

Causes of War

Clash of Civilizations?

February 12, 2015

Today's Agenda

- 1. Debating the Clash of Civilizations thesis.**
- 2. Presentation on "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict."**
- 3. Presentation on "A(nother) Dark Side of the Protection Racket."**

Historical Context

In the early 1990s:

- Commercial interdependence as source of peace**
- Boundaries mostly settled (territorial integrity norm)**
- Relief in ideological tension**

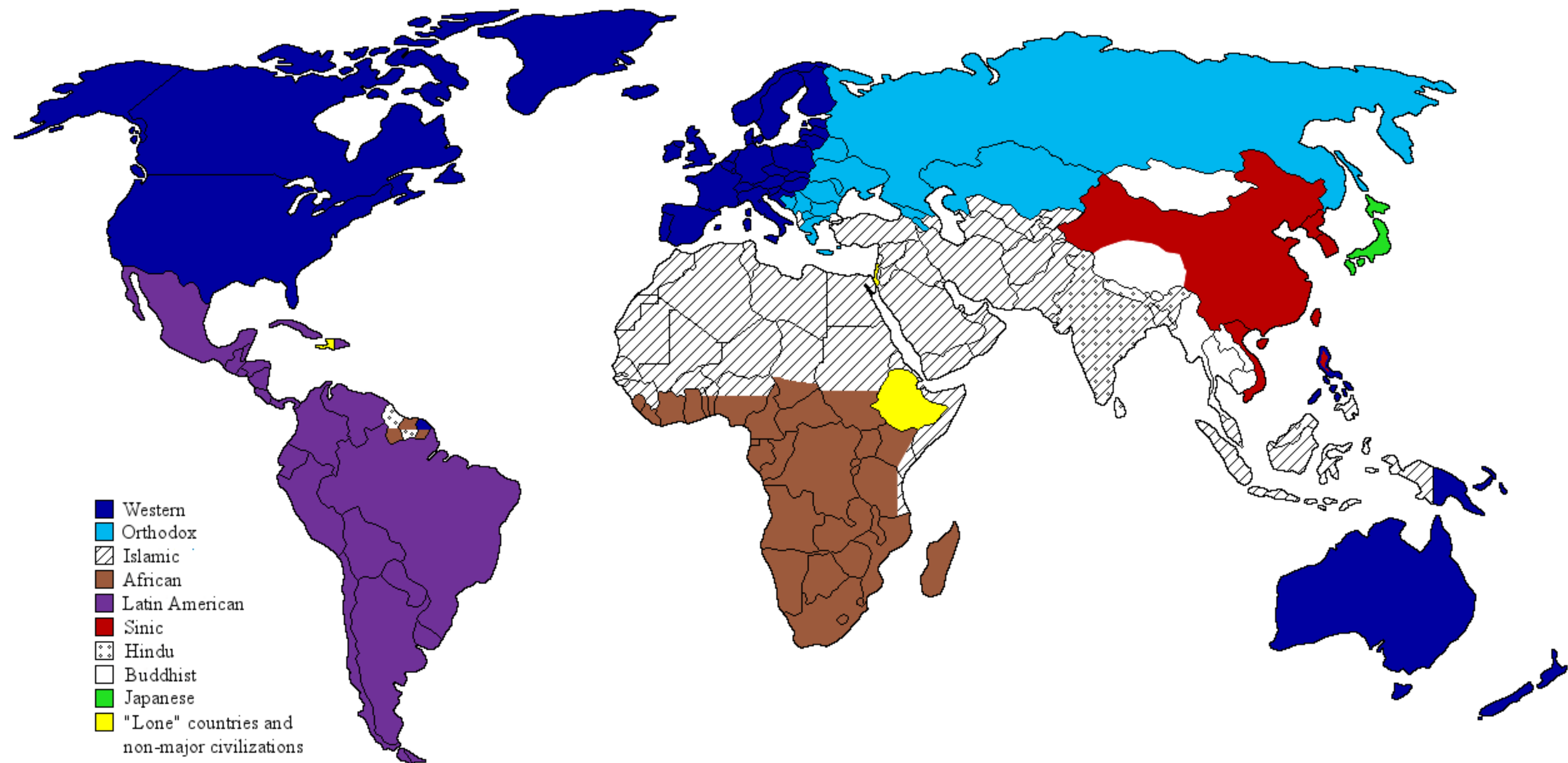
Huntington's Thesis

Conflict between *civilizations* will be the primary source of war in the post–Cold War era.

What Is a Civilization?

"The highest cultural grouping and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species" (p. 24).

- Primary distinction is religion**
- Can change over time**



Mechanisms

- **Civilizational differences are fundamental**
- **Inter-civilization interactions increasing**
- **Modernization weakens local identities**
- **De-Westernization of non-Western elites**
- **Immutability and indivisibility**
- **Increasing economic regionalism**

Theoretical Problems

- Is "civilization" well-defined?**
- Overlap with existing causes of war?**
- Why does more interaction → more conflict?**
- Why does difference lead to conflicts of interest?**
- Why can't these conflicts be bargained over?**

Henderson and Tucker

Let's evaluate the clash of civilizations thesis through empirical testing.

