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Abstract

Do armed conflicts in the contemporary post-Cold War period reflect a clash of civilizations (CoC) as predicted by Samuel Huntington? This study substantially broadens and temporally extends the scope of major extant quantitative tests of the CoC thesis by assessing not only interactions among states but also interactions between states and non-state armed groups, from 1989 to 2015. Based on Chi-square and logistic regression tests, this study does not find empirical support for the CoC thesis as a basis for adopting foreign policies of civilizational containment.

Keywords: *clash of civilizations, Samuel Huntington, armed conflict*

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The Clash of Civilizations? Statistical Evidence from Armed Conflicts, 1989-2015

Afa'anwi M. Che

The recent surge in suspected Islamist terror incidents in the West and America's temporary restriction on immigration from some largely Islamic states have revitalized Huntington's (1993) famous clash of civilizations prediction 25 years ago. But is the world really experiencing a clash of civilizations (CoC) following the end of the Cold War? While a quantitative evaluative design allows for a comprehensive test of Huntington's CoC thesis, major extant quantitative evaluations are temporally and substantially flawed, failing to effectively assess the clash thesis on its own terms. Huntington's clash thesis (1993; 1996) predicted that ideological antipathies of the Cold War period will, in the contemporary post-Cold War period, be supplanted by cultural conflicts, which at the broadest level are civilizational conflicts. Conflicts of contemporary global politics will mainly be between nation-states and groups of different civilizations (1993, p. 22), and these intercivilizational conflicts will be more frequent and violent than conflicts within the same civilization (1993, p. 48).

While Huntington predicted the clash of civilizations to take place in the post-Cold War period and to occur predominantly between states and groups (non-state actors), prominent extant quantitative evaluations do not extensively cover the contemporary era and test the validity of the CoC thesis mainly from relationships between states. For instance, Russett, Oneal and Cox (2000) undertook one of the most prominent assessments at the dawn of the 21st century, but their test covered a period (1950-1992) that is almost entirely related to the Cold War and sought to establish if states belonging to different civilizations were more likely to engage in militarized disputes with each other than states belonging to the same civilization. Russet, Oneal, and Cox (2000) did not find evidence linking civizational difference and militarized interstate disputes.

In *A Reply to Russett, Oneal & Cox*, Huntington (2000) rebuffed the quantitative analysts' claim that their assessment of militarized interstate disputes between 1950 and 1992 provided a test of the clash thesis: "It does nothing of the kind, and the claim that it does is simply untrue…an analysis of conflicts during the Cold War can neither prove nor disprove" the CoC thesis (p. 609). Furthermore, Huntington criticized Russett, Oneal, and Cox's (2000) test dataset for covering "only interstate conflicts" which are "very few" in the post-Cold War period and are largely outnumbered by conflicts between states on one side and (non-state) armed groups on the other (p. 609). Huntington concluded his critique by calling on Russett, Oneal, and Cox to rerun their assessment with a revised design focusing on the post-Cold War period and incorporating conflicts involving non-state actors. In a separate article, Oneal and Russett (2000) reacted to Huntington's critique with a qualitative justification for the Russett, Oneal, and Cox (2000)

interstate conflict—and Cold War era-related—test dataset but did not undertake Huntington's challenge for a revised, more comprehensive test of the CoC thesis.

Subsequent major large-*n* evaluations, including Henderson and Tucker (2001), Chiozza (2002), and Imai (2006), generally echo Russett, Oneal, and Cox's finding of no statistically significant evidence for the CoC thesis, but critically fail to cover the post-Cold War period extensively and continue to test for intercivilizational belligerence mainly from relationships between states, possibly owing to a relative dearth of data on non-state actors. The resurgence of suspected Islamist terrorism in the West on the eve of the 25th anniversary of Huntington's CoC article presents a timely opportunity to re-evaluate the clash thesis more closely on its own terms. This article assesses the CoC thesis over almost the entire post-Cold War period (1989-2015) whilst gauging intercivilizational belligerence (or the absence thereof) from all dyadic armed conflicts, including extra systemic, interstate, intrastate, and internationalized intrastate conflicts, in which at least one of the primary sides is a state.

Based on two measurements (one geographically bound and the other non-geographically bound) of civilizational similarity within dyads, preliminary descriptive frequency statistics herein reveal that the number of intercivilizational conflicts in 2015 was slightly higher than in 1989 while the number of intracivilizational conflicts in 2015 was relatively lower. While the comparative frequency counts seem to suggest that intercivilizational conflicts have increased over time in line with Huntington's prediction, a closer observation of the entire period in-between 1989 and 2015 reveals volatile surges and dips in the distribution of inter- and intracivilizational conflicts across time.

Further analysis involving two logistic regression models controlling for some traditional realist and liberal conflict influences do not find statistically significant evidence linking civilizational difference and increased likelihood of armed conflict among states and between states and groups or non-state actors, corroborating extant quantitative evidence against Huntington's clash thesis as a basis for foreign policies of cultural containment.

This article proceeds in three sections: first, counterfactual testable hypotheses are derived from a brief review of Huntington's reasons as to why civilizations are expected to clash; next, a quantitative evaluative design is described; and finally, statistical outputs of the evaluation are reported together with their policy implication.

