

CIVILIZATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, AND NATIONAL EXPLANATIONS FOR ETHNIC REBELLION IN THE POST- COLD WAR MIDDLE EAST

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Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis, if nothing else, has sparked a debate over the nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era. Huntington predicts that future conflict, including conflict in the Middle East, will be mostly between civilizations. However, many disagree and variously predict that conflict in general will decline or that it will continue to be fought along more traditional lines. Two traditional bases for ethnic conflict that are particularly relevant to the Middle East are religion and nationalism. Accordingly, this study assesses the comparative impact of civilization, religion, and nationalism on ethnic rebellion in the Middle East. The results show that both conflict in general and civilizational conflict in particular in the Middle East dropped significantly after the end of the Cold War, thus contradicting Huntington's theory. Also it is shown that the most violent rebellions in the Middle East tend to be national conflicts rather than religious ones.

Ever since Huntington (1993a, 1996a, 1996b) proposed his "clash of civilizations" thesis, there has been a vigorous debate over its validity. This debate, which was prompted by Huntington's arguments, has taken on a larger meaning because it is

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essentially over what, if anything, will define the nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era. According to Huntington, civilizational conflicts will be the most common and intense forms of conflicts in the post-Cold War era. Yet, as described below, many others disagree, arguing that other traits including religion and nationalism will define conflict in the post-Cold War era. Some even argue that conflict will decrease.

This study assesses these competing claims in the context of ethnic rebellion in the Middle East. That is, this study asks two questions. First, it asks whether ethnic rebellion in the Middle East, one of the many types of conflict which Huntington expects to be influenced by civilizational factors, in fact increased with the end of the Cold War. Second, whatever the post-Cold War trend in Middle Eastern ethnic rebellion, what, if anything, can explain this trend? The specific potential explanations assessed here include civilization, religion, and nationalism. This study uses the Minorities at Risk dataset, as well as data collected independently to assess these competing explanations.

It is important to emphasize that a full assessment of all of Huntington's thesis is beyond the scope of what can be done in an article. This study focuses on one aspect of Huntington's thesis in one region of the world. Huntington expects increased civilizational conflict in the post-Cold War era both internationally and domestically. This study only assesses one type of domestic conflict, ethnic rebellion, in the Middle East.

The Overlapping Concepts of Ethnicity and Civilization

Huntington (1993a:24) defines 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.

This definition is similar to many definitions of ethnicity. For example, Gurr (1993a:3) defines ethnicity as

...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 reinforcing 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.

Both of these definitions are based on ascriptive traits which build the perception among a group that they are a group. That is, both ethnic groups and civilizations are determined by a shared identity based upon commonalities. The basic difference between the two is the breadth of those who are included in the common identity. Ethnic groups are more narrowly defined than are civilizations. Thus, if two groups belong to different civilizations, they most likely are different ethnically as well, but the reverse is not true because the broader definition of civilizations allows for multiple ethnic groups to share in the same civilization.

Ethnic conflicts are a subset of a type of conflict that Huntington (1996a:208, 252-254) calls fault-line conflicts, or conflicts along the borders between civilizations. Fault-line conflicts include conflicts between states of different civilizations that border each other, and ethnic conflicts within states which involve ethnic groups of different civilizations. According to Huntington's predictions, civilizational clashes, including fault-line ethnic conflicts, should be more common and intense than noncivilizational clashes. Or, at the very least, civilizational conflicts in the post-Cold War era should constitute a larger proportion of ethnic conflicts than they did during the Cold War and should have increased in intensity in comparison to other types of ethnic conflicts. These predictions, presumably, also apply to the Middle East, a region of the world with many long-standing ethnic conflicts and rivalries.

It is also important to note that Gurr's definition of ethnicity, which is the definition used by this study because the study is based on data from Gurr's Minorities at Risk dataset, does not limit itself to groups with nationalist aspirations. Gurr's definition of ethnicity includes several types of ethnic groups. These include ethnonationalists, which are ethnic groups seeking some form of self-determination; indigenous peoples, who are descendents of the original inhabitants of a region such as native Americans or the Aborigines of Australia; ethnoclasses, which are ethnically distinct peoples who have special economic roles in a society;

militant sects, which are ethnic groups whose political status is primarily defined along religious lines; and communal contenders, which are distinct peoples or tribes who live in multi-ethnic societies where the competition for power is along ethnic lines (Gurr, 1993a:18-13). It is possible for one group to meet the criteria for more than one of these categories.

The Debate Over the Clash of Civilizations Hypothesis

Since the appearance of Huntington's 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs*, there has been a spirited debate over his argument that future conflicts would be between civilizations. One reply, also published in *Foreign Affairs*, was actually written in the form of a poem (Tipson, 1997). Since his later book and articles basically elaborate on the argument made in the *Foreign Affairs* article, the discussion here will evaluate this debate based on the arguments that are made regarding the subject, rather than on a chronological basis. Also, given the considerable volume of discussion on this issue, it is beyond the scope of this work to assess all of Huntington's critics and supporters. The focus here is on those aspects of the debate relevant to the aspects of Huntington's argument being tested here. Even this fraction of the debate is still voluminous. Accordingly, the sources cited here are meant to be representative of the debate as a whole, rather than an exhaustive discussion of the debate.

It is important to note that many of the criticisms described below contradict each other and, in fact, some of the individual critics contradict themselves and many attack Huntington's theory along several different lines. While it is possible to divide the criticisms of Huntington's theories into several schools of thought, this is avoided here because of the overlapping of critics and criticisms described above. Rather, the debate is presented in the form of the types of arguments that were posed in criticism of Huntington's clash of civilizations theory.