Testing the Thesis

Civilizational differences cause war



States go to war that wouldn't if not for civilizational difference

Data

Unit of observation: Pair of countries in given year

Independent variable: Civilizational difference

Dependent variable: Did they go to war?

Sample:

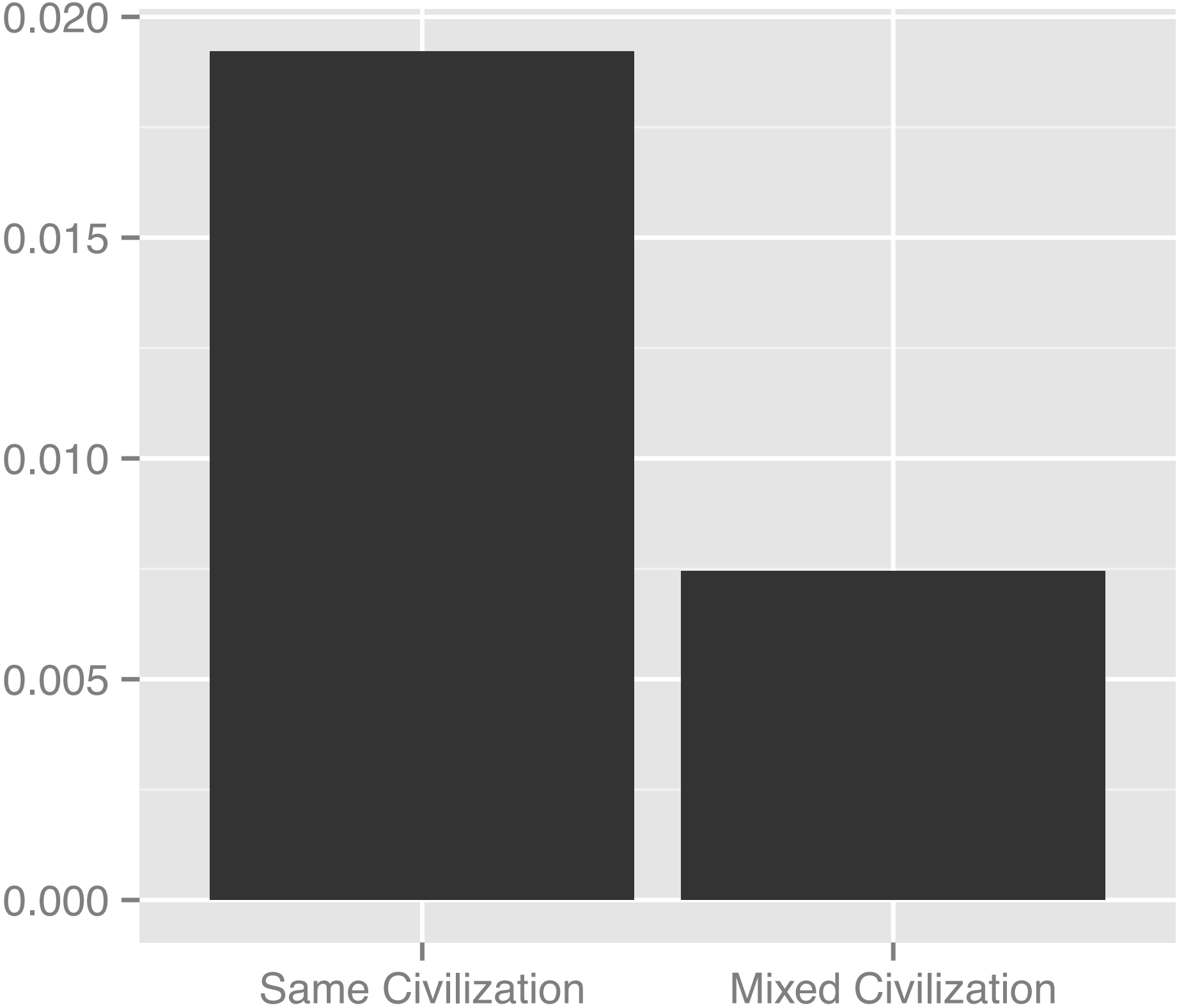
- 1816–1945 (civ. diff. → war?)
- 1946–1988 (civ. diff. \nrightarrow war)
- 1989–1992 (civ. diff. → war)

Control Variables

- **Distance**
- **Regime type (both democratic?)**
- **Power parity**

Post-Cold War Results

Probability
of War



Summary of Results

1816–1945: civ. diff. → peace

1946–1988: civ. diff. → war (insignificant)

1989–1992: civ. diff. → peace (insignificant)

Conclusion

- **Illustrates how identity might cause war**
- **...and how to evaluate such claims with scientific evidence**

For Next Time

- **Midterm exam**
 - **Short essay(s)**
 - **Choice among prompts**
 - **Open-book, open-note**
 - **No electronic devices**

Image Sources

- Emile Signol, "Taking of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, 15th July 1099": [Wikimedia Commons](#)
- Kyle Cronan, *Clash of Civilizations* map: [Wikimedia Commons](#)