Rethinking Huntington's Thesis: Why Civilizations Will Not Clash

Huntington (1993; 1996) predicted that civilizations will clash in the post-Cold War period remarkably as a function of various factors, notably including identity differences between civilizations, increased interactions between civilizations resulting from globalization, and resistance to "Westernization" of other civilizations. This section reviews these factors and avers a counterfactual hypothesis to the clash thesis.

Identity Differences

According to Huntington (1993), civilizations are expected to clash primarily because of "differences among civilizations" with regard to ascriptive identifiers as language, tradition, and religion (p. 25). These differences are "real," "basic," "fundamental," and "have generated the most prolonged and most violent conflicts" (p. 25). Huntington clearly makes a direct link between cultural identity difference and conflict outbreak. However, such a primordialist linkage is overly simplistic, treating hospitality and cooperation within the in-group and hostility and conflict against the out-group as a mere function of "common blood" (Vanhanen, 1999) and myths of own group virtuousness and superiority (Hammond & Axelrod, 2006, p. 926). Huntington's primordialist conception of cultural identity is trumped by the more convincing instrumentalist perception that views the effect of cultural identity on conflict as indirect rather than direct: intercultural conflicts arise only when identities are politicized or manipulated for exclusionary political and socio-economic benefits. Thus, differences in the identities of civilizations are unlikely to produce conflicts except in circumstances where the identities are politicized (Gurr, 1994; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

More critically, even if Huntington's primordialist perception linking mere differences in cultural identity and intercivilizational conflicts were to be accepted as correct, then one can logically expect more clashes within, not between, civilizations because there are more levels of identity differences within, than between, civilizations. As clarified in Huntington's (1993) own work, a civilization is the broadest level of cultural identity short of that which differentiates humans from other species and there are only "seven or eight" civilizations in the world (p. 24). Conversely, within each civilization, a group could culturally identify itself in several ways according to its village, district, region, country, and continent of location or origin. Thus, if cultural identity differences were actually a direct source of clashes as Huntington asserts, then there should be more conflicts between entities within civilizations than between civilizations.

Increased Interactions

Globalization in the post-Cold War period, according to Huntington (1993), has stirred a surge in interactions between peoples of different civilizations, intensifying "awareness of differences between civilizations and commonalities within civilizations," and engendering conflicts between, and peace within, civilizations (p. 25). However, the asserted linkage between globalization and intercivilizational conflicts is undermined by the empirically stronger commercial peace theory, which anticipates that increased interactions and movements of people, investments, capital, and goods accompanying globalization will reduce mistrust and increase interdependency, ultimately mitigating conflicts between civilizations. Indeed, as national economies become more globalized, and as major powers such as the U.S. and UK exit regional institutions such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the EU while seeking global partnerships, the world is more likely to see intercivilizational cooperation

while disgruntlement within regional organizations and partnerships being "Brexited" are likely to fuel intracivilizational conflicts.

Resistance to Westernization

Huntington's (1993) thesis prominently argues that, following the end of the Cold War, "efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values" will engender resistance from other civilizations and spur clashes between "the West and the Rest," especially between the West and the Muslim world (p. 29). Huntington's thesis perceives Western liberal democracy to be particularly inimical to Islam because it challenges the sovereignty of God and God's law (the Shari'a) by projecting the electorate and the legislature as sovereign sources of authority. However, the internationalization of Islamic economies is accompanied by effective democratization of Islamic polities, with the recent "Arab Spring" protests for democracy and the increase in the number of democracies in the Arab and entire non-Western world since the end of the Cold War (Salih, 2001, p. 4) challenging the supposed incompatibility of democracy and Islam. Even when the former Gaddafi regime of Libya mounted repressive operations against the popular protests, some other Arab states partnered with NATO members to intervene, with the stated aim of protecting civilians. Such a partnership bears testament to shared values of democracy and liberalism between the West and the Muslim world (Che, 2013).

Several suspected Islamist terror incidents in the West, including the ones mentioned earlier, and America's war on terror, together with President Trump's anti-Muslim immigration executive orders, have been cited as evidence of a clash of civilizations between the West and the Muslim world (Cohen, 2015). The proposed evidence is not quite convincing, however, as Islamic states hosting America's "war on terror" and/or being targeted by President Trump's immigration-restrictive executive orders constitute only a minority of the Muslim world, as not all Muslims, even in Islamic states targeted by the U.S., hold extremist Islamist views. Moreover, suspected ISIS and Al-Qaeda attacks have in recent years targeted not only Western cities but also cities in the Islamic world itself, including Baghdad, Tripoli, and Damascus, killing "fellow Muslims" and bomb-blasting even mosques.

Counterfactual arguments against Huntington's CoC thesis suggest the following counter-hypothesis:

> Armed conflicts in the contemporary post-Cold War era are more likely within civilizations than would be predicted by geographical contiguity and other conventional determinants of armed conflicts.

