of these variables see Gurr (1993a) or the Minorities at Risk website [www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar].

19 This variable is coded as follows: 0 = no support recorded; 1 = ideological encouragement (diplomatic), or diffuse forms; 2 = non-military financial support; 3 = access to external markets and communications; 4 = peacekeeping units, or instituting a blockade.

20 This variable is coded the same as the above variable.

21 This variable is coded as follows: 0 = no support recorded; 1 = funds for military supplies or direct military equipment; 2 = military training or provision of advisory military personnel; 3 = rescue missions, cross-border raids, or peacekeeping units; 4 = cross-border sanctuaries, or in-country combat units.

22 This variable is coded the same as the above variable.

23 For a review of the literature on the linkage between international factors and ethnic conflict see Carment and James (1997) and Gurr and Harff (1994).

24 While this variable is included in the MAR3 dataset, it is originally taken from the Polity dataset. For more details, see Jaggers and Gurr (1995).

25 This variable takes the previous variable, subtracts 5 and squares the result. This variable is intended to measure which states are semi-democracies. For more details, see Fox (1999b).

26 This variable is based on the number of peaceful political organizations representing the ethnic minority and the extent of support for them. For more details see Gurr and Moore (1997) and Fox (1999a).

27 This variable is based on the number of militant political organizations representing the ethnic minority and the extent of support for them. For more details see Gurr and Moore (1997) and Fox (1999a).

28 Huntington (1996a: 257–8) does use some cross-sectional quantitative data to show that the Islamic civilization is disproportionally involved in fault line conflicts. However, this is a secondary aspect of his theory. His other uses of quantitative data are mostly descriptive statistics which present demographic, land use, or economic data. The vast majority of the evidence Huntington presents is anecdotal and this use of quantitative data can be described as the exception that proves the rule.

29 See, for example, Beedham (1999), Kirkpatrick et al. (1993), Halliday (1997), Heilbrunn (1998), Kirth (1994), Rosecrance (1998), Tipson (1997) and Yamazaki (1996).

Acknowledgements

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