First, many argue that conflicts will continue to be fought along traditional lines. While most of these arguments, such as those of Ajami (1993), Gray (1998), and Pfaff (1998), focus on international conflict, their arguments are applicable to domestic conflict. That is, traditional *realpolitik* theories, that still provide the best explanation for international conflict, are relevant to domestic conflict in that those factors that caused conflict during the Cold War will continue to do so after it. Similarly, many like Beedham (1999), Kirkpatrick et al. (1993), Halliday (1997), Heil-

brunn (1998), Hunter (1998), Kader (1998), Kirth (1994), Rosecrance (1998), Tipson (1997), and Yamazaki (1996) argue that the civilizations Huntington describes are not united and most conflicts, both international and domestic, will be between members of the same civilizations. Walt (1998) combines these two arguments, stating that nationalism remains the most important factor in the post-Cold War era, making conflicts within civilizations as likely as conflicts between them.

Second, many argue that the world is becoming more united and interdependent, thus causing a general reduction of conflict in the post-Cold War era. Anwar (1998) and Tipson (1997), for example, argue that factors like economic interdependence, communications, and world integration will lead to a world civilization which will rise above conflicts. Ahari (1997) makes a normative version of this argument, saying that the only culture that should occupy the world is the human culture. Ikenberry (1997) believes that the process of globalization does not even need to reach a very high level, arguing that "a belief in universalism and global cultural homogenization is not necessary to pursue an order that goes beyond the West. All that is needed are states with commitments to democracy, free markets and the rule of law." Also, Halliday (1997) notes that there has been a historical borrowing and mixing among cultures, making it difficult to argue that the civilizations Huntington describes are distinct.

Third, many argue that Huntington ignored an important post-Cold War phenomenon that will impact on conflict, thereby making his theory irrelevant. That is, many argue that some factor other than civilizations will be the basis for world conflict or the lack thereof. Viorst (1997) argues that Huntington ignores the fact that the world is better at managing conflict than it used to be. He also believes that population and environment issues will define world politics in the future. Ajami (1993) argues that Huntington underestimates the power of modernity and secularism and that people are more interested in economic prosperity than maintaining their traditions. Barber (1998) argues that power in the post-Cold War era will be defined by control over information technology. Senghass (1998) argues that most ethnopolitical conflicts result from protracted discrimination rather than cultural roots. Rosecrance (1998) points out that military power overshadowed civilizations in the past and there is no reason it cannot do so in the future. He also argues, as do Hunter (1998) and Nussbaum (1997), that economic power is the most important type of power today. Kirkpatrick et al. (1993) believes that since other civilizations want to be like the West, the predicted West vs. non-West

conflicts will not occur. Similarly Mahbubani (1993) argues that the non-West wants Western leadership and is, in fact, afraid that the West is weakening. Howell (1997) argues for an opposite trend of the West becoming Easternized.

Fourth, many argue that Huntington has his facts wrong. Some, Anwar (1998), Hassner (1997a), Heilbrunn (1998), Kader (1998), Neckermann (1998), and Walt (1997), simply argue that the facts do not fit Huntington's theory. Pfaff (1998) accuses Huntington of ignoring facts. Some, like Hassner (1997b), even go as far as to accuse Huntington of bending the facts to fit his theory. Also, several empirical studies on the topic including Gurr (1994:356-358), Russett, Oneal and Cox (2000), Henderson (1998), and Henderson and Singer (2000) find little support for Huntington's arguments.

Fifth, many critique Huntington's methodology. Hassner (1997a) and Pfaff (1998) accuse Huntington of oversimplification. Beedham (1999), Pfaff (1998), Smith (1997), and Tipson (1997) question Huntington's assessment of what are the world's civilizations. Ikenberry (1997) similarly argues that the features that Huntington feels make the West unique are, in fact, not cultural factors nor are they unique to the West. Heilbrunn (1998) notes that Huntington, in his various writings, contradicts himself. Gurr (1994) and Halliday (1997) note that Huntington's evidence is completely anecdotal, leaving room for many to cite counter examples. Similarly, Senghass (1998), Rosecrance (1998), and Walt (1997) argue that Huntington provides no systematic analysis of the link between civilizational controversies and political behavior. That is, a quantitative, or at least a more systematic, analysis of Huntington's evidence is necessary before it can be properly evaluated. (The same argument is made here.) However, Pfaff (1998) accuses Huntington of the opposite. He argues that political science in general, and Huntington specifically, have wrongly made the behavioral assumption that political behavior can be explained scientifically.

Sixth, many argue that because of his popularity among policy-makers, Huntington's theory is a self-fulfilling prophecy (Hassner, 1997a; Pfaff, 1998; Singhua, 1997; Smith, 1997; Tipson, 1997; and Walt, 1997). Similarly, Anwar (1998) and Gungwu (1997a) accuse Huntington of making unwarranted doomsday predictions.

Despite all this, Huntington is not without his supporters. Gregg (1997), Gungwu (1997a and 1997b), Hardjono (1997), Harris (1996), Murphey (1998), Naff (1998), Seamon (1998), and Walid (1997), among others, agree with his argument and use it to

make policy prescriptions. Marshall (1998) agrees with Huntington's thesis, arguing that the majority of conflicts are occurring along religious divides. Even some of Huntington's critics, including Anwar (1998), Hassner (1997a), and Heilbrunn (1998), agree that it may be true for at least part of the world, especially the West-Islam.

Even many of Huntington's detractors admit that if he is wrong, he is brilliantly wrong. For example, Hassner (1997a), who is among Huntington's most vehement critics (his review of Huntington's book is titled "Morally Objectionable, Politically Dangerous") admits that Huntington "is perhaps the most brilliant, articulate, versatile, and creative living political scientist." Similarly, Heilbrunn (1998) states that "Huntington may be America's most distinguished political scientist. He is certainly the most exasperating."