Research Design

To test the clash thesis, observations of armed conflicts are made annually for every armed conflict dyad in the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's dyadic dataset, version 1-2016 (Melander, Pettersson, & Themnér, 2016) over the active years of each dyad across the post-Cold War period 1989-2015. Comparative frequency counts of intercivilizational and

intracivilizational conflict dyad-years are executed via the Chi-square crosstabs procedure on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to find preliminary evidence for or against the clash thesis. To further evaluate the influence of civilizational identity difference on dyadic armed conflicts, this study uses logistic regression analysis controlling for traditional realist (geographic contiguity, military capability, and military support) and liberal (level of democracy) variables predicting armed conflict.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study (*CONFLICT*) is dichotomous and relates to the presence or absence of a dyadic armed conflict involving a state on the one side and another state or a non-state actor on the opposing side, and in which the use of armed force results in at least twenty-five (25) battle-related deaths in a calendar year. This understanding of armed conflict allows for a test of the clash thesis not only from interactions exclusively involving states as with most extant evaluations, but also from relationships involving non-state actors. The twenty-five (25) battle-related deaths threshold might imply an exclusion of several possible intercivilizational militarized disputes involving threats, displays, and uses of military force that do not result in twenty-five (25) deaths. However, it allows the clash thesis to be tested more closely on Huntington's own terms which forecast that, violent conflicts between "states and groups of different civilizations" are likely to be severe and to escalate "as other states and groups from these civilizations rally to the support of their 'kin countries'" (Huntington, 1996, p. 28; see also Russett, Oneal, & Cox, 2000, p. 591). Moreover, the relative scarcity of data on militarized disputes merely involving threats and displays of military force for the period under study, and for relationships involving non-state actors, makes it impossible to incorporate such disputes in this study.

The Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) dyadic dataset uses the twenty-five (25) battle-related deaths threshold and covers various types of armed conflicts (extra systemic, interstate, intrastate, and internationalized intrastate conflicts) in which at least one of the dyadic parties is a state. Thus, the UCDP dyadic dataset (version 1-2016) is used to code the dependent variable for all active years of each dyad across the post-Cold War period under study. Herein, the active interval of a conflict dyad starts from the year in which the dyad first recorded twenty-five (25) battle-related deaths and ends when it last recorded that threshold. Years outside the active interval but falling within the 1989-2015 post-Cold War scope of study, are excluded from the analysis. This is to ensure that the non-state actors included in the analysis were actually in existence for the dyad-years coded, assuring accuracy of the analysis. To illustrate, Senegal vs. Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) with dyad ID 129 in the UCDP dyadic dataset was seen within the post-Cold War period to be active only from 1990 to 2011. Thus 1989 and the post-2011 years are not coded for this dyad and are excluded from analysis. If a dyad registered at least twenty-five (25) battle-related deaths in an active year, the dependent

variable, *CONFLICT*, is coded '1' to indicate the presence of armed conflict; if it did not, it is coded '0' to indicate an absence of armed conflict.

Independent Variable

Difference, or the absence thereof, in the civilization identities of the component entities of the dyads in the UCDP dyadic dataset constitutes the predictor variable in this study. Civilization identity difference is measured in two ways, with the second measure allowing the study to test the robustness of empirical findings associated with the first measure. First, Huntington's (1996, pp. 45-48, Map 1.3) geographically bound conception and classification of major civilizations is used to identify the civilization membership of states and non-state actors, allowing for an evaluation of the clash thesis through Huntington's own lenses. To minimize the possibility of missing civilization identity data for states which do not fall under any of the civilizations identified by Huntington (e.g., Israel and Jamaica), the Huntington-based measure of civilization difference (*CIVDIF*) draws on Henderson and Tucker (2001) as a complementary data source. Henderson and Tucker (2001, p. 325) list such states under a residual civilization category known as "Other."

Under the *CIVDIF* measure, the civilization identities of armed groups in extra systemic, intrastate, and internationalized intrastate conflict dyads are generally considered in this study to be the same as the identities of the countries within which they are located, given Huntington's geographically bound conception of civilizations. The UCDP Actor Dataset (version 2.2-2016) compiled and updated by Pettersson (2014) is used to determine the country location of non-state actors per conflict dyad in the UCDP dyadic dataset. *CIVDIF* is coded '1' for all active dyad-years wherein the rival entities in the dyad belong to different civilizations, and '0' where the dyadic entities belong to the same civilization.

However, the *CIVDIF* measure, though ensuring that the clash thesis is tested as closely as possible on Huntington's own terms, predisposes most conflict dyads to being coded as intracivilizational since a majority of post-Cold War conflicts are intrastate conflicts. More critically, coding intrastate conflict dyads as intracivilizational dyads potentially disregards the influence of core cultural identity disputes in some intrastate and internationalized intrastate conflicts. Component entities of some intrastate and internationalized intrastate conflict dyads do not perceive each other as sharing the same cultural identity, irrespective of Huntington's geographically bound conception and classification of civilizations.

Examples of intrastate conflict dyads coded under *CIVDIF* as intracivilizational but characterized by perceived core cultural identity differences and disputes include: Algeria vs. Islamic Salvation Army (UCDP Dyad ID 1); Algeria vs. Armed Islamic Group (ID 3); Egypt vs. Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya (ID 241); Afghanistan vs. Taliban (ID 327); Afghanistan vs. Hezb-i-Islami (ID 412); (Pakistan vs. Mohajir Quami Movement (ID 340); Iraq vs. Al-Mahdi Army (ID 442); Iraq vs. Ansar Al-Islam (ID 443); Iraq vs. IS (ID 448); Nigeria vs. Boko Haram (ID 793); and Syria vs. IS (ID 14620). While all of the listed dyads are coded under *CIVDIF* as (Islamic)

intracivilizational dyads, the sub-state groups in the dyads actually perceive(d) and project(ed) the governments of their dyadic adversaries as being "Western" and secular since those governments usually align with and are supported by Western powers, particularly the USA. On the other hand, the government sides in the listed dyads perceive(d) and project(ed) their dyadic adversaries as extremists on diversity-intolerant "jihadist" missions.

