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## Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations and Its Allure for the Past Thirty Years

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**Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*  
and Its Allure for the Past Thirty Years**

**Michaela E. Munda**

**An Honors Thesis submitted for partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for graduation with honors in History  
from Hamline University**

**November 15th, 2020**

*I would like to extend a special thanks to Professor Nurith Zmora for her guidance throughout this project. I am grateful for her knowledge and wisdom. I owe the success of this Honors Project to her, as much as I owe myself.*

*Thank you Elli Vega, for true friendship and solace.*

*Thank you Rebecca Lund, for perspective and helping me pave my path.*

*Thank You James Winker, for encouraging my love of history and learning from the start.*

*Thank you to my professors past and present for encouraging me to reach my potential. Specifically but not limited to, I thank Kate Bjork and John Mazis of the Hamline history department, as well as Stephen Kellert and Joseph Swenson of the Hamline philosophy department.*

*Thank you to my family members and friends, who believed in me (whether you knew it or not) when I did not believe in myself.*

*Thank you Samuel P. Huntington, who has certainly made us think.*

British novelist, Timothy Mo praised Samuel P. Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* thesis saying, "This is one of those rare books...which will shape times as well as reflect them."<sup>1</sup> Huntington provided a monumental shift from previous discussions of the nineties that provided a direction after the fall of the Soviet Union. How Huntington drew his conclusions is a reflection of his own experiences in academic and government work, and he was then able to construct a theory that is still remnant in our minds thirty years later. The discussions surrounding the Clash of Civilizations theory are numerous, and the interpretations of his theory have crafted the perception of his work. The impact of a theory is just as, if not more important than the theory itself. Whether or not theory is accurate, or if one agrees or disagrees with Huntington's theory, his writings and teachings are still remnant in our minds, and we are still grappling with issues Huntington has named.

Samuel P. Huntington was not known for having a demeanor that was particularly charming or strong, but he was known to hold his ground when it mattered. One story often recited in memory of Huntington was a night at Harvard in the early 1980s where a group of muggers attempted to steal from and attack Huntington, his wife, and a colleague. Instead of cooperating with the muggers, Huntington took the offensive and managed to wrestle with the muggers and kept them from running away before authorities arrived. Robert D. Kaplan of *The Atlantic* quoted Huntington for his article "Looking the World in the Eye" about this incident, "A week before there had been an article in one of the newsmagazines recommending that you shouldn't fight with a mugger. But my immediate impulse was to fight back."<sup>2</sup> This attitude was reflected academically as well. There was rarely a stance Huntington was afraid to debate,

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<sup>1</sup>Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon and Schuster 1997

<sup>2</sup> Kaplan, Robert D. "Looking the World in the Eye." *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company, December 1, 2001.

discuss, or challenge and he was eager to allow his students to play a part in these conversations. A former student of his told Robert D. Kaplan, “He’s [Huntington] is a quintessential Victorian man of honor-- very quiet and contained, yet extraordinarily tough when the occasion demands.”

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If you were to sit in one of Samuel Huntington’s lectures at Harvard, you would see a beady-eyed intellectual, most likely hunched over in his chair. Teaching undergraduates was more favorable than the higher levels in Huntington’s eyes because he admired their willingness to challenge him. His wife, Nancy Huntington spoke about him to the *New York Times*, saying that, “He loved teaching undergraduates, right up to the end. He loved that they would speak out. And he was a mentor to so many young scholars...Francis Fukuyama, Michael Desch at Notre Dame, Steve Rosen at Harvard, Eliot Cohen at the State Department, Fareed Zakaria.”<sup>4</sup> A variety of prominent academic and political figures either worked alongside Huntington or studied under him. Huntington was an influence for a variety of important figures and not all of them sharing the same ideology. Huntington was less concerned with where one stood in an argument, but why they stood there as well as if they could defend it rationally and practically. A former undergraduate of Huntington said, “Other academics want to ram down your throat what they know and then go on to the next victim. Huntington never dominates classroom discussions, and he listens intensely.”<sup>5</sup> Huntington was an open mind; he wanted to teach his students to think rather than teach them to think by one ideology. In Huntington’s interview with Robert D. Kaplan, he says about graduate students, “[They are] more reluctant to challenge this or that

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<sup>3</sup> Kaplan, Robert D. “Looking the World in the Eye.”

<sup>4</sup> Lewin, Tamar. “Samuel P. Huntington, 81, Political Scientist, Is Dead.” *The New York Times*. The New York Times, December 29, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Kaplan. “Looking the World in the Eye.”

professor...[they are] captured by the jargon and orthodoxy of the discipline”.<sup>6</sup> The questions, challenges, and discussions in and out of the classroom were part of what Huntington not only preferred or loved, but needed in his own intellectual process. According to Kaplan, “His ideas emerge from seminars and lectures, not from sudden epiphanies. If he couldn’t teach, he probably couldn’t write.”<sup>7</sup>

Huntington embraced controversy and iconoclasm throughout his career, and he admired the conversations that led to understanding. Throughout his career he was a man who rationalized through practicality and reality. These traits are present in his work, from his first writings to his last. When the twentieth-century world wondered how to maneuver through international and systematic disorder, Huntington came to the table with a practical answer of his own. He wrote from the beginning of his career up to his death. Henry Rosovsky, a former Harvard colleague of Huntington said, “I think the key to his importance is that he wrote many books, every one of them dealing with a centrally important issue of our time. That’s a pretty big order.”<sup>8</sup> The perspective to which Huntington bases his reality comes into debate among his works, and at the same time his books are considered valuable academic works to this day. Whether one agrees with Huntington’s words or not, his works were and are, relevant.

Samuel Huntington was a Davos Man, a term he created to describe “gold collared workers,”<sup>9</sup> those people being the global rich, elite, and academics that transcend national borders. Huntington means this perspective to come from a place outside of his upbringing, nationality and ethnicity. Because of Huntington’s position as a Davos Man, one can see through

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<sup>6</sup> Kaplan, “Looking the World in the Eye.”

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Tamar, Lewin. “Samuel P. Huntington, 81, Political Scientist, Is Dead.” *The New York Times*. December 29, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel P. Huntington. “Dead Souls: The Denationalization of the American Elite.” *The National Interest*. The Center for the National Interest, June 24, 2014.

his works a real effort to find order in a complex and changing world. The stances that Huntington takes do not always appeal to one particular mode of political thought or party alignment. It can appear as though he bounces back and forth between two opposing sides, which has led to harsh criticisms of his academic character. Regardless if one champions or criticizes Huntington's work, he makes you think. His ideas led to an explosion of discussion from a variety of perspectives.

Many have named Huntington a dying breed of democrat, that is liberal with the exception of his views on foreign and defense policy. Huntington was a political realist, stressing nation-states and the balance of powers between the nation-states of the world. Realism, in contrast to Liberalism and Idealism, promotes necessary conflict between nation-states and that each nation-state be concerned with holding their own nation-state's interests and needs above all else at the end of the day. According to realism, every country's national interests are sustained by power and the global stage is a constant maneuvering of power struggles between nations in order to secure interests. The mindset of realism is that conflict is inevitable, so the goal is to protect one's nation from threats to conflicting interests. Huntington, however, will not argue in favor of conflict, but in avoiding it. Twenty years after the publishing of "Clash of Civilizations?", the political science magazine, *Foreign Affairs*, dedicated an issue to Huntington's 1993 essay and its importance. Gideon Rose, editor of *Foreign Affairs* says, "...his [Huntington's] article was a call to think about the ways in which cultural issues would come back into politics and geopolitics. He actually wanted to avoid clashes where possible."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Gideon Rose, "The Clash at 20." *Foreign Affairs* August 13, 2013.

Huntington's concern over national security will continue through his entire career. There were real concerns that he held his whole life about national security, that the United States has been "lucky".<sup>11</sup> The sparsity of foreign attacks on the United States is not the result of a strong and intelligent policy, but of geographical advantage. This concern is prevalent throughout his works, from *The Soldier in the State* in 1957 to *Clash of Civilizations* in 1996. Huntington thinks the way security must be maintained depends on the threat of the times, stemming from his experience between academia and the government.