Huntington's (1993b) reply to some of these critiques can be best summed up by his statement: "got a better idea?" He cites Kuhn's (1970) famous work on scientific paradigms which, among other things, argues that a paradigm need only be better than its competitors; it does not have to explain everything. Huntington argues that the Cold War paradigm was not perfect, and neither is the civilizations paradigm. There were anomalous events that contradicted each paradigm. However, both paradigms have strong explanatory power for the era which they explain, and, more importantly, this explanatory power is greater than any competing paradigm. He responds to the arguments that post-Cold War conflicts will occur on a level more micro than civilizations by restating his argument that groups of states have strong bonds of history, culture, language, religion, and location which bond them into civilizations. He also responds to what he calls "one world theories." He notes that the argument that all of the world will become liberal democracies is deterministic and assumes only one historical alternative. He responds to the assumption that communications makes the world smaller, thus causing unification, by arguing that the increased level of interaction will only cause more conflict. He asserts that the argument that modernization will lead to homogenization does not fit the facts.¹ Finally, he argues that a universal civilization can only be the result of a universal power, which, as of yet, does not exist.

In his book, Huntington (1996a:29-40, 59-78, 128) further elaborates on this theme of "got a better idea?" He argues that the four competing paradigms of world unity, that the world will be divided in two along economic or cultural lines, realism, and anarchy, cannot be both parsimonious and at the same time have

good explanatory power to the extent to which the civilizations paradigm can. That is, he argues that the civilizational paradigm is the simplest theory which has the ability to explain real world events. He also addresses the argument that the world will coalesce into one civilization in more detail. He argues that the major components of a civilization include language and religion, both of which serve to divide the world rather than unite it. The end of the Cold War has not united the world, rather it has released the forces of "the more fundamental divisions of humanity" including civilizational conflicts. He repeats the above argument regarding increased interaction causing increased opportunity for conflict. Finally, he argues that modernization does not necessarily mean Westernization. It is possible for other civilizations to modernize economically without adopting Western culture. He also admits that balance of power considerations can also play a role in political alliances, but in the long run they are subordinate to civilizational considerations.

In all, the above discussion establishes, if nothing else, that there is considerable debate over the nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era. Huntington predicts a rise in civilizational conflict. However, many have opposing predictions. These include that things will continue as before and that there will be a drop in conflict due to the world's growing interdependence. In addition, many dispute Huntington's assertion that civilizations as opposed to more conventional explanations for conflict are the key to understanding conflict in the post-Cold War era.

Religion and Ethnic Nationalism as Causes of Ethnic Rebellion in the Middle East

As noted above, many argue that what has caused conflicts in the past will continue to cause conflicts in the future. Perhaps the most prominent past causes of ethnic rebellion in the Middle East have been religion and ethnic nationalism.

Religion and politics have always been intimately and uniquely intertwined in Middle Eastern culture. In modern times this remains the case. The Arab-Israeli conflict has had religious elements both in its international and domestic manifestations. The Israeli government, since the establishment of the state, has almost always had a religious party in the government. Influential Islamic opposition movements and/or political parties exist in most Arab states. Given this, it is arguable that religion provides a

strong potential explanation for ethnic rebellion in the Middle East.

The association between religion and violence in general is well documented. For example, Juergensmeyer (1991) and Girard (1977) argue that violence is an intrinsic element of religion. Similarly, Rapoport (1991a:118-123, 1991b:446) and Fox (1999) argue that all major religions have the potential to inspire violence through their ability to inspire intense commitment and emotions that make it difficult to reconcile religious conflicts, thus inviting violent solutions. In fact, "Before the 19th century, religion provided the only acceptable justification for terror" (Rapoport, 1984:659). Haynes (1994:93), Kramer (1991:549), and Piscatori (1994:361) make similar arguments with regard to Islam. Hoffman (1995) and Rapoport (1990) make similar arguments with regard to religious terrorists.

As much as religion is associated with violence in general, the two are even more closely associated in the Middle East. That all of the Middle East's major religions, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, have concepts of holy war illustrates this point.² The subject of religion and politics in the Middle East has been the focus of several studies which deal with the impact of religious radicalism. For example, Sandler (1996) argues that Jewish religious needs have significantly influenced Israeli politics from the inception of the state.³ While this influence has varied over time from support of the government to opposition to the government, it has always been present. Similarly, Amara (1997), Landau (1993), and Smooha (1984) argue that Islam has had a significant impact on Arab integration into Israeli political life.

That Islam, the predominant religion in the Middle East, from its inception has always been a political religion is an important indicator of the close connection between religion, violence, and politics in the Middle East. There is no separation in Islam between religion and politics (Haynes, 1994:5, Kramer, 1991:549, and Gellner, 1992:9). Thus, the fact that religion is so important in an overwhelmingly Islamic region should not be surprising.⁴

There are several other reasons to link Islam and violence in the Middle East. For example, Esposito (1983), Azar and Moon (1987), Deeb (1992:53-4), Piscatori (1994:361-363), and Layachi and Haireche (1992:70) argue that the failure of Middle Eastern secular governments to successfully reach the goals of economic self-sufficiency and social justice has undermined the legitimacy of these regimes. This has resulted in the resurgence of Islam as a legitimate alternative to these regimes' more secular ideologies. However, it is important to note that many like Haynes (1994) and

Juergensmeyer (1993) argue that this trend is found throughout the Third World and is not unique to Islam or the Middle East.

Nationalism is also closely associated with conflict in the Middle East. Many of the most well-known and violent conflicts are associated with the ethnic nationalist desire for self-determination. These include the Kurdish opposition movements in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, the Palestinians, the many competing groups in Lebanon, the Saharawis in Morocco, and the Berbers in Algeria. These and other Middle Eastern minorities have for some time sought, often violently, to achieve their goal of self-determination. While this is by no means unique to the Middle East, it is undeniable that ethnic nationalism has contributed to many of the region's ethnic rebellions. Gurr (1993a) notes that in the Middle East and around the globe, nationalist minorities make very different types of demands, including separatist demands, than other types of minorities and are the most likely to rebel.⁵

It is important to note that nationalism, ethnicity, and religion are often overlapping forms of identity. Gurr (1993a:3) includes shared religious beliefs in his definition of ethnicity. Smith (1999) argues that many forms of nationalism owe their origins to religion. Also, the connection between ethnicity and nationalism is self-evident.