Because some intrastate and internationalized intrastate conflict dyads might be characterized by core cultural identity differences and disputes, regardless of Huntington's classification of civilizations, core cultural identity (*CORECUL*) is constructed as a second measure of the independent variable to test the robustness of empirical findings associated with the *CIVDIF* measure. Drawing mainly on Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan's (2013) Non-State Actors in Armed Conflict (NSA) Dataset, which provides detailed information and narratives on civil and internationalized civil conflict dyads in the UCDP dyadic dataset, *CORECUL* is coded '1' if at least one dyadic side perceived and projected the other as being culturally different, with cultural identity being a fault line in the dyad, and '0' otherwise. This coding operationalization is based on the "weak link" assumption, which asserts that the belligerent character of dyadic interactions is often determined by the side with fewer constraints (Oneal & Russett, 1997; also cited in Chiozza, 2002, p. 722). In this context, the less constrained side is expected to be the one that projects itself as being culturally different (e.g., Islamic Salvation Army in Algeria, Taliban in Afghanistan, Al-Mahdi Army in Iraq, and Boko Haram in Nigeria) from the other dyadic side, with a motivation to militarily challenge the other side.

Control Variables

Three realism-based variables (geographical contiguity, national capacity, and third-party military support) and one liberalism-based factor (level of democracy) that are among key conventional determinants of armed conflict are added to the baseline regression models.

First, given that civilizations are geographically bound in Huntington's conception and that most conflicts are between contiguous actors, the empirical evaluation of the clash thesis controls for geographical contiguity between the component entities of each dyad. Geographical contiguity provides a potential for members of a dyad to reach each other with military force. Moreover, contiguous actors are likely to have the most reasons to fight, including over territorial control, natural resources, political power, secessionist and irredentist nationalism, and so forth. Thus, geographical contiguity provides both the opportunity and incentives to fight. The study draws mainly on the Correlates of War (COW) project's territorial contiguity data (Stinnett, Tir, Schafer, Diehl, & Gochmanet, 2002) and on state–rebel conflict dyad narratives in Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan's (2013) NSA dataset to gauge geographical contiguity (*GEOCON*). *GEOCON* is coded '1' if both dyadic entities are directly contiguous, with one being a component part of the other (as in most civil conflict dyads) or with both entities sharing a land and/or sea border, and '0' otherwise.

Second, because the national material (including military) capacities of states to exercise and resist pressure or influence in relations with other states and non-state actors may increase incentives and opportunities for armed conflicts, this study controls for national capacities in all post-Cold War conflict dyad-years. The COW project's index of national material capabilities, version 5.0 (Greig & Enterline, 2017)—which uses diverse (demographic, industrial, and military) component indicators—is employed to gauge national capacity, $NACAP_H$, with higher values expected to correlate with greater armed conflict propensity. For dyads exclusively composed of states (interstate dyads), the greater of the two states' $NACAP_H$ values is used. This is consistent with the aforementioned "weak link" assumption in conflict studies. In terms of the reasoning linking national capacity and armed conflict, the state expected to be less constrained is the state with a higher $NACAP_H$ value.

The third control variable reflects the realist expectation that, third party military support to at least one side in a dyad is likely to boost motivation and opportunities for armed conflict, irrespective of the civilizational character of the dyad. Third party military support is added to the baseline regression models using the variable name *MILSUP* which equals '1' if one or both members of a dyad had military support from other states and/or non-state actors, and '0' if neither dyadic side had military support. Observations for the presence or absence of third-party military support in the dyad were made from the UCDP dyadic dataset itself and Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan's (2009) Non-State Actor Data (version 3.4) which draws on the UCDP to expand information on non-state actors involved in civil conflicts, including information about external support to armed groups.

Under liberalism, democracy is seen to enjoy an almost unrivalled, though not undisputed, peace-inducing effect arising from its institutional and cultural constraints on state leaders (Russett, 1995). Accordingly, it is to be expected that, regardless of the civilizational identities of their component entities, dyads with higher levels of democracy would be less prone to armed conflicts than dyads with lower levels of democracy. This study uses *Polity IV* data, v.2015 (Marshall, Gurr, & Jaggers, 2016) to code level of democracy, $DEMOCRACY_L$, in contemporary conflict dyad-years. Based on three component indicators of the political character of regimes (popular participation, openness of executive recruitment, and executive constraints), the composite *Polity* index measures democracy on a 21-point scale ranging from -10 (most autocratic) to +10 (most democratic). Owing to the absence of data measuring democracy in non-state actors, $DEMOCRACY_L$ scores for all dyad-years in this study are derived exclusively from those of state members of every dyad. The democratic character of dyads exclusively composed of states (interstate dyads) is measured by the lesser of the two states' polity scores as the state with the lower score constitutes the 'weak link' in the dyad, with fewer constraints on its foreign policy.