Huntington's lifetime on paper was a series of rising in his positions. He was born in 1927 in Queens, New York into a family of publishers, journalists and writers. At the age of twenty-three, he had been in the Army, earned his PhD, and had begun teaching at Harvard. Huntington had grown up middle class, so by thirty years of age he was a "product of elite American Institutions of learning".<sup>12</sup> Huntington had published a popular book, acquired tenure at Harvard, and prominent sideline positions in politics. Huntington married Nancy Arkelyan after they wrote a speech together for presidential candidate, Adlai Stevenson. Soon after his marriage in 1957 he published his first book, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. The release of *The Soldier and the State* was the first of the many controversies Huntington would create and partake in.

*The Soldier and the State* was an analysis of the relationships between politics and the military. Stating that, although the constitutional process to declare, fund, and command war is in the executive and congressional branches, the idea of separation of military from politics is nearly impossible. Throughout this book he analyzes the ways in which the military is and

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<sup>11</sup> Robert D. Kaplan. "Looking the World in the Eye."

<sup>12</sup> Andrew J. Gawthorpe. "'Mad Dog?' Samuel Huntington and the Vietnam War", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2018. 41:1-2, 301-325.



should be a part of the political process. Another claim of the book is the notion that national security involves a loyal trust in the military and the political institution. A concern Huntington held all of his life was the balance of trust and opposition between the government, the military and the people. Critics of his first book compared Huntington to Mussolini for how he discouraged opposition.<sup>13</sup> Yet, fifty years later the book was in its fifteenth printing and is, “[today] considered a standard title on the topic of how military affairs intersect with the political realm,” according to Corydon Ireland’s article about Huntington’s life in *The Harvard Gazette*. “Telford Taylor, the chief American prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, had this to say about the book when it was first published: ‘Civilian control’ [of the military] has become a piece that politicians mouth worshipfully but with little understanding. This is an area where iconoclasm is badly needed; Professor Huntington’s store of this commodity seems virtually inexhaustible, and it is refreshing to follow his trail of destructive exposure”<sup>14</sup>

Harvard denied Huntington tenure in 1959 after the outrage from his colleagues in the Government Department over *The Soldier and the State* and overall controversy of his first work. Huntington then went to Columbia University where he became their deputy director of the Institute of War and Peace Studies and met his lifelong academic and political friend, Zbigniew Brzezinski. They published together the book *Political Power: USA/USSR* about Cold War political strategy in 1962. Through Huntington’s connections to other prominent and rising academics at the elite academic institutions, he began to find himself in application of his knowledge and theory. Little could Huntington anticipate that his consultancy for President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Administration would grant him the nicknames ‘Mad Dog’ and ‘War awk’,

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<sup>13</sup> Kaplan, “Looking the World in the Eye.”

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

bestowed by his Harvard leftist counterparts during the Vietnam War. In President Johnson's administration, Huntington grew closer to Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger, as all three of them were in support of drawing the conflict in Vietnam to a close. Henry Kissinger had been jointly awarded the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize for assisting a ceasefire, with no doubt the help of Huntington. Many will remember the name Henry Kissinger and the roles he played in Cold War national security, yet not nearly as many will remember Huntington. At the end of the day Huntington was an academic and a scholar rather than a politician, he was more engaged in theory and writing than his counterparts who made their roles in the spotlight of service and speeches. Kaplan writes on this, "He is a worse than indifferent public speaker: hunched over, reading laboriously from a text."<sup>15</sup>

Huntington is presented as a hypocrite and because of the dichotomy he personified due to his role in Vietnam. Andrew J. Gawthorpe in his article *'Mad Dog? 'Samuel Huntington and the Vietnam War*, said that Huntington was a, "Irredeemable hawk in the Harvard yard, and an Irredeemable dove in DC."<sup>16</sup> While he was an open supporter of the war in Vietnam, he would directly criticize the methods and direction of the administration. This can make for a confusing depiction of his character and beliefs. How could Huntington be a supporter of the Vietnam war, and at the same time work towards a ceasefire? The answer to this dichotomy in Huntington's case is derived from the core, practical beliefs about modernization and security that he held throughout his academic career. The belief expressed in his academic works is that nations must have a strong government in order to maintain stability and order. This meant that, although he believed the Vietnam strategy needed to be rethought, the open opposition would create in his

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

eyes, a disruption of the balances of power. Huntington was concerned throughout the varying social movements and upheaval of the sixties, as he found it to be an issue of national security. Relating back to *The Soldier and the State*, the balance between the government, the military and its people was offcentered during this time period, which meant mainstream opposition to the United States government was a serious concern.

The fight in Vietnam for Huntington was not on the front lines of the jungle, but hunched over with his pen and paper. *Political Order in Changing Societies*, published in 1968, directed the conversation of intellectuals and strategists about the Vietnam conflict. *Political Order in Changing Societies* was derived from a hundred page report to the State Department, that then was a declassified article in foreign affairs, and then a book.<sup>17</sup> Huntington argued in this report that stability is of consequential importance for developing countries. The strategy he suggested was to urge the rural population of Vietnam to the urban areas, that would then allow all of the people to be modernized and thus collected under a common cause. Democracy and modernization are assumed to be hand in hand, but this idea will change for Huntington in his future works. It is here in *Political Order in Changing Societies* that he outlays his belief that the form of government is not as important as the degree of power by the government.

In 1977, National Security Advisor and longtime friend of Huntington Zbigniew Brzezinski appointed him to the National Security Council as a consultant for President Jimmy Carter's Administration. The controversy followed Huntington into his presidential appointment. An anonymous writer in The Harvard Crimson argued that, "...his views on Vietnam, and on democracy both in America and in the Third World, should serve to disqualify him from this,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid

and any other, public post.”<sup>18</sup> According to the anonymous writer, Huntington was considered for a number of other positions in the administration, almost all of them needing confirmation from a Senate that held compunctions due to his political stances.<sup>19</sup> This writer argued the gold collared worker working alongside the claimed man of the people was contradictory. Huntington was able to implement his ideas in the South African Apartheid government. During this time there was strong opposition to the government-upheld segregation, thus Huntington suggested there needed to be a “reform and repress”.<sup>20</sup> By this logic that Huntington suggested, the government should incorporate the wants of the people to maintain stability. For Huntington it always comes back to the balance of power in order to have security.

In 1981 Huntington published the book *American Politics: the Promise of Disharmony* examining the disparity between ideals and realities of political process in the United States. Compared to his last works, the threat of national security has shifted and his beliefs begin to change around democracy and modernization. Huntington analyzes in the 1980s what has been prominent in politics in the present: disharmony and tension between the left and the right. Huntington was worried like he was in *The Solider and the State*, during the sixties social movements, and in the apartheid government, that the balance between the people and the government must be maintained in order to secure a stable nation. Huntington predicts that tensions will only further increase, and if not handled correctly, will tear the nation apart. There is an urgency in his work to understand that ideals do not necessarily correlate to the reality of an institution as it functions. He examines the cycles of political conflict, how it has phases in one

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<sup>18</sup> Anonymous, “Against The Huntington Appointment: News: The Harvard Crimson.” News | *The Harvard Crimson*. February 17, 1977.

<sup>19</sup> Anonymous, “Against The Huntington Appointment: News: *The Harvard Crimson*.” November 5, 1987.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel P. Huntington. “Dead Souls: The Denationalization of the American Elite.” *The National Interest*. The Center for the National Interest, June 24, 2014.

era to another. This is not the first, and certainly not the last time Huntington will make a prediction worthy of present relevance. In 1989 these concerns continued in his *Foreign Affairs* article “The U.S. Decline or Renewal?”.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union tipped the balance of world power, one that hadn't tipped so greatly since the Second World War. There was a scramble to make sense of this transition globally as well within the former Soviet Union and its territories. The power vacuum in the region and the uncertainty of the future led to rising ethnic tensions that erupted across the former Soviet Union, particularly in former Yugoslavia. Ethnic and religious tensions were at the forefront of conflict in this region and identities were central to the establishment of the new states.