Be that as it may, it is clear that both religion and nationalism have been and continue to be present in the Middle East and deserve consideration as potential sources of the ethnic rebellions which occur in the region.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to answer two questions. First, has ethnic rebellion in the Middle East increased, decreased, or remained at about the same level with the end of the Cold War? Second, if there has been any change, is it in any way associated with civilizational, religious, or nationalist factors? Data from the Minorities at Risk Phase 3 (MAR3) dataset, along with data collected independently, is used to answer these questions.⁶ The unit of analysis in the MAR3 dataset is the minority group within a state. For each of the 275 cases there is a minority and a majority group. Thus, 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.⁷

This study assesses one dependent variable, ethnic rebellion for the period of 1985 to 1998. This period was chosen because these are the years in which yearly data on ethnic rebellion are available in the MAR3 dataset. The variable measures the extent of rebellion on the following scale:

0. None.
1. Political banditry, sporadic terrorism.
2. Campaigns of terrorism.
3. Local rebellions: armed attempts to seize power in a locale. If they prove to be the opening round in what becomes a protracted guerrilla or civil war during the year being coded, code the latter rather than local rebellion. Code declarations of independence by a minority-controlled regional government here.
4. Small-scale guerrilla activity. Small-scale guerrilla activity has all these three traits: fewer than 1,000 armed fighters, sporadic armed attacks (less than 6 reported per year), and attacks in a small part of the area occupied by the group or in one or two other locales).
5. Intermediate-scale guerrilla activity. Intermediate-scale guerrilla activity has one or two of the defining traits of large-scale activity and one or two of the defining traits of small-scale activity.
6. Large-scale guerrilla activity. Large-scale guerrilla activity has all these traits: more than 1,000 armed fighters; frequent armed attacks (more than 6 reported per year), and attacks affecting large parts of the area occupied by the group.
7. Protracted civil war, fought by rebel military with base areas.

The most serious occurrence in any given year for a particular ethnic group is coded as the level of rebellion for that year.

The yearly level of rebellion is examined here in five contexts on a yearly basis from 1985 to 1998. First, the average level of rebellion among Middle Eastern ethnic minorities is compared to the average level of rebellion among minorities living in the rest of the world. This will allow an examination of whether the average level of rebellion increased or decreased with the end of the Cold War, both in the Middle East and in the world in general. Other than this test, all other tests focus only on those groups in the Middle East. For the purposes of this study, the Middle East includes the Arab states of North Africa. Also, while it is difficult to pinpoint the end of the Cold War, 1989 is designated here as the last year of the Cold War.

Second, the average level of rebellion in civilizational conflicts in the Middle East is compared to the average level of rebel-

lion in non-civilizational conflicts in the region. This will allow for testing whether, as Huntington predicts, civilizational conflicts increased in intensity after the end of the Cold War.⁸

Third, the average level of rebellion by Middle Eastern religious minorities is compared to the average level of rebellion by non-religiously differentiated minorities in the region. For the purposes of this study, minorities are considered religious minorities if their religion or denomination differs from that of the majority group.⁹ This will allow for testing whether religious conflicts are, in fact, more intense than other ones.

Fourth, the average level of rebellion by separatist minorities in the Middle East is compared to the average level of rebellion by the region's other minorities. In this test, separatism is used as a surrogate variable for a nationalist desire for self-determination.¹⁰ This test allows an assessment of whether the more nationalist minorities engage in higher levels of conflict than other minorities.

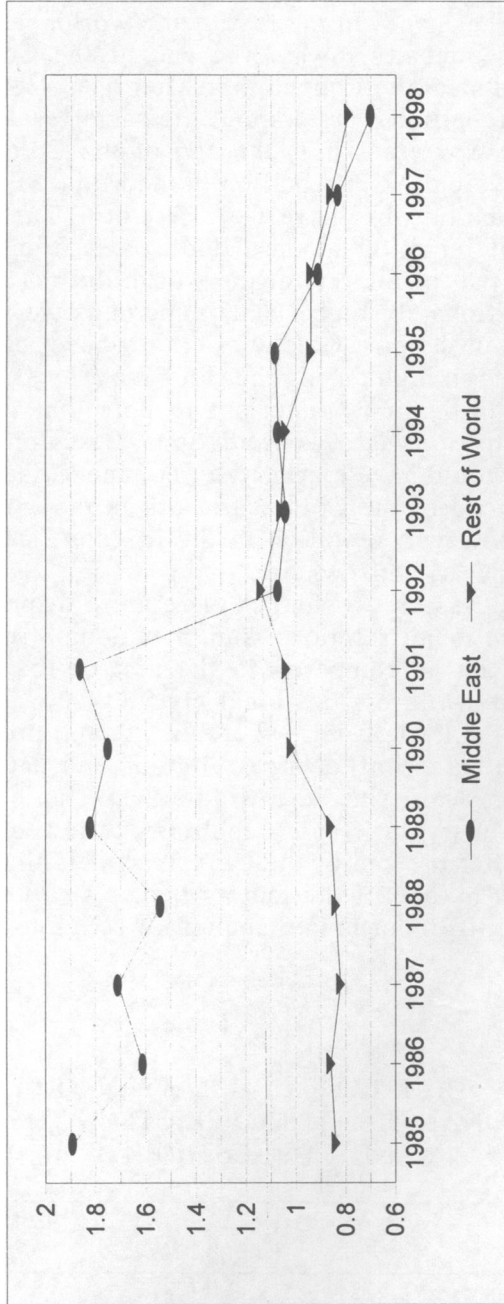
Fifth, the average level of rebellion is compared among four groups: minorities that are both separatist and religious, minorities that are only separatist, minorities that are only religious, and minorities that are neither religiously differentiated nor separatist. This will allow for an assessment of the combined impact of religion and separatism on ethnic rebellion. This test is done slightly differently from the other tests. Because dividing the groups into four categories brings the number of groups in each category to be too small for meaningful mean results, the levels of rebellion in two-year periods are assessed together. That is, instead of, for example, checking the average level of rebellion by the four groups that are both separatist and religious in 1985, the results for these four groups in 1985 and 1986 are combined so that there are eight observations rather than four.