Statistical Outputs

Preliminary descriptive statistical analysis involving comparative frequency counts of dyadic conflicts within and between civilizations via the Chi-square crosstabs procedure on SPSS reveal evidence that contradicts Huntington's clash thesis and supports the counter-hypothesis stated earlier. As reported in Table 1, of all the dyad-years coded (N = 1765), 1378 were plagued by armed conflicts. The proportion of intracivilizational dyad-years that witnessed armed conflicts (1283; that is, 93.1 percent of 1378) was considerably greater than the number of intercivilizational dyad-years that experienced armed conflicts (95; 6.9 percent) using Huntington's geographically bound operationalization of civilization difference (*CIVDIF*). When the independent variable was coded in terms of the presence or absence of core cultural differences within dyads irrespective of geographical (non)contiguity (*CORECUL*), more intercivilizational dyad-years were observed to have witnessed armed conflicts (828, that is, 60.1 percent of 1378), relative to intracivilizational ones (550; 39.9 percent), as reported in Table 2.

Table 1
Observed frequencies of UCDP dyadic conflicts within and between civilizations (1989 – 2015), based on the CIVDIF *measure of civilizational difference*

			CONFLICT		Total
			0 Absence of armed conflict	1 Incidence of armed conflict	
CIVDIF	0 Side A and Side B belong to the same civilization	Count	348	1283	1631
		% within CIVDIF	21.3%	78.7%	100.0%
		% within CONFLICT	89.9%	93.1%	92.4%
		% of Total	19.7%	72.7%	92.4%
	1 Side A and Side B belong to different civilizations	Count	39	95	134
		% within CIVDIF	29.1%	70.9%	100.0%
		% within CONFLICT	10.1%	6.9%	7.6%
		% of Total	2.2%	5.4%	7.6%
Total		Count	387	1378	1765
		% within CIVDIF	21.9%	78.1%	100.0%
		% within CONFLICT	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	21.9%	78.1%	100.0%

Table 2
Observed frequencies of UCDP dyadic conflicts within and between civilizations (1989 – 2015), based on the CORECUL *measure of civilizational difference*

			CONFLICT		Total
			0 Absence of armed conflict	1 Incidence of armed conflict	
CORECUL	0 absence of core cultural dispute between side A and side B	Count	135	550	685
		% within CORECUL	19.7%	80.3%	100.0%
		% within CONFLICT	34.9%	39.9%	38.8%
		% of Total	7.6%	31.2%	38.8%
	1 Presence of core cultural dispute between side A and side B	Count	252	828	1080
		% within CORECUL	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%
		% within CONFLICT	65.1%	60.1%	61.2%
		% of Total	14.3%	46.9%	61.2%
Total		Count	387	1378	1765
		% within CORECUL	21.9%	78.1%	100.0%
		% within CONFLICT	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	21.9%	78.1%	100.0%

In terms of the distribution of intercivilizational conflicts over the post-Cold War period studied, frequency counts based on the *CIVDIF* measure of civilizational difference indicate that there were two intercivilizational dyad-year armed conflicts in 1989 and by 2015 the number had increased slightly to ten, while the number of intracivilizational conflicts dropped marginally from 58 in 1989, to 50 in 2015 (see Table 3). Frequency counts based on the *CORECUL* measure of civilizational difference reveal a similar pattern, with intercivilizational conflicts rising from 22 in 1989, to 46 in 2015, whereas intracivilizational conflicts dropped from 38 in 1989, to 14 in 2015 (see Table 3). While the comparative frequency counts of inter- and intracivilizational conflicts for the start (1989) and end (2015) years of the period studied might appear to suggest that intercivilizational conflicts have increased over time in line with Huntington's prediction, a closer observation of the entire period in-between 1989 and 2015 reveals volatility in the distribution of inter- and intracivilizational conflicts as graphically illustrated with line charts below Table 3.

Table 3

Distribution of UCDP Dyadic Armed Conflicts over the Post-Cold War Period, 1989 – 2015

Dyad-Year	**Number of Intercivilizational Conflicts based on *CIVDIF* Measure of Civilizational Difference**	**Number of Intracivilizational Conflicts based on *CIVDIF* Measure of Civilizational Difference**	**Number of Intercivilizational Conflicts based on *CORECUL* Measure of Civilizational Difference**	**Number of Intracivilizational Conflicts based on *CORECUL* Measure of Civilizational Difference**
1989	2	58	22	38
1990	2	63	30	35
1991	4	63	32	35
1992	5	56	35	26
1993	7	47	31	23
1994	4	54	37	21
1995	1	45	31	15
1996	3	47	29	21
1997	3	52	26	29
1998	4	48	23	29
1999	3	47	25	25
2000	2	49	28	23
2001	4	47	31	20
2002	3	42	25	20
2003	4	40	26	18
2004	3	42	28	17
2005	3	37	27	13
2006	3	44	31	16
2007	2	42	32	12
2008	4	44	33	15
2009	3	44	32	15
2010	1	39	27	13
2011	3	49	34	18
2012	5	37	33	9
2013	2	48	35	15
2014	5	49	39	15
2015	10	50	46	14
Total	**95**	**1283**	**828**	**550**

Figure 1. Illustration of volatility in the distribution of UCDP armed conflicts from 1989 to 2015, based on the *CIVDIF* measure of civilizational difference.

