

5.a.What does the term clash of cultures/civilizations mean?

The Clash of Civilizations is a thesis that people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post–Cold War world.

A concept first used by Samuel Huntington (1927–2008) in a 1993 Foreign Affairs article. He argued that, in the context of the end of the Cold War, conflict in international relations increasingly would be due to clashes between civilizations rather than to ideology or economic interests. Huntington conceived of civilizations as the highest level of cultural grouping, identified by features such as language, history, or religion. He identified eight such civilizations—Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and African—and predicted that conflict was most likely on the borders between civilizations.

The concept of a clash of civilizations has been used widely since 1993, but it has also been widely criticized. Critics question whether civilization or culture can be self-contained in an age of multiculturalism, and claim the thesis creates a polarized view of the other. Concern that the idea could become a self-fulfilling prophecy has led to the concept of a 'dialogue of civilizations' in response.

Since the attacks of September 11th, 2001 on the US, the clash of civilizations concept has received increased attention. It has been a convenient framework to use to interpret these events and the 'war on terror' that followed. Despite attempts by politicians to distance themselves from a West versus Islam narrative, the events are often reported and interpreted in this way.

5. b.Discuss the impact of cultural/civilizational clash on global conflict/cooperation and peace/war.

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.

Discussion:

The results above show that the long-term history of violent conflicts, in general, and those of a religious nature, in particular, had a bearing on the contemporary differences of cross-country religious fractionalization. They suggest that violent conflicts and religious confrontations influenced ethnic and linguistic fractionalization too, although to a much lesser extent. Furthermore, religious conflicts seem to have exerted statistically significant—in some cases adverse but in others favorable—effects on institutional quality, as measured by countries' polity scores.

Conclusion

The Clash of Civilizations is a thesis that people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world

A sizable literature has shown that fractionalization influences economic development and growth indirectly, without yielding any evidence that the standard measures of ethnic or religious fractionalization has a quantitatively and statistically significant effect on violent conflict within countries.

Finally, once we accounted for the endogeneity of fractionalization with respect to ecclesiastical conflicts, we found that religious fractionalization, if anything, negatively effects on economic growth.

Reference: International Studies Quarterly Vol. 45, No. 2 (Jun. 2001), Wikipedia