In addition, the percentage of Middle Eastern ethnic conflicts which are civilizational, religious, and nationalist are compared to ethnic conflicts outside the Middle East. This allows for a comparison of which types of conflicts are disproportionately present in the Middle East.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1 shows the mean levels of rebellion by the 28 Middle Eastern ethnic minorities as compared to the 247 ethnic minorities in the rest of the world. The results show that during the Cold War, the average level of rebellion in the Middle East was

Table 1
ETHNIC REBELLION IN THE MIDDLE EAST VS. THE REST OF THE WORLD, 1985-1998



considerably higher than in the rest of the world. However, between 1991 and 1992, ethnic rebellion in the Middle East dropped considerably to about the same level as in the rest of the world. On the other hand, in the rest of the world, rebellion began to increase in intensity toward the end of the Cold War, peaked in 1992, and steadily dropped thereafter until 1998 when the average level of rebellion was at about the same level it had been during the Cold War era. Thus, the end of the Cold War is associated with a severe drop in rebellion in the Middle East and a temporary rise in rebellion in the rest of the world. Furthermore, while the pattern of rebellion in the Middle East from 1992 onward conforms to that of the rest of the world, during the Cold War it was disproportionately high. That is, perhaps we should not ask why rebellion in the post-Cold War era dropped, but should rather ask why it was so high during the Cold War.

In addition, it is important to note that these results do not conform to Huntington's predictions. Based on Huntington's theories, we would have expected a permanent rise in ethnic rebellion after the end of the Cold War, both in the Middle East and elsewhere. However, rebellion in the Middle East dropped, and rose only temporarily elsewhere.

Table 2 assesses whether there are a disproportionate number of civilizational, religious, and/or national ethnic conflicts in the Middle East as compared to the rest of the world. The results show that while civilizational conflicts are about as common in the Middle East as elsewhere, a greater proportion of Middle Eastern ethnic conflicts are religious and national than they are elsewhere. Thus, since the Middle East is unique in its high levels of Cold War era ethnic rebellion, followed by a severe drop shortly after the end of the Cold War, it is likely that this drop is explained by one of the factors that is also unique in the Middle East, the disproportionate amount of religious and nationalist minorities.

Table 2

PERCENTAGE OF CIVILIZATION, RELIGIOUS, AND
NATIONAL ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST
AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

	<i>N</i>	<i>Type of Conflict</i>		
		<i>Civilizational</i>	<i>Religious</i>	<i>Nationalist</i>
Middle East	28	35.7%	67.9%	46.4%
Rest of World	247	38.5%	46.2%	31.2%

Table 3 assesses the comparative levels of ethnic rebellion in the Middle East between civilizational and non-civilizational conflict. The results show that while the levels of ethnic rebellion between and within civilizations were approximately the same through the early 1990s, by 1992 the intensity of rebellion by civilizational minorities began to drop in comparison to rebellion by non-civilizational minorities. This gap between the levels of rebellion by civilizational and non-civilizational minorities remains present through 1998.

This causes serious doubt about the applicability of Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis to the Middle East. Not only is the end of the Cold War associated with a drop in conflict in the region, much of this drop occurred precisely among those groups Huntington expected to become more conflictive with the end of the Cold War. In fact, Gurr (2000: 40) found that rebellion in the Middle East peaked during the early 1980s. Not only do these results fail to conform to Huntington's predictions, they run directly opposite to them. Additionally, the predictions by some of Huntington's detractors that conflict in the post-Cold War era will drop due to a more united and interdependent world are relatively consistent with these results. The disproportionate drop in civilizational conflict is about what we would expect in a world where conflicts fueled by differences in culture are muted due to increased interdependence.

Table 4 examines the comparative levels of rebellion by religious minorities and non-religiously differentiated minorities in the Middle East. The results, in general, reflect the drop in ethnic rebellion in the Middle East in the post-Cold War era. Since this post-Cold War drop in intensity occurred for both religious and non-religiously differentiated minorities, religion does not seem to be the reason for it. More importantly, the results show a stable relationship between rebellion by religious minorities and rebellion by non-religiously differentiated minorities where the religious minorities consistently engage in markedly lower levels of rebellion than non-religiously differentiated minorities. This runs directly counter to the common wisdom that the Middle East's religious conflicts are particularly intense.

Table 5 examines the comparative levels of rebellion by nationalist and non-nationalist minorities. The results show that nationalist rebellion by Middle Eastern nationalist minorities is consistently higher than rebellion by the region's other minorities. The results also show that while the level of rebellion by non-nationalist minorities in the Middle East dropped slightly between 1985 and 1998 with a temporary rise in 1991, rebellion by the re-

gion's nationalist minorities rose until 1989, then began to drop to less than half that level by 1998 with the biggest drop occurring between 1991 and 1992. This has two implications. First, conflicts involving nationalist minorities are the ones that are most likely to reach the highest levels of rebellion in the Middle East. Second, the general post-Cold War drop in ethnic rebellion in the Middle East exactly coincides with, and thus can be explained by, the drop in nationalist rebellion in the region. The only question that remains is why Middle Eastern nationalist rebellion dropped after the end of the Cold War.