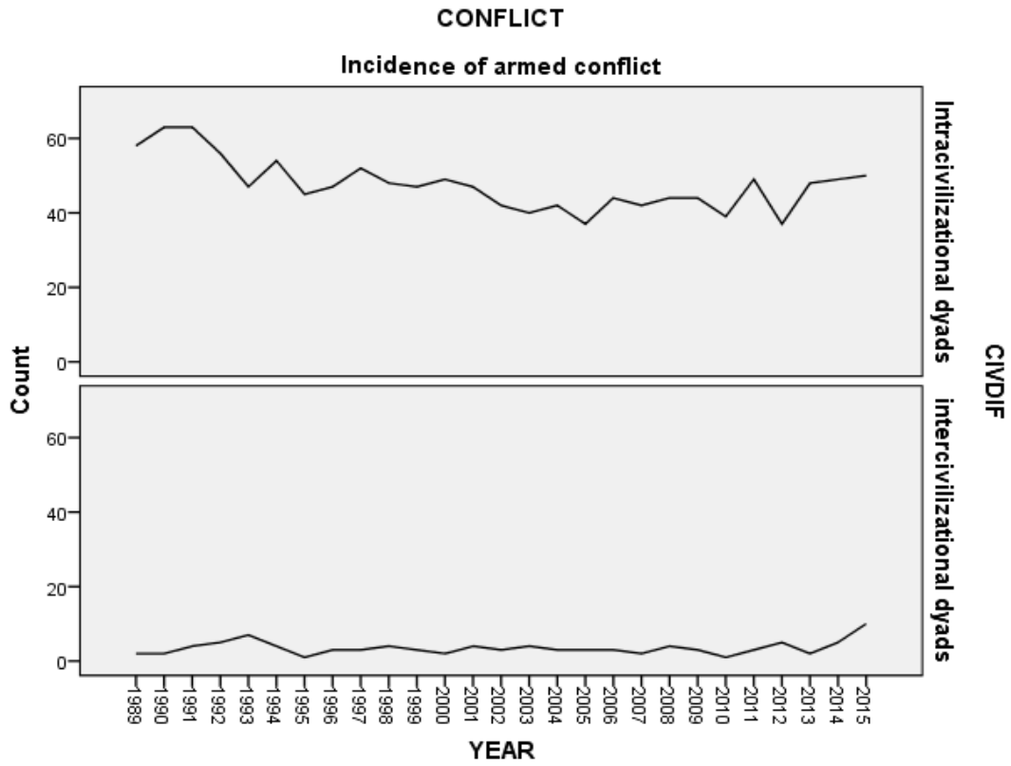
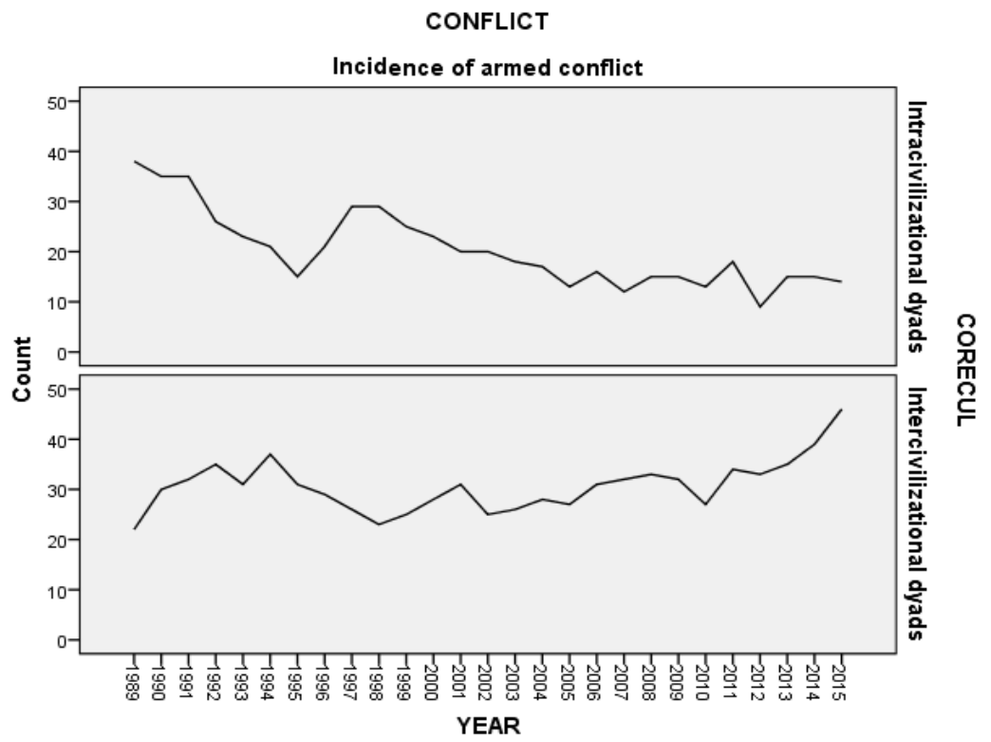


Figure 2. Illustration of volatility in the distribution of UCDP armed Conflicts from 1989 to 2015, based on the CORECUL measure of civilizational difference



As illustrated in Figure 1, observations based on the *CIVDIF* measure of civilizational difference indicate dips in the number of intercivilizational dyad-year conflicts over the periods

1993-1995, 1998-2000, 2003-2004, 2006-2007, 2008-2010, and 2012-2013. Rather than a steady decrease in the number of intracivilizational dyad-year conflicts as anticipated by the clash thesis, observations reveal surges over the periods 1989-1990, 1993-1994, 1995-1997, 1999-2000, 2003-2004, 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2010-2011, and 2012-2015. Volatility in the numbers of intercivilizational and intracivilizational conflicts become even more pronounced when the *CORECUL* measure of civilizational difference is used (Figure 2).