In the 1990 address to the U.S. Congress, President George H. W. Bush claimed that, “This [the conflict in the Persian Gulf] is not as Saddam Hussein would have it. The United States against Iraq, it is Iraq against the world”.<sup>21</sup> This part of George W. Bush’s speech represents a common sentiment that former student of Huntington, Francis Fukuyama, who had boldly argued that the next era was, ‘the end of history’. The fall of the Soviet Union had ushered in a New World Order. Communism had ended and democracy had won. Fukuyama writes in his 1989 article “The End of History?”,

“The triumph of the West, of the Western idea, is evident first in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism. In the past decade, there have been unmistakable changes in the intellectual climate of the world’s two largest communist countries, and the beginning of significant reforms in both. But this

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<sup>21</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “George Bush Defines the New World Order.” C. Accessed March 19, 2020. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4528359/user-clip-george-bush-defines-world-order>.

phenomenon extends beyond high politics and it can be seen as so in the ineluctable spread of consumerist Western culture in such diverse context as the peasants' market and color television sets now omnipresent throughout China, the cooperative restaurant and clothing stores opened in the past year in Moscow, the Beethoern piped into Japanese department stores, and the rock music enjoyed alike in Prague, Rangoon and Tehran."<sup>22</sup>

According to Fukuyama's claim, it was not just democracy that had won, but the Western ideals that are intertwined in the West's spread of democracy. Fukuyama attributes this to the nature of liberal democracy, that it will naturally move towards peace and order. Democracy had not itself won, rather the United States had won the twentieth century. The international community had shifted in this monumental change, to what extent and the implications of it moving forward were debated far and wide.

In 1993 Huntington customarily contributed to the conversation after a classroom discussion at one of his seminars.<sup>23</sup> This classroom discussion led to Huntington's most notable work and theory, *Clash of Civilizations*. The term *Clash of Civilization* was originally coined by Bernard Lewis in his 1990 article "The Roots of Muslim Rage"<sup>24</sup>. *Clash of Civilizations* had been released as an article "Clash of Civilizations?" in the journal *Foreign Affairs* in the summer of 1993, where it swiftly became a sensation.

Huntington attributes his success partially to the timing, saying in an interview with Pew Research Center, "I think the extent to which something has an impact depends, in part, upon the

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<sup>22</sup> Francis Fukuyama. "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989): 3-18.

<sup>23</sup> Robert D. Kaplan. "Looking the World in the Eye."

<sup>24</sup> Bernard Lewis. "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *The Atlantic*. September 1990.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/304643/>

logic of its argument and the evidence it presents; but it also depends overwhelmingly on timing. You've got to set that argument forth at the right time. If you set it forth five years too early, or five years too late, nobody pays attention to it."<sup>25</sup> As mentioned and seen before, Huntington often took upon the task of commenting and theorising on relevant topics of national security and international politics, normally as events occurred. This time, Huntington provided perspective at the perfect timing.

The war of ideology that encompassed most of the twentieth century was no longer, thus the divisions among people would be civilizations and culture, according to Huntington. The thesis can be adequately summarized for now in this section of the original essay "Clash of Civilizations?", published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1994, "It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The Clash of Civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future."<sup>26</sup> Huntington reminded readers that identity, history, culture and ethnicity were vital to understanding a world stage that was no longer a bipolar.

In *Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington swam against the intellectual currents of third wave feminism and postmodernism, this is part of what made him stand out. Broadly speaking, both movements were striving to move past the structures and labels of modernity while Huntington argues that those labels and structures are an aspect of our identity. Modernity was part of the

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<sup>25</sup> "Five Years After 9/11, The Clash of Civilizations Revisited." Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, December 31, 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Samuel P. Huntington. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993)

enlightenment, intertwined with the values of the United States. Huntington wants to argue that those values, that history, and that culture make up who we are, and that we must remember; we cannot necessarily separate from that. Yet, it's not the case that Huntington solely pushed against these movements, his practical speculations include that feminism and postmodernism movements in the way that identity, history and culture is important. Huntington does not deny that the subject of identity exists and what it means, only to remind us that identity as it is important, is built upon history and culture, and that those are stretching aspects of identity one cannot shut themselves away from. In this way, Huntington pushed against and swam with the current simultaneously. Most of Huntington's thinking involves the appearance of contradiction, when in fact his thinking lay in the grey.

Although democracy had won for the time being in his article "Clash of Civilizations?" and in his later essay "The West: Unique, Not Universal," Huntington insists that democracy is not necessarily universal. The notion that democracy and western culture are separated are further discussed in this article. This is a prominent theme, not just in Huntington's works, but in the analyses of his work. If one thinks that the solution is for Islamic civilizations to modernize and adapt democracy, are they able or willing to do so? The Golden Arches Theory by Thomas L. Friedman in his 1999 book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* goes that no two countries that have McDonalds have ever fought each other is a notion Huntington argues against, not all good things come together. Meaning, a strong economy and democracy do not necessarily come together. Huntington recognized reality lives in the grey, not the black and white, meaning a theory such as The Golden Arches is too black and white to depict and offer



advice upon maneuvering reality. Placing a McDonalds in the Middle East will not solve the tension between the West and Middle East.

The last book published by Huntington has a common thread with the current immigration debate. *Who Are We? The Challenges to American National Identity* was the least well received of all Huntington's works for these reasons. A prominent idea in the book was Huntington's concern over immigration, that an overflow of different cultures all at once would not allow the proper assimilation into American culture and values of the society. In *Who Are We?* Huntington suggests a decline in immigration flow to give time for assimilation, and that in order not to lose American society immigrants must hold to the Anglo-Saxon roots of the nation. There are echoes of Clash of Civilizations in his notion of noticing differing cultures overlapping, and predicting what must practically happen in order to maintain security by having a strong government. Though the application and implications of *Who Are We?* has been tied to oppressive ideologies, Huntington understood the struggles of multiculturalism that were to come. It must be noted that although ideas of multiculturalism and immigration may overlap with those presented in his following 2008 book *Who Are We?* multiculturalism as I discuss further focuses on how it is discussed in Clash of Civilizations. An analysis of *Who Are We?* similar to the structure of this work could be equally as valuable to this, but it is not the focus of this work.

Samuel P. Huntington died Christmas Eve of 2008 of complications stemming from his diabetes. Though his pen and paper have been set down, his words and theories ring in our ears. Just under academic Robert O. Keohane you will find Huntington is the second most cited author

on college syllabi for political science courses.<sup>27</sup> There are countless academic and news articles published after his death, his theories are used in application of past and present issues of security and international relations. Kaplan said about Huntington's legacy and importance, "The history of the intellectual battles surrounding American foreign policy since the early Cold War can be told, to an impressive degree, through Huntington's seventeen books and scores of articles."<sup>28</sup> The legacy of Samuel Huntington is not solely derived from his Public Service Scholarship, or the countless positions he held and was awarded for, rather by the way his ideas have found a way to keep lingering. The ideas are a key in understanding past and present issues by the way they can make one think. To reflect on Huntington's theories is not to ask 'was he right or wrong?' but rather, how has he made the world think, and why we are still in many ways thinking about what Huntington claimed.

Critics and Champions of the Clash of Civilizations theory range internationally. *Clash of Civilizations* had been printed in 26 languages. Seminars, lectures and discussions were held over its contents.<sup>29</sup> Regardless of the positive or negative takes and impacts, it comes to call the world to look at itself and the balances of power because he wanted people to think practically. Amidst uncertainty, Huntington provided a direction that had a far reaching impact regardless of accuracy. The depth of insight continued further when in 1996 Huntington released the article as a book, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. It has since offered room for continuous reflection on the balance of power after the end of the Cold War. Countless conflicts were put under the scope of Huntington's theory since its release. In particular, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the War on Terror specifically came under observation through the lense of Clash of

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<sup>27</sup> (n.d.). Retrieved October 23, 2020, from <https://opensyllabus.org/results-list/authors?size=50>

<sup>28</sup> Robert D. Kaplan. "Looking the World in the Eye."

<sup>29</sup> Kaplan. "Looking the World in the Eye."

Civilizations. The scope of the theory has been applied to China's economy and rise in power, but the theory is not used nearly as often in the discussion of China compared to the Middle East. The theory was not one solely discussed in academic circles, in some way or another it made its way into publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Slate*, and *The Atlantic* to name a few.