Table 6 examines the combined impact of religion and nationalism-separatism on ethnic rebellion. The results show that, except for the 1989-1990 period, the minorities which are separatist but not religious consistently engage in the highest levels of rebellion, followed by those groups that are both separatist and religious. The minorities which are religious but not separatist and the minorities which are neither religious nor separatist engage in about the same levels of rebellion through the end of the Cold War, after which the minorities which are religious but not separatist engage in no rebellion and the minorities which are neither separatist nor religious engage in very low levels of rebellion. Since this table shows two-year periods, it does not accurately reflect the drop in rebellion between 1991 and 1992, but an examination of the yearly results shows that rebellion by both groups that are only separatist and groups that are both religious and separatist drops dramatically, while rebellion by the other two categories also drops but less dramatically. Thus, separatism remains the best explanation for this drop in rebellion.

These results have some important implications. First, the two categories of minorities that are separatist consistently engage in the highest levels of rebellion, reinforcing the finding that the key to predicting violence in the Middle East is separatism. Second, with the exception of the 1989-1990 period, adding religion to separatism lowers the level of rebellion rather than increasing it. This reinforces the argument that religious differences do not contribute to the level of rebellion in the Middle East. Third, in the post-Cold War period, those conflicts that involve only religious differences have the lowest level of rebellion, which is, in fact, no rebellion from 1992 onward. This even further reinforces the finding that religious differences do not contribute to the level of rebellion in the Middle East.

Table 3
CIVILIZATIONAL ETHNIC REBELLION VS. NON-CIVILIZATIONAL ETHNIC REBELLION
IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1985-1998

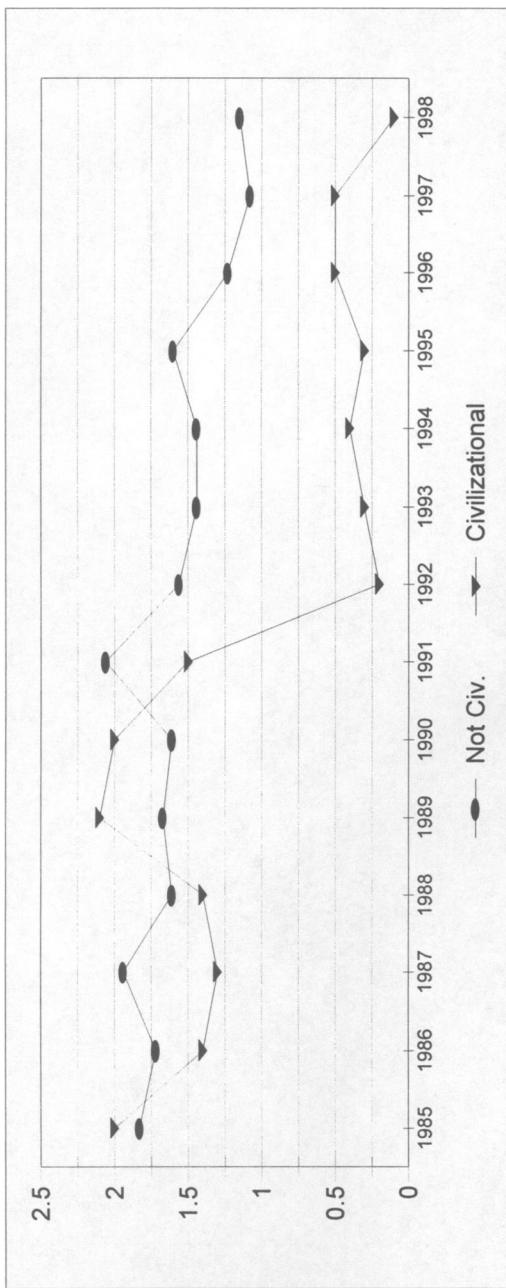


Table 4

RELIGIOUS VS. NON-RELIGIOUS ETHNIC REBELLION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1985-1998

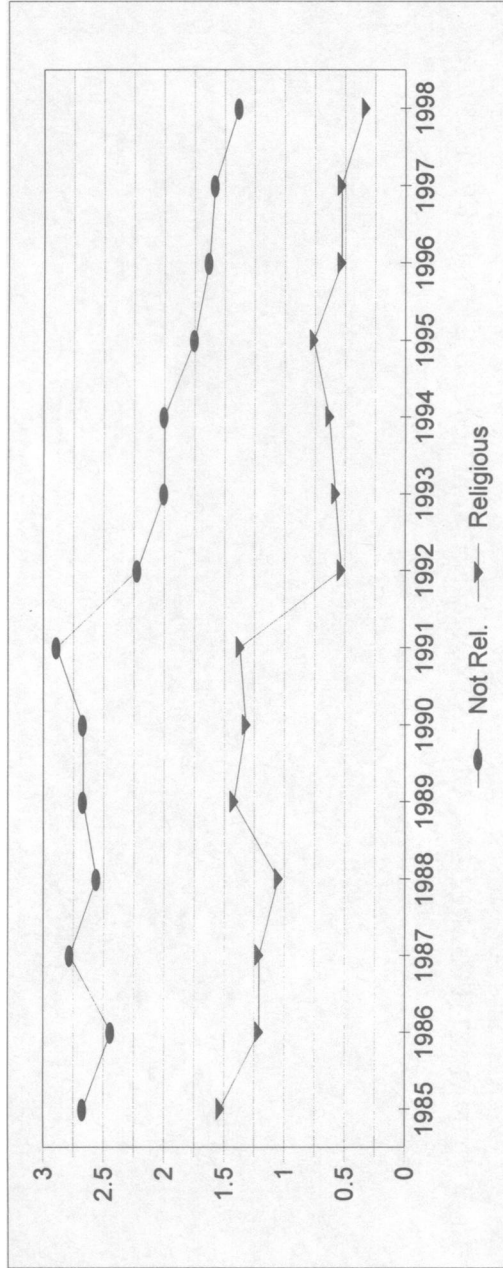


Table 5
SEPARATIST VS. NON-SEPARATIST ETHNIC REBELLION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1985-1998