Chi-square tests for independence or relatedness between civilization difference and armed conflicts in Table 4 (based on the *CIVDIF* measure of civilizational difference) below suggest a statistically significant relationship as the "continuity correction" value (3.92) rectifying an overestimation of the Pearson Chi-square value for a 2 by 2 crosstabulation has a significance level (0.048) that is approximately equal to the commonly-used alpha value for statistical significance (0.05). Civilization difference appears to be negatively related to armed conflict propensity, with dyads composed of entities belonging to different civilizations being less likely to engage in armed conflicts than dyads composed of entities belonging to the same civilization. However, using the *CORECUL* measure of civilizational difference, Chi-square tests revealed no statistically significant relationship between civilizational difference and armed conflict propensity, $p > 0.05$ (see Table 5), suggesting yet again lack of empirical support for Huntington's positive correlation between civilization difference and increased conflict likelihood.

Table 4

Chi-square tests for relatedness between civilization difference and incidence of armed conflict, based on the CIVDIF measure of civilization difference

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	4.365[a]	1	.037		
Continuity Correction[b]	3.923	1	.048		
Likelihood Ratio	4.099	1	.043		
Fisher's Exact Test				.039	.026
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.362	1	.037		
N of Valid Cases	1765				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 29.38.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 5

Chi-square tests for relatedness between civilization difference and incidence of armed conflict, based on the CORECUL measure of civilization difference

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.218[a]	1	.073		
Continuity Correction[b]	3.010	1	.083		
Likelihood Ratio	3.250	1	.071		
Fisher's Exact Test				.077	.041
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.216	1	.073		
N of Valid Cases	1765				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 150.20.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Nonetheless, simple bivariate statistics cannot be relied upon for conclusive remarks regarding the effect of civilization difference on armed conflicts. Non-multivariate test models controlling for potential realist and liberal conflict-mitigating factors are imperative. Thus, two logistic regression models incorporating four control variables each (geographical contiguity, national capacity, military support, and level of democracy) were used to verify the influence of civilizational difference on armed conflict. The first logistic regression model (Model 1) adopted Huntington's geographically bound operationalization of civilizations (*CIVDIF*) to ensure a test of the clash thesis on its own terms. The second model (Model 2) checked the robustness of findings in Model 1 by adopting a non-geographically bound operationalization of civilizations which measures civilizational similarity within a dyad, or the absence thereof, in terms of whether at least one dyadic side perceives the other as sharing the same core cultural identity (*CORECUL*).

As shown in Table 6, Model 1 was statistically significant, χ^2 (5, N = 1765) = 80.403, $p < 0.05$, indicating that the model was able to distinguish between dyad-years that experienced armed conflicts and those that did not.

Table 6

Omnibus Tests of Model 1 Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	80.403	5	.000
	Block	80.403	5	.000
	Model	80.403	5	.000

Table 7

Model 1 Logit Analysis Predicting UCDP Dyadic Armed Conflicts, 1989 – 2015

Variables	B	Wald	*p*	Odds Ratio	95% C.I. for Odds Ratio	
					Lower	Upper
CIVDIF	-.720	8.491	.004	.487	.300	.790
GEOCON	.396	3.484	.062	1.485	.980	2.251
$NACAP_H$	8.687	7.089	.008	5927.498	9.899	3549281.965
$DEMOCRACY_L$	-.001	.010	.921	.999	.977	1.021
MILSUP	20.308	.000	.996	660020751.955	.000	.
Constant	.617	9.344	.002	1.853		

Table 7 reports the contribution of each variable in regression Model 1 towards predicting armed conflicts among states and between states and non-state actors in the UCDP's dyadic dataset. Civilizational difference (*CIVDIF*) makes the largest unique contribution while third party military support (*MILSUP*) makes the least unique contribution per the Wald test (see column labelled Wald). Only the contributions of *CIVDIF* and national military capability ($NACAP_H$) are statistically significant, $p < 0.05$. Geographical contiguity (*GEOCON*) contributes that barely misses the statistical significance level of 0.05.

Civilizational difference (*CIVDIF*) makes a significant contribution ($p < 0.05$), but in a direction opposite to the one forecasted in the clash thesis. While Huntington's clash thesis links civilizational difference with increased likelihood of conflict, the coefficient for *CIVDIF* here is negative (as reported in the column of B values), meaning entities of different civilizations are less likely than entities of the same civilization, to fight each other, *ceteris paribus*. *CIVDIF*'s odds ratio suggests that, intercivilizational dyads are approximately 0.5 times less likely to engage in armed conflicts than intracivilizational dyads. The specified odds ratio is, however, only a point estimate at the true value, based on the sample data. Nevertheless, one can be 95 percent confident that the actual value of the odds ratio for *CIVDIF* lies between 0.30 and 0.79, quite a small range of values. This confidence interval does not contain the value 1, ruling out

the possibility of the true odds ratio being 1 with equal armed conflict probability for both intercivilizational and intracivilizational dyads.