Regardless of interpretations and implications, the Clash of Civilizations became a comprehensive academic work. Those who thought like Huntington were those who praised him, such as his old friends Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski and those who were eager for an answer forward. Huntington produced an examined, compatible and understandable theory that directed and satisfied much of the conversation around new world order.

Clash of Civilizations was certainly not discussed at the American dinner table, but to this day it is still a relevant work and is used as a lens of understanding international politics. Though not directly stated by any presidential administration, it is speculated and argued by many academics that specifically the Clinton and George W. Bush state departments considered and applied aspects of this theory to national security measures. Critics would call this proof that the theory was self prophesying and a naive generalization of history.

Overall, many critics and even some champions have noted how Huntington's ideas were not necessarily original, but no one could disagree that the direction it provided in discussions of international relations was extensive. The notion of unoriginality in his theory, this comes partially from Huntington's stance as a political realist, and partially because Huntington's purpose is to promote and protect American Values. One could claim that Clash of Civilizations was not original, but a copy and paste application of realism on the new world stage, however

one could also claim that realism is inherent in all of his work as an academic and as an advisor to the United States government. The association of Huntington to a neoconservative realist desire to find a new conflict is because the clashes Huntington describes gave the realists a direction. Decades of realist thinking was turned upside down after the fall of the Soviet Union, and although Huntington's goal was to stave conflict by naming a potential conflict, it gave those who craved conflict a clear direction. Frankly, his ideas are not original because the ideas that Huntington discusses are conversations and concerns that were already occurring. Huntington just happened to be the one to articulate the reality of the situation, and with his practical approach gave applicable suggestions. Not to mention, Huntington was a well respected academic with noteworthy accomplishments, therefore when he wrote on a topic it was likely many would read it.

Historian Bernard Lewis wrote several titles on what he saw was a clash between the West and the Middle East before Huntington wrote *Clash of Civilizations*. According to academic John Trumbour, Lewis has held this notion long before the conversations in the 1990s, and only then did his work become prominent with the help of Huntington's popularity. In his works from his article "Muslim Roots of Rage" to his books *What Went Wrong?* and *The Crisis of Islam*, Lewis analyses the historical roots of separation between the West and Middle East all the way back to the Crusades. Lewis wants there to be an understanding of the rejection of the West by the Middle East and why through looking at history.

"Roots of Muslim Rage" published in 1990 described a clash that was strengthening with the end of the Cold War. It was a recent application and phrasing of his ideas of a clash between civilizations, predecessors to this era. In *What Went Wrong?* Lewis describes a transition of

civilizational power that has been occurring since the Dark Ages of Europe. While the Islamic world was stretching in power and knowledge, Europe was not as advanced. This success was a part of the religion, Lewis claims, attributing a rise from the Dark Ages to the knowledge and arts that spread from the Islamic world in this time. Transitioning out of the Dark Ages, Europe slowly rose as a prominent political and cultural influence across the centuries following the Crusades and the Renaissance. The Crusades triggered an already existing notion of non-Muslims being the other, and thus a true clash began. As Europe rose into power and influence, so shifted the Islamic power and influence. At many points, European diplomats were not even seen by the Sultan of the great Ottoman Empire as they were seen as not important enough. Yet with the fall of the Ottoman Empire and Islamic civilizations, rose Western civilizations. This was the process of many hundreds of years. The Middle East had been conquered and shifted by Western colonialism and imperialism from the 1910's until the middle of the twentieth century. Lewis goes into varying details as to how diametrically opposed these civilizations are down to day to day happenings.

Lewis claims that the Middle East yearns to be as powerful as the West, as they were once more powerful than the West according to their history. However the Middle East is stuck in old notions of how the world should be, and in order to be as powerful as the West they need to set aside some of those notions. The clash between civilizations is only heightened in the fact that the West and democracy won the twentieth century. The cure to this is for the Middle East to adapt to modernization and democracy, but can Middle Eastern civilization cope and allow this transition to take place?

In *The Crisis of Islam*, Lewis hums a similar tune as *What Went Wrong?*, although there is much historical repetition as *What Went Wrong?* the purpose of this book is to understand the history of Islam and the Middle East in order to confront terrorism and fundamentalism. Lewis particularly focuses on the twentieth century buildup to the September 11th attacks. In this book he offers insights to how to achieve democracy in the Middle East, he claims it is by the deconstruction of Wahhabism or Islamic fundamentalism. Lewis thinks that the outcome of this will determine if the Middle East will progress forward, or remain backwards, if not regress further with the help of fundamentalism.

The 1996 book, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* expands in detail upon the 1994 essay published by Huntington. The term civilization was coined by the French in the eighteenth century who used it as an antonym to barbarism in order to classify the legitimate from the primitive.<sup>30</sup> Huntington however, uses the word civilization plurally, meaning civilizations are consistent ideals that form an overarching way of life. At the same time as claiming civilizations are consistent, Huntington claims that they also have no distinct beginning and end, and that they are continually being redefined. A single civilization triumphing over the rest could end the variety of cultures that have formed throughout history. Civilizations according to Huntington are the foundation of the world as it transcends cultures, religions, ethnicity, language, tribes, politics and borders. According to Huntington, there are nine major civilizations, Western, Orthodox, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, African, Latin American, East Asia, and Japanese. These nine major civilizations depict the world stage of the post- Cold War era.

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<sup>30</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon and Schuster 1997. 41.

Acknowledging that Westerners forget their history on the international stage but the rest of the world does not is a prominent point in the book. This is why Huntington thus asserts, “In fundamental ways, the world is becoming more modern and less West.”<sup>31</sup> The process of what Huntington calls indigenization, the revival of cultural and ethnic identity was and continues to occur and contribute to this movement. While many think because of modernization, religion has been shoved aside- Huntington thinks the opposite. In times of change, people need something to root themselves in, to find meaning, structure, hope and community. Huntington says, “People do not live by reason alone. They cannot calculate and act rationally in pursuit of their self interest until they define themselves.”<sup>32</sup> First and foremost people need their psychological and emotional needs met, including a sense of who they are and where they can belong. When a person has been uprooted from their psychological and emotional needs, especially from what Huntington names the ‘trauma(s) of modernization’ they can turn to religion to meet them in order to cope. Due to this, Huntington argues that the revival of non western religion is the “..most powerful manifestation of anti-westernism in non-western societies.” It is not a rejection of modernity, but seeking modernity without the influence of the West.<sup>33</sup>

A new world order preceding the Cold War includes a reconfiguration of identity on a global scale. Who are we, and where do we belong and align? Huntington wants us to ask ourselves who we are, who your neighbor is across the street or across the continent, and then understand what it means in order for each other's needs and interests to be met. Huntington describes a world in the coming era where powers are cross aligning and cultures are reviving. Civilizations will be the forefront of conflict and politics in the coming age especially as culture

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<sup>31</sup> Huntington, 78.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 101.

and politics are being used to define identity. Huntington will argue that people work best within their own civilizations, therefore unity and cooperation need to happen inside cultures, and then more importantly, civilizations as a whole. Only then can successful cooperation happen between different civilizations. For the United States he suggests going back to the roots of Anglo-Saxon, protestant values. The United States must unite if it is to align with the greater Western powers.

Huntington points to particular clashes, or “challenger civilizations”<sup>34</sup> he foresees such as the West, Islam, and East Asia. For the case of East Asia, this civilization is gaining economic growth and hegemonic power on the global stage, presenting itself as a contender for world power. Islam on the other hand has a population boom and is seeing a religious revival, particularly in fundamentalist Islamic movements. These conflicts as they occur are described by Huntington as “fault line wars” that appear consistently and similarly to ethnic, religious, clan, tribe and national wars, they will occur on a macro scale because of the different roots of civilizations.<sup>35</sup>

The concluding concern is not just of a clash itself, but what a clash or the anticipation of a clash means. The notion that assuming the triumph of the West or that the success of one civilization is permanent is ignorant, so a clash due to the factors that Huntington discusses could indicate a descent in Western power. Therefore, each civilization, including the West, must remember their roots and unify accordingly, “In a multicivilizational world, the constructive course is to renounce universalism, accept diversity and seek commonalities.”<sup>36</sup> Huntington advises that the United States cannot escape or control the world, and that it must align with

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<sup>34</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon and Schuster 1997. 41.