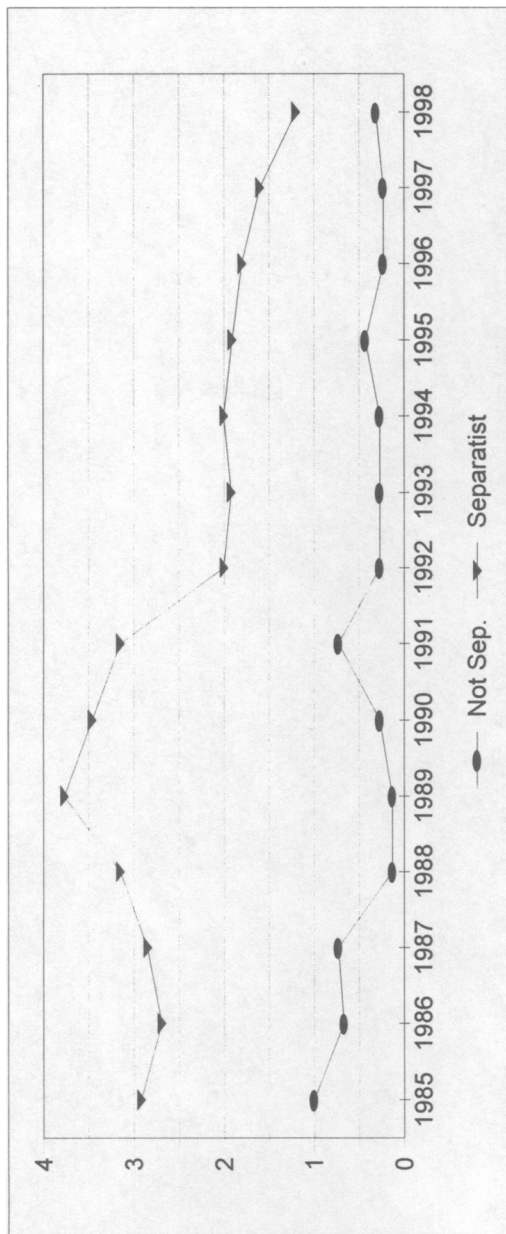
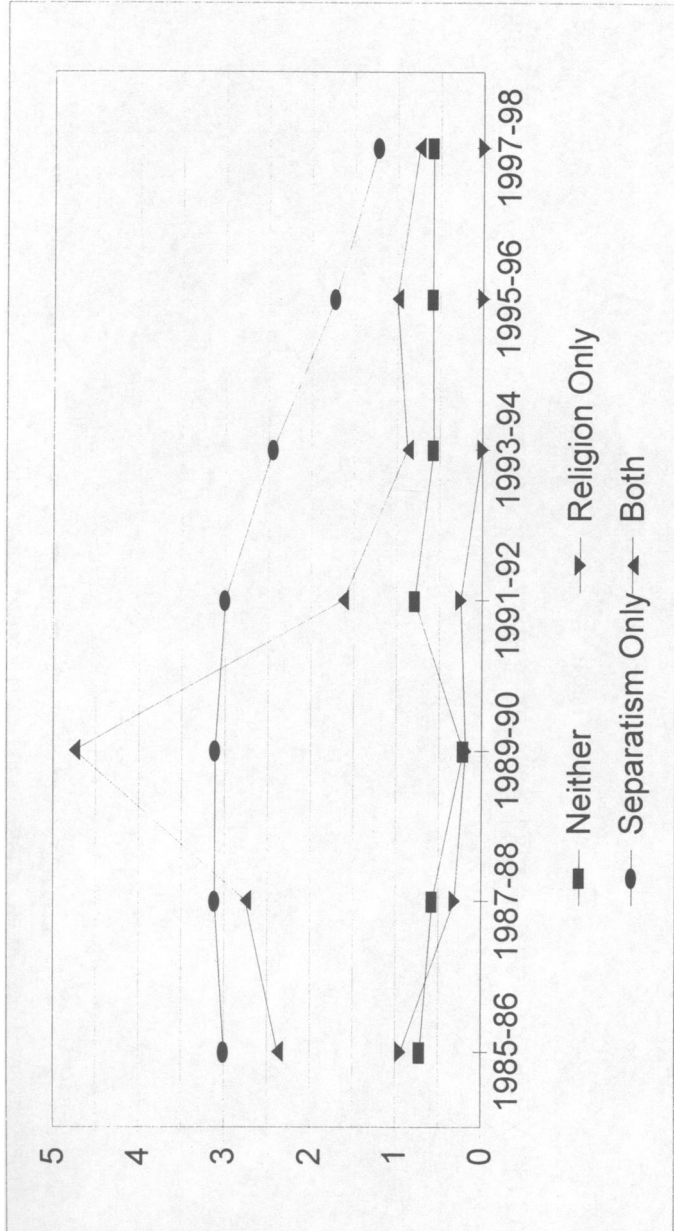


Table 6
 SEPARATIST VS. RELIGIOUS ETHNIC REBELLION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1985-1998



Conclusions

This study has produced two major findings. First, this study has unambiguously shown that Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" theory is not accurate with regard to ethnic rebellion in the Middle East. Instead of increasing with the end of the Cold War, ethnic rebellion in general, and especially by civilizational minorities, dropped dramatically. In fact, ethnic rebellion in the Middle East was at its highest during the early 1980s, which can be described as one of the high points of the Cold War. However, Huntington was right in the sense that conflict in the post-Cold War era will be different from conflict during the Cold War. Thus, those who predicted that the status quo would continue with the end of the Cold War were also incorrect.

These findings are also consistent with those who predicted a drop in conflict due to increased world unity and interdependence. Nevertheless, these arguments must be taken with a grain of salt. This is because, although the results are consistent with these arguments, this study did not directly test whether increased unity and interdependence were actually the cause of the dramatic drop in ethnic rebellion in the Middle East.

There is an alternate argument that also explains this drop in Middle Eastern ethnic rebellion, that it is a result of the post-Cold War power structure which has only one superpower. It is fair to say that during the Cold War, Middle Eastern politics, and especially Middle Eastern conflicts, experienced a considerable amount of intervention by both superpowers. In fact, most of the time when one superpower intervened on behalf of one side of a conflict, the other superpower would intervene on behalf of the other side. This dynamic, arguably, increased the overall level of conflict in the region and almost definitely did not decrease it. With the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. remained the only superpower. This had three major influences. First, the U.S. had more time and resources to devote to conflict prevention and resolution and other activities that were lower on its priority list during the Cold War. Second, those involved in conflict could no longer play one superpower off against the other. Third, it allowed intervention by the U.S. and other Western powers without any effective opposition by the Soviets. For example, it is unlikely that the allied intervention in the Gulf War would have been possible at the height of the Cold War. This directly resulted in intervention on behalf of Iraq's rebelling Kurdish minority. The end of superpower rivalry in the Middle East probably also contributed to the end of Lebanon's civil war and the peace process

between the Israelis and Palestinians, both of which can be considered ethnic conflicts.

The second important finding of this study is that it is not religious conflicts which are most violent in the Middle East but rather the nationalist-separatist ones. This is consistent with Walt's (1998) argument that nationalism will be the most important basis of conflict in the post-Cold War era. In fact, throughout the 1985-1998 period, the average level of ethnic rebellion by religious minorities in the Middle East was consistently lower than the average level of rebellion by the region's other ethnic minorities. Conversely, nationalist-separatist minorities in the Middle East consistently engaged in higher average levels of rebellion than the region's non-separatist minorities. In addition, separatist minorities that are also religious minorities engaged in less post-Cold War rebellion than minorities that are separatist but not religious, and minorities that are religious but not separatist engaged in no rebellion after 1991. One additional indication of the fact that separatist conflicts tend to be the most violent is that in 1989, the year in which separatist ethnic rebellion peaked, all of the ethnic minorities which engaged in terrorism, guerilla warfare, or open military rebellion were involved in separatist conflicts. These include the Palestinians, the civil war in Lebanon, the Kurds in Iran, Iraq and Turkey, the Baluchis in Iran, and the Saharawi in Morocco. Some of these conflicts also involve religion, but some do not. Thus, it is nationalism and separatism which characterize the most violent conflicts in the Middle East, and not religion. However, religion cannot be ruled out as an intervening variable.¹¹

Furthermore, the post-Cold War drop in ethnic rebellion in the Middle East is almost certainly explained by the drop in the ethnic rebellion by separatist minorities that occurred at the same time. This provides additional evidence that it is nationalist-separatist conflicts that define the overall level of violence in the Middle East. It also supports the contention that the high level of rebellion during the Cold War was due to superpower rivalry. This is because it is these types of conflicts that most lend themselves to the international intervention and mediation that often result in lower levels of conflict. These types of conflict are also those that are most likely to become arenas of contention for competing superpowers.

In retrospect this finding that Middle Eastern ethnic rebellion occurs most often among separatist minorities has a basis in earlier studies. For example, Gurr (1993a and 1993b) found that separatism was one of the major causes of ethnic rebellion. Fox

(2000) found that while religion may be disproportionately important in religious conflicts involving Islamic groups (and all ethnic conflicts in the Middle East include at least one Islamic group), these conflicts are not otherwise distinguishable from other ethnic conflicts. Also, Fox (2001a) found that rebellion rarely occurs among religious minorities unless they also express a desire for autonomy.

Be that as it may, it is important to reiterate that these results apply only to ethnic rebellion in the Middle East. Other types of conflict within ethnic groups are not included in the study. This includes the many religious opposition movements in Islamic states, most notably Algeria, which are all conflicts that are between members of the same ethnic group. Thus, the finding that Middle Eastern separatist conflicts tend to be more violent than religious ones does not apply to these types of religious opposition movements. The findings of this study also do not apply to any form of international conflict. However, the finding that Huntington's "clash of civilizations" argument is incorrect with regard to Middle Eastern domestic conflict is a more universal finding because there are few, if any, civilizational conflicts that are not also ethnic conflicts. Nevertheless, these limitations on the findings of this study suggest avenues of further research including the collection and examination of data that would allow us to test Huntington's theories with regard to non-ethnic and international conflict.

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Notes

1. A similar argument is made by many scholars with regard to ethnic conflict. See, for example, Horowitz (1985).
2. For a comparison of Christian and Islamic concepts of just war, see Kennedy (1999).
3. For further reading, see Liebman and Don-Yehiya (1983) and Liebman (1997).
4. For further readings on religion and the Middle East, see Borthwick (1980), Don-Yehiya (1987), Heilman and Friedman (1991), Owen (1992), and Rubin (1990).
5. For more on nationalism, see Comaroff and Stern (1995), and for more on its separatist elements, see Carment and James (1997).
6. The MAR3 data is available at the MAR website: www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/. The additional data used here is also available separately at the MAR website.
7. 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, arguing that the project has systematically collected a list of groups which are treated differentially and/or are politically active. Thus, the project represents a reasonable record of all serious conflicts between ethnic groups and governments.
8. For a detailed description of how these conflicts were divided into civilizational and non-civilizational conflicts, see Fox (2001b).
9. Because Lebanon was either experiencing a civil war or was jointly ruled by ethnic groups of different religions during this period, all ethnic groups in Lebanon are considered religious minorities.
10. This variable is named SEPX in the MAR3 dataset. The version used here simplifies the variable into one with two values: the group does not have active separatist desires or it does have active separatist desires.
11. In fact, an unpublished study of the data used in this study shows that while religion is not a cause of the world's ethnic conflicts, under certain circumstances it can add to the violence of these conflicts.