The above finding in Model 1, that intercivilizational dyads are less prone to armed conflicts than intracivilizational dyads, corroborates the negative correlations between civilizational difference and international conflict in major extant quantitative assessments of the clash thesis for the post-Cold War period by Russett, Oneal, and Cox (2000), Henderson and Tucker (2001), and Chiozza (2002). But as noted earlier, these studies test the civilizational effect on conflict exclusively from relationships between states, and their post-Cold War scope is limited. Nevertheless, upon adding relationships involving non-state actors to the evaluative design whilst stretching the temporal scope of extant analysis to cover almost the entire post-Cold War period (1989-2015), this study finds evidence that, based on the Huntington's geographically bound operationalization of civilizations, intracivilizational dyads are more prone to armed conflicts than intercivilizational dyads, holding other factors constant. The positive B coefficients on the realist control variables (geographical contiguity, military support, and national capability) and the negative coefficient on the liberal one (level of democracy) corroborate the directional patterns of correlations between these variables and armed conflict in extant peace research.

Table 8

Model 2 Logit Analysis Predicting UCDP Dyadic Armed Conflicts, 1989 – 2015

Variables	B	Wald	*p*	Odds Ratio	95% C.I. for Odds Ratio	
					Lower	Upper
CORECUL	-.236	3.306	.069	.790	.612	1.019
GEOCON	.639	10.391	.001	1.894	1.284	2.793
$NACAP_H$	7.389	5.210	.022	1618.396	2.841	922084.765
$DEMOCRACY_L$	-.002	.029	.864	.998	.976	1.020
MILSUP	20.174	.000	.996	577151264.646	.000	.
Constant	.509	6.846	.009	1.663		

To test the robustness of the finding linking civilizational similarity and increased armed conflict likelihood, another logistic regression analysis (Model 2) was executed whilst adopting a non-geographically bound operationalization of civilizational identity. Model 2 gauges civilization difference in terms of at least one member of the dyad perceiving and projecting the other as having a different core cultural identity (*CORECUL*), irrespective of geographical proximity. The robustness test model was statistically significant, χ^2 (5, N = 1765) = 75.550, $p < 0.05$.

However, as reported in Table 8 above, while the negative direction of correlation between civilizational difference and armed conflicts in Model 2 (see *CORECUL*'s B coefficient) is the same as in Model 1 and opposite to the one forecasted by Huntington, the unique effect of *CORECUL* on the dependent variable marginally misses the level of statistical significance (p =

0.069 > 0.05). The range of values for which one can be 95 percent confident encompasses the actual value of the odds ratio for *CORECUL* (0.61 – 1.02) contains the value 1, meaning the true odds ratio could well be 1, with intercivilizational dyads being equally prone to armed conflicts as intracivilizational dyads. This does not corroborate the finding from Model 1, but it nevertheless disconfirms Huntington's CoC thesis predicting intercivilizational dyads to be disproportionately prone to armed conflicts.

Conclusion

This study has substantially broadened and temporally extended the post-Cold War scope of major extant large-*n* evaluations of Huntington's clash of civilizations (CoC) thesis by assessing the civilizational effect on conflictual interactions involving not only states but also interactions between states and non-state actors, from 1989 to 2015. Rather than a steady increase in intercivilizational and a steady decrease in intracivilizational armed conflicts, descriptive statistical analysis revealed volatility in the year-to-year distribution of intercivilizational and intracivilizational armed conflicts over the post-Cold War period. Two logistic regression tests incorporating geographical contiguity, military support, national capability, level of democracy was executed to gauge the effect of civilizational identity difference on armed conflict propensity. Using a geographically bound operationalization of civilizations, regression Model 1 found that, instead of increasing the likelihood of armed conflict as predicted in Huntington's clash thesis, civilization difference appears to reduce armed conflict propensity. Regression Model 2 adopted a non-geographically bound operationalization of civilizations but found that intercivilizational dyads could be equally prone to armed conflicts as intracivilizational dyads, yet again disconfirming the clash thesis, albeit not statistically significantly.

The presence and absence of statistical significance in logistic regression outputs linking civilizational similarity and increased armed conflict propensity in Model 1 and Model 2 respectively suggest a possibility that the validity or falsity of Huntington's clash thesis could well vary depending on how conflict dyads are coded to be intercivilizational or not. But the absence of statistically significant evidence for a positive correlation between civilizational difference and armed conflict proclivity in both regression models in this study affirms extant quantitative evidence against the clash thesis (Russett, Oneal, & Cox, 2000; Henderson & Tucker, 2001; and Chiozza, 2002).

Critically, however, the UCDP dyadic dataset on which the clash thesis is tested does not incorporate dyads composed exclusively of non-state armed groups. Thus, although this study's findings disconfirm the CoC thesis, they do not necessarily deny that civilizational or cultural factors, including ethnic and religious differences, might be at play in politics and conflicts involving non-state groups exclusively. Further assessments focusing on non-state actors and incorporating more realist and liberal control variables are required to provide more conclusive evidence regarding the civilizational effect on politics and conflicts in general. Nevertheless, to

the extent that Huntington's thesis predicts armed clashes among states, and between states on the one hand and non-state armed groups on the other, it does not find empirical support in this study to justify it as a basis for states to adopt foreign policies of civilizational containment, involving, but not limited to, restrictions or absolute bans on immigration and refugee flows from other civilizations.

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