<sup>35</sup> Huntington, 252.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 318.



other members of its civilization, in order to maintain peace and form relationships with other rising powers in the new era of world affairs.<sup>37</sup>

Huntington continues along the path Lewis walked by using history to explain the rift between the West and the Middle East, and what that means moving forward. By trade, Lewis is a historian and is partaking in historical observation and analysis compared to Huntington who promotes the importance of history and uses history as a necessity for supporting his theory. History is one of the tools Huntington used to build his theory. builds part of his argument off of Lewis's original notions, but Huntignton's scope is much broader than just the Middle East and the West. The political scientist relies on history and recognizes its significant role in having an understanding of the world, especially Huntington who is crafting a broad world theory.

One could spend ages sifting through the articles, books, mentions and debates over the Clash of Civilizations theory. Outside of using the Clash of Civilizations as a scope to examine events, academics have debated the rightfulness of the theory itself since it was published. Over the years the evidence changes, the comparisons and its importance changes. Before September 11th, writings and commentary around the theory were focused on academic discussions on the theory and the rightfulness or lack of rightfulness of Huntington's predictions. After September 11th the theory became a legitimate scope of comparison and understanding.

After the September 11th attacks, they were viewed by academics and journalists under the scope that Huntington provided in 1996. The events of September 11th made Huntington a prophet, and the term "clash of civilization" has been used as a scope to an even wider degree. Amitav Acharya from the New York Times said, "The Sept. 11 attacks on the United States were

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 312.

the first real test of Huntington's thesis. Amid the initial shock waves of the attacks, many saw its vindication. This view gained strength when George W. Bush used the word "crusade," with its connotations of a Christian holy war against Muslims. The attacks themselves were presented by the perpetrators as Islamic holy war against Christians and Jews."<sup>38</sup> Due to the rhetoric and emotions around the war on terror, it seemed quite literally as a clash of civilizations that Huntington had described. When approaching the threat of terrorism, Huntington had what seemed to be the answer in 1993.

The book *The New Crusades, Constructing the Muslim Enemy*, is a compiled work of essays and selections by various academics that aim to analyse the rift between the West and Middle East, specifically the West and Islam. Most of these academics in *The New Crusades* are opposed to the schools of thoughts related to the theories of Lewis and Huntington. The commentaries about Huntington and the reshaping of world order were written after *Clash of Civilizations* released and some after the September 11th attacks. Whether it was Huntington's intent or not, the amount of essays that respond to *Clash of Civilizations* show how intertwined the *Clash of Civilizations* theory is with the construction of the muslim enemy.

The Moroccan sociologist and feminist writer Fatema Mernissi scrutinizes the notion that the West and East are separate entities. In her 1996 essay, "Palace Fundamentalism and Liberal Democracy", Mernissi offers a deeper analysis into the implications of theories such as *Clash of Civilizations*. She first addresses the split between the Middle East and the West, inquiring if it is the continuation of the Cold War and examining how Liberal democracies have supported and profited from Islamic fundamentalism up to this point. The center of the arms

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<sup>38</sup> Amitav Acharya, and International Herald Tribune. "Clash of Civilizations? No, of National Interests and Principles." *The New York Times*, January 10, 2002.

trade and from this, immense global wealth lies in the Middle East. United States weapons indirectly fuel internal Muslim conflicts. If there is a claim to the apparent clash of the West and Middle East, then why has there been what Mernissi calls a ‘marriage’ between these two forces forged by imperialism, oil and arms sales? Given this, Mernissi suggests a shift in perspective of Islamic fundamentalism, that it is not, “..an anarchist, medieval religion..” but a, “ strategic agency to create employment in the unsettling post- modern economy of the West.”<sup>39</sup> Mernissi heeds warning to jumping onto the notion that the Cold War is done and the next conflict is readily ahead, “If, to justify their budgets, some generals and arms lobbies find it appropriate to blow cultural differences into a Medieval Crusade, we should not jump blindly onto their bandwagon, because, we might have different interests- such as promoting dialogue, tolerance, and global responsibility.”<sup>40</sup>

Mernissi notes that in the Arab world, feminist and fundamentalist movements existed peacefully together at the start of the thirties. The change in this began from what we commonly associate as politics and systems of the Middle East was caused by the export of oil around this same time as these movements. This is when the roles of nations went according to the Cold War and a rise in nationalism from leaders such as Egypt’s Nasser. An important take away stressed by Mernissi is that ideas matter, and that our interests are more interconnected than we can sometimes perceive them to be, “We do not live in seperate worlds, but in highly interconnected ones.”<sup>41</sup>

In his 1995 essay “The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist’s Critique”, Roy Mottahedeh, claims that the Clash of Civilizations theory gave the United States what it wanted,

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<sup>39</sup> Qureshi, Emran, and Michael Anthony. Sells. *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*. 57.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 54.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 63.

a direction. As an Islamic scholar, Mottahedeh claims that Huntington's theory, "...seems to offer a broad picture of world events that seems to be supported by a wealth of examples."<sup>42</sup>

Mottahedeh questions the basis of Huntington's 'empirical' strategy and evidence. Huntington's naming of civilizations has created a false reality to conflicts and cultures that are more complex than they appear. Take for example Africa, defined by Huntington as one civilization when in reality there are a multitude of countries, cultures and differing conflicts across the continent. Mottahedah says, "There is a very great danger that using the term *civilization* will lead us to underestimate the variety within designation and the rapidity with which it can change over time. There is an even greater danger that units proposed as "civilizations" but still far from being proved to be such will be treated as realities before they are shown to be such."<sup>43</sup>

The way that Huntington describes Islam in his work implies that the Arabic Islam is the way of Islam for all of those who practice, and it overshadows complex conflicts that have their own intricate aspects. Though Huntington attempts to account for variance and dynamics, his message is that civilizations are, "highly stable units, each internally united by a large number of characteristics."<sup>44</sup> The fear of Huntington's notions is that it will, "feed fantasies already too prevalent about the massive coordinated Islamic movement that sees as its primary objective the humiliation of the West." Mottadeheh claims that Huntington has crafted a theory that generally makes sense, is easily understood and is exactly what the United States wanted to hear, however if one were to examine the implications, the theory contains a dangerous undercurrent.

Harvard researcher John Trumbour in his essay, "The Clash of Civilizations: Samuel P. Huntington, Bernard Lewis, and the Remaking of Post- Cold War World Order", deeply

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 132.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 136.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 136.

examines how the Clash of Civilizations theory created the new enemy, or a new cold war. Trumpbour traces this back to as early as 1964, when Bernard Lewis claimed there was a clash between civilizations. According to Trumpbour, this idea did not gain interest until Lewis's "Roots of Muslim Rage" in 1990 and then the adaptation of the idea in Samuel Huntington's article "Clash of Civilizations" in 1993. Academics such as Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington helped to replace the 'red' enemy of communism with the 'green' enemy of the muslims. To a government whose foreign policy options are, "Get tough or get out"<sup>45</sup>, Trumpbour claims that elites ate the theories up, "Leading foreign policy sages such as Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski thus hail Huntington for supplying the grand design lacking at the Bush and Clinton-era State Departments."<sup>46</sup> The implications of these theories tie directly into the school of thought that developed called 'Megaterrorism'. Similarly to Huntington, critics of this school claim it was prophetic to the September 11th attacks. With these schools of thought and Huntington's big-picture theory, the Clinton- Gore administration was focused on large forms of terrorism, such as bioterrorism and advanced technology, allowing them to overlook low-tech means of accomplishing terrorist acts.<sup>47</sup> The solution in the end according to these schools of thought adapted by the elite is that the Muslims need to modernize. Though they propose it, Lewis, Huntington and those similar to their works do not necessarily think modernization is compatible with Islam.

Trumpbour argues the claim by Robert J. C. Young that we have replaced biologism and scientism to culturalism, it feels safe by not being reminiscent of Nazism's use of scientism and biologism. Yet this does not make it safe, as Trumpbour then goes on to say it makes simple

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 94.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 95.

sense to attribute the development of culture with race, as Huntington claims, cultures then make up civilizations.<sup>48</sup> The transition from the red enemy to the green is not just an undercurrent of oppression, it fits in with the neoconservative search for an enemy. It's an easy enemy to find, one that was well defended, and taps into the fear of multiculturalism on Western liberalisation, or Western values. There is a soft yet rapid undercurrent from the neoconservative perspective that fears an excess of democracy, and wishes to maintain a delicate balance of powers and order. To Trumpbour the implications of these ideologies and schools of thought are as complex as the cultures and civilizations discussed.

Post colonialist academic Edward Said gives his take of Huntington's theory in his article "The Clash of Definitions". Said claims that the notion of the Clash of Civilization is to continue the Cold War, that his theory is a "recycled version of the cold war thesis"<sup>49</sup>. Said boldly proclaims, "So strong and insistent is Huntginton's notion that other civilizations necessarily clash with the West, and so relentlessly aggressive and chauvinistic is his prescription for what the West must do to continue winning, we are forced to conclude he is really most interested in continuing and expanding the Cold War by means rather than advancing ideas about understanding the current world scene or trying to reconcile between cultures."<sup>50</sup> Said examines how this notion of a clash between civilization is a product of a democratic contest, one neoconservatives namely promote.

Said claims that civilizations are not as rigid and set as Huntington implies, that even foundations of the West such as Ancient Greece, were part of the Egyptian empire at one point thus not a sole civilizational actor. This idea of a rigid, sole acting civilizations erases the reality

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid 110.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 69.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 69.

of history. One of the many examples he brings into defending this notion is the book *Black Athena* by Martin Bernal, in which he argues that within every great empire comes a compilation of many cultures and civilizations adapting and taking from one another. Civilizations did not, and do not, act as their own separate entities. “To Huntington, what he calls a “civilizational identity” is a stable and undisturbed thing. It is like a roomful of furniture in the back of your house”,<sup>51</sup> yet this notion is entirely inaccurate to not just the West or Middle East, but the globe. “Rather than accepting the incredibly naive and deliberately reductive notion that civilizations are identical with themselves, and that is all, we must always ask what civilizations are intended, created and defined by whom and for what reason.”<sup>52</sup> is the central theme of this critique by Said.

Each work by Mernissi, Said, Trumbour, and Mottahedeh claims that the Clash of Civilizations, ideas and schools of thought associated were prophesying and in part encouraged the war on terror and the September 11th attacks because it moved in the direction the United States wanted and was built on pre-existing grounds. Many critics also make the connection of oppressive undercurrents throughout this work and policy, that it inaccurately portrays history and culture, it weaves the narrative to justify Western superiority and importance on the global stage. This was not an end to the Cold War, but a different flavor of policy that leads to furthering Western global power abroad. Huntington’s self given title of the Davos Man is indirectly brought into question throughout works that criticize him. This is done by many of the authors who commit to the same idea that Huntington is as much a product of his history, education and experience as any other person. A main take away from all of these sources is to look beyond the Clash of Civilizations sensible surface value, and examine the darker, and much

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 79.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 83.

more complex, undercurrent surrounding these issues presented. The Clash of Civilizations when examined under this scope is naive and general, and thus a dangerously false representation of history and reality.

The scope of Clash of Civilizations is not only prominent but it also expands into more mainstream media, as it does not exist in solely academic circles. In the mainstream media, articles from the New York Times contain the most in terms of discussions of Huntington's theory. Articles range from applying, defending and criticising the theory. September 11th is the point in which Clash of Civilizations comes to mainstream attention, and is no longer solely discussed in academic circles.

Amitav Acharya in his 2002 opinion article published in the New York Times "Clash of Civilization? No, of National Interest and Principle" claims that civilizations were only a 'secondary role' to the conflict.<sup>53</sup> This is because the world joined and supported the United States in its fight against terrorism. Acharya claims international support gave countries who were also struggling with extremism a boost to get rid of groups that have been causing issues. Acharya points out that, "Appalled by the terrorists' methods and the loss of so many innocent lives, most religious leaders in Islamic societies condemned the attacks as un-Islamic."<sup>54</sup> Thus, "The international response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks shows that religion and civilization do not replace pragmatism, interest and principle as the guiding motives of international relations."<sup>55</sup> Even if one disagrees with the Clash of Civilizations thesis they must still approach

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<sup>53</sup> Amitav Acharya, and International Herald Tribune. "Clash of Civilizations? No, of National Interests and Principles." The New York Times, January 10, 2002.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.



it from the applied scope. Its application is inherently a part of its criticism, its legitimacy is engrained.

In 2009 the New York Times published an editorial piece titled, “The End of the Clash of Civilizations” in response to President Obama’s visit to Turkey and his effort to redirect civilization rhetoric unintentionally established by President Bush years earlier. It was a switch of dialogue. Though President Bush claimed the war was not on Islam but on terror, the language he used about the war such as ‘crusade’ left a sour taste in mouths across Islamic communities and nations. “Not only are Mr. Obama’s words and tone better, his policies are better.”, the article affirms.<sup>56</sup> A shift in President Obama’s language was one aspect, another was by his actions. One of those actions was the removal of troops from Iraq, and the efforts to create a better relationship between the United States and Iran. This rhetoric from Obama in relationship to the Middle East was established in his campaign in part because of his heritage, as his father was Muslim. Obama gave effort into lifting American Muslims and reestablishing international ties, moving away from civilizational rhetoric. From this assertion, the Clash of Civilizations is no longer a thesis or idea, it was an event that has happened and is on its way to resolution.

In 2011, David Brooks published an article in the New York Times “Huntington’s Clash Revisited” that states, “Huntington committed the Fundamental Attribution Error. That is, he ascribed to traits qualities that are actually determined by context.”<sup>57</sup> Statements made about people were general and do not account for the intricacies of individuality and individual authenticity. The Arab Spring at this point showed that people are not necessarily stuck in their

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<sup>56</sup> “End of the Clash of Civilizations.” The New York Times, April 12, 2009.

<sup>57</sup> Brooks, David. “Huntington's Clash Revisited.” The New York Times, March 4, 2011.

cultural ways, they also have values of courage that strive for democracy and pluralism.<sup>58</sup> Brooks emphasises that Huntington misrepresents culture in his work, “..it seems clear that many people in Arab nations do share a universal hunger for liberty. They feel the presence of universal human rights and feel insulted when they are not accorded them.” Historically, Huntington looks at events linearly while Brooks thinks that history is much more like a sweeping wave. Though Brooks does not necessarily look down upon Huntington and his thesis, he says, “..his mistakes illuminate useful truths: that all people share certain aspirations and that history is wide open. The tumult of events can transform the traits and qualities that seemed, even to great experts, etched in stone.”<sup>59</sup>

Clash of Civilizations has come under scrutiny and application decades later. Not only was it used to describe and analyse the particular issues Huntington wrote and discussed, but it has been used to examine the Trump Administration. Carlos Lozada in his Washington Post article “Samuel Huntington, A Prophet for the Trump Era” draws lines between the messages Samuel Huntington preached in his works. When Donald Trump told Western nations to “summon the courage and the will to defend our civilization...share our values and love our people..”, he brought back the civilizational rhetoric Obama moved away from.<sup>60</sup> Trump’s slogan to Make America Great Again, rings with Huntington’s advice for maneuvering the Clash of Civilizations. Huntington continues to foresee and examine the events of rising immigration and the trade war with China. Lozada states, “This is Trump’s presidency, but even more so, it is

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Carlos Lazoda, “Samuel Huntington, a prophet for the Trump Era”. The Washington Post, July 2017

Huntington's America. Trump may believe himself a practical man, exempt from any intellectual influence, but he is the slave of a defunct political scientist."<sup>61</sup>

War and conflict is the center of American identity. Conflicts have allowed the cultivation and advancement of American culture since the Revolutionary War. The values of America and the West are important and entirely their own, and must take appropriate action to sustain themselves. Lozada does not think that Huntington would necessarily support Trump in the manner of his actions and campaign, but his ideology is traceable to Huntington's works, as well as his prescription to maintaining Western civilization. Lozada concludes that, "...if the path involves closing ourselves off, demonizing newcomers and demanding cultural fealty, then how different are we, really, from anywhere else? The central agony of the Trump era is that rather than becoming great, America is becoming unexceptional. And that's not a clash of civilizations. It's a civilization crashing."<sup>62</sup>

Lazoda looks at the *Clash of Civilizations* and *Who Are We?* and how it contains prominent elements of Trump's America, he writes how *American Politics, The Promise of Disharmony* rings true to the current political scene. There are gaps between values and ideas of the direction of the nation, "...liberty, equality, individualism, democracy, constitutionalism — and the government's efforts to live up to those values as the central tension of American life."<sup>63</sup> Regardless of the debate, Huntington recognized a cycle in American politics, one that is natural and defines what it means to be American. Lazoda says that Huntington predicted right down to the time it would occur. Huntington anticipates this cycle because he claims in *Who Are We?* and in *Clash of Civilizations* that the root of American culture is the Anglo-Saxon, Christian, English

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

values that are descended from Ancient Greece and Rome, and the Magna Carta. Now that many outside of the Anglo-Saxon culture wish to share the American dream, it will be harder to obtain unless they fully assimilate to the values and culture of the United States. Lazoda says that according to Huntington, diversity is the enemy of twenty-first century America. Huntington was concerned with an overflow of people not given enough time to assimilate into American values. This is why he encouraged slowing down immigration in order to allow for assimilation to take place and thus preserving American values and culture while also sharing them.

There are a great number of different aspects of Huntington's thesis that are scrutinized, one recurring point that can be seen is that categorizing people becomes complex. Philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah makes the claim in his book *The Lies That Bind*, "The modes of identity we've considered can all become forms of confinement, conceptual mistakes underwriting moral ones. But they can also give contours to our freedom..."<sup>64</sup> People do not like others placing them in a box, especially if they feel that the box is mislabeled or misrepresented. One consistent critique, notably by Edward Said, is that Huntington's categorization of Africa as a civilization is too broad for the many cultures that exist on the continent, then goes on and elaborates that civilizations and cultures are more blended than Huntington makes them out to be. This can be said for Islam as well. In the generalization of Islam, it has been argued by various academics that generalizing like this gives more power to fundamentalist Islam as a civilization itself, and disregards the number of diverse Muslims who practice Islam. By this argument, it is almost contradictory to claim importance in identity, and then to outlay identities that are a broad grouping rather than unique.

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<sup>64</sup> Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity*. Liveright Publishing Company, 2018. 218.

Huntington acknowledges that his theory (paradigm) may be applicable to only a certain set time, and at the same time estimates and outlines civilizations that are interpreted as lasting and rigid. The clearest example of this interpretation is Edward Said in his essay “The Clash of Definitions” as summarized earlier, in which he states, “To Huntington, what he calls a “civilizational identity” is a stable and undisturbed thing. It is like a roomful of furniture in the back of your house”.<sup>65</sup> This circles back to the notion mentioned earlier in the paper that once an idea is presented and taken, the interpretation and meaning will be inevitably made, and not necessarily to the exact meaning of the author’s main idea. Not to the detailed degree that Said will further argue, Huntington makes room in *Clash of Civilizations* to explain that civilizations are not rigid, “Civilizations have no clear-cut boundaries and no precise beginnings and endings. People can and do redefine their identities and, as a result, the composition and shapes of civilization change over time. The cultures of people interact and overlap...Civilizations are nonetheless meaningful entities, and while the lines between them are seldom sharp, they are real.”<sup>66</sup> Within broad definitions comes room for interpretation that can sway according to interpretation and perspectives. One could argue (and many do) that *Clash of Civilizations* is indirectly responsible for September 11th and the events that followed by setting up the leaders of the West to search for a conflict just as equally as it confirmed the enemy to be Islamic Fundamentalists. The argument as to whether or not this (or any other large speculations of Huntington's work) is specifically true is interesting and valuable, but it does not detract from the importance of Huntington’s words. The interpretation and implied meaning of a work can be just as important as the work itself, and this is the case of Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations*.

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<sup>65</sup>Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. 79.

<sup>66</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. 43.

Although it is considered an important work of academic literature, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* is not looked upon favorably in the present. It has been associated with modern conservatism, specifically as Carl Lazoda claims. So, would Huntington “nod his head in agreement” to Trump policies as Lazoda argued?<sup>67</sup> Not necessarily. Trump is an isolationist, which Huntington was opposed to. Huntington wanted America to realize that, “In this [post Cold War] era..the United States can neither dominate nor escape the world. Neither internationalism nor isolationism, neither multilateralism nor unilateralism will serve its best interests.”<sup>68</sup> The rest of the world is catching up to the United States, and thus must learn to cooperate within themselves and their civilization in order to preserve and protect American interests and power. The narcissistic, racist and isolationist actions of Trump do not align directly with Huntington’s claims. So then how is this notion aligned and why is Huntington relevant in the present?

It all comes back to protecting American Interests for Huntington, he wants the reader to understand what makes America great, and how to maintain that greatness. Just upon hearing the words make America great (again), anyone in the world from 2016 to the present associated those words with Trump and his ideals. By this association, how and why America is great in Trumpism and in Huntington’s eyes seem to fall along the same lines. However, the way in which Trump ideology makes meaning out of the make America great slogan and Huntington’s prioritizing of American interests are not necessarily synonymous. The West isn’t superior in comparison to other civilizations, it is but one of many powerful actors on the world stage. The frame of mind that fuels security, relief and perhaps superiority after the fall of the Soviet Union,

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<sup>67</sup> Carlos Lazoda, “Samuel Huntington, a prophet for the Trump Era”

<sup>68</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. 312.

or in the sentiment that the West is the best, is ignorant to the fact that the actors on the world stage are always changing, the show is never over.

This connection made between Huntington and Trump can be traced specifically to Carl Lazoda's article, and mostly connected through Huntington's *Who Are We?*. The preservation of American values and power is vital to Huntington, and in order to do so the West must hang together, and the United States must unite within its civilization. What it means to unite within one's civilization and culture is touched on in *Clash of Civilizations*, and is in part further developed in *Who Are We?*.

What would make America unique and great in Huntington's eyes would be the founding creed of values such as liberty and equality as laid out in the Constitution and other such documents. Huntington criticized the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in *Who Are We?*, and on the surface from the perspective of someone in the year 2020, it is taken horribly, when in fact he argued against it because the Constitution technically laid out life, liberty and happiness for all people in the United States. The need of the Act in the first place, and the implementation of the Civil Right acts undermines the Constitution and those rights should already be enforced for all people, it should not need an additional act to enforce what is already laid out in the constitution. If one were to take part of Huntington's argument out of context, in this case it would land closer to Trump ideologies. *Who Are We?* is a separate work that would need thus separate analysis from *Clash of Civilizations*, but in this aspect of uniting through American values and identity they tie into one another. This example shows that arguments and words taken out of contexts can be manipulated according to an ideology or to a connotation that does not align with the meaning.

The Clash of Civilizations was written to leaders and academics of all nations and political alignments, with a certain focus on the West and the United States, believing that the United States and Europe “..either hang together or separately.”<sup>69</sup> Huntington draws his conclusions based on practicality of the reality of the world stage and foundational American values, then he suggests a path for maneuvering through the new era given the foundational American values and the reality of the world stage. It is Huntington’s suggestions of how to maintain power on the global stage, his perspective on the reality of the world stage, within a broad theory that leaves room for interpretations that have set Huntington to be aligned where he is in the present.

The White House during Clinton and Bush’s terms have condemned this suggestion but it has been speculated that former presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush took aspects of Huntington’s thesis into consideration. There is validity in this suggestion that past presidents accept Huntington’s claims, not because it can be proven or is necessarily true but because what Huntington suggests and promotes is not new or unique. For example, to answer the question of immigration and its effect on the United States Huntington quotes Teddy Roosevelt, “The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of its continuing of a nation at all would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities”<sup>70</sup>. This notion is not new to the United States, it is an issue that has come time and again from massive immigration of non Anglo-Saxon Protestant cultures.

Huntington’s suggestions turn to the United States to reject multiculturalism at home in order to find unity necessary for moving through the next era.<sup>71</sup> The idea is that multiculturalism

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 306.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. 307.



must be accepted on the global stage, but is destructive at home. Alternatively, universalism is stronger at home, and problematic abroad. Huntington wrote a separate article to this point “The West: Unique, but not Universal” in late 1996. To reject multiculturalism can come with the connotation of xenophobia and racism attached. It is how Huntington's words have been interpreted as to this connotation which has caused both criticism of and attachment to these ideas. While xenophobia can be an attributor to rejections of multiculturalism, the two modes of thought are not necessarily synonymous. Multiculturalism becomes multifaceted in reality.

Kenan Malik is an Indian born British Academic who wrote the article “The Failure of Multiculturalism” in the March/April issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Malik speaks to European society, but nonetheless his argument has alignments with multiculturalism as a general concept. Malik argues, “As a political tool, multiculturalism has functioned as not merely a response to diversity but also a means of constraining it. And that insight reveals a paradox.”<sup>72</sup> Malik argues although multiculturalism is important as it can aid in recognizing diversity, it has the potential to create a rigid understanding of ethnicities, cultures and identities through policy. If specific policy is focused on diversity, it lays qualifications and outlines of ethnicities, cultures and identities therefore it can cause ethnicities, cultures and identities to be understood systemically and rigidly when they are not rigid themselves. To Malik, systemically defining ethnicities, cultures and identities has the potential to create separation between people rather than uplift them.

Identity is important and it is also a lie that binds us according to Appiah, where it has the power to help us understand ourselves it also has the room to trap us, thus back to Huntington on multiculturalism, there must be a sense of unity beyond identities that differentiate us from

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<sup>72</sup> Malik, Kenan. "The Failure of Multiculturalism: Community Versus Society in Europe." *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 2 (2015): 21-32.

one another. “Squabbling nationalities” as Teddy Roosevelt says it and how Huntington can then take on more than one meaning, another besides xenophobia and racism that when we focus on holding ourselves to what makes us different, it has the ability to constrain us based on our differences. Malik goes on to say, “Multicultural policies accept as a given that societies are diverse, yet they implicitly assume that such diversity ends at the edges of communities. They seek to institutionalize diversity by putting people into ethnic and cultural boxes- into a singular, homogeneous Muslim community for example...”<sup>73</sup> By this notion, the melting pot metaphor does not have to be strictly homogeneous in reality. It’s not necessarily that rejecting multiculturalism means that immigrants are harmful to a society, and that in order to be a successful immigrant must throw away all that is their culture. Malik makes the point that an immigrant teenager and an English teenager will have different identities, but on the surface have generally more or less the same clothes, phones and interests that also express their identity. There is a level of assimilation that consciously or subconsciously happens.

The Clash of Civilizations and how it has moved throughout the last thirty years expresses a historical truth, the impacts of ideas are enigmatic and stretching. Meaning, we can set dates and eras in our history, but nothing in history truly ends as we conceptualize it to. The end of the Cold War did not simply mean that democracy had won and the United States was permanently victorious. Huntington says, “The moment of euphoria at the end of the Cold War generated an illusion of harmony.”<sup>74</sup> History does not solely belong to the section of time we designate it to, its effects continue to influence our livelihoods on a large and small scale whether we recognize it or not. Huntington wants us to be mindful of these histories- how they build up

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<sup>73</sup> Malik, Kenan. "The Failure of Multiculturalism: Community Versus Society in Europe."

<sup>74</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. 31.

and what they could mean moving forward. Jack Weatherford explains this notion concisely in his book *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, “The great actors of history cannot be neatly tucked between the covers of a book and filed away like so many pressed botanical specimens. Their actions cannot be explained according to a specific timetable like the coming and going of so many trains. Although scholars may designate the beginning and ending of an era with exact precision, great historical events, particularly those that erupt suddenly and violently, build up slowly, and, once having begun, never end.”<sup>75</sup> Though a historian can explain history by claiming a cause that had an effect, so on and so forth, causes and effects as a way to explain history cannot be categorical, exact or rigid in order to explain events. This is not to claim that setting eras and times should be done away in history, nor to explain causes and effects but to acknowledge how we use these concepts and how it describes reality.

When one externalizes and articulates an idea, there is no control over the direction of that idea and how it will move through history, neither the meaning and interpretation it will inevitably derive. When the original Clash of Civilizations article became popular in 1993, Huntington gave credit to lucky timing of its release. This is not to demean and dismiss his own work, but acknowledge the exterior factors that go into a work or idea becoming popular. By this comment Huntington indicates an understanding of a lack of control that is inherent to us all. Though his goal is to preserve American values and power, a factor he wants the reader to understand is that every great power ebbs, flows and falls.<sup>76</sup> Through this recognition of the ebb, flow and eventual fall there are clues and wisdoms to keep power and stay in the game as long as

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<sup>75</sup> Jack Weatherford. *Genghis Khan And the Making of the Modern World*. New York. 267.

<sup>76</sup> Samuel P. Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. 306.

one can. That is the goal of Huntington and his work throughout his life, how can the United States maintain its power and influence.

The West had been the stronghold of the world in the 20th century, and just as the rise of Western power took hundreds of years, Huntington predicts that the downfall of the West will occur slowly over the relatively same course of time. Francis Fukuyama argued in 1992 that democracy had won, and history had ended. Huntington will contradict this notion saying, “Societies that assume their history has ended..are usually societies whose history is about to decline.”<sup>77</sup> This acceptance is why Huntington urges unification within cultures and then civilizations by an understanding of oneself, their culture and civilization. Huntington was one of many academics who anticipated, and was weary of, political contests and collisions in the future based on cycles examined in the past, hence his urging of his direction he outlines in *Clash of Civilizations* and explicitly in his 1981 book *The Promise of Disharmony*.<sup>78</sup>

Security was the feeling of many in the West after the fall of the Soviet Union, and yet within that security Huntington warns of the dangers of this sigh of relief. This theme of warning against the *Clash of Civilizations* has in hindsight led some scholars to argue that Huntington created a clash by laying them out. By detailing the clash between the West and Islamic civilizations, some argue it gave Islamic fundamentalists the confirmation they needed to press forward against the West. Namely, John Trumpboer elaborates on this in “The Clash of Civilizations: Samuel P. Huntington, Bernard Lewis and the Remaking of Post- Cold War World Order” as summarized previously. Trumpboer makes claims that Huntington’s theory shaped, and gave the answer they wanted, to the US State Department, trading in the red hat for the green

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<sup>77</sup> Huntington, 301.

<sup>78</sup> Samuel P. Huntington. *American politics: The Promise of Disharmony*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press 1981.

one.<sup>79</sup> This leads to the assumption that the United States additionally sought out a new conflict in order to maintain power through military and imperialist tactics. Huntington himself argued that unity was accomplished mostly through wartime and common struggle in the United States, yet does not condone seeking out conflict, in fact encourages mediation and negotiation, “This *abstention rule* that core states abstain from intervention in conflicts in other civilizations is the first requirement of peace in a multicivilizational, multipolar world. The second requirement is the joint mediation rule that core states negotiate with each other to contain or to halt fault line war between states and groups from their civilizations.”<sup>80</sup> Huntington goes on to say, “Acceptance of these rules and of a world with greater equality among civilizations will not be easy for the West or for those civilizations which may aim to supplement or supplant the West in its dominant role.”<sup>81</sup>

Protecting the freedoms provided by the creed involves the United States stepping back from unnecessary conflict and being prepared to sit equally at the table with the rest of the world, not above it. This is why universalism is useful at home, but not abroad. Huntington says, “Imperialism is the necessary logical consequence of universalism...the West no longer has the economic or demographic dynamism required to impose its will on other societies and any effort to do so is also contrary to the Western values of self-determination and democracy.”<sup>82</sup>

Huntington relies on history to make his point and to get the reader to understand its foundational importance in successfully maneuvering in the new era, “The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion (to which few members of other

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<sup>79</sup> Qureshi, Emran, and Michael Anthony. Sells. *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*. 51.

<sup>80</sup> Samuel P. Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. 317.

<sup>81</sup> Huntington. 317.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* 310.

civilizations were converted) but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact; non-Westerners never do.”<sup>83</sup> meaning, not only is one's own history important to understanding ourselves in the present and future, but it is how others come to understand and estimate one another. It was by this idea that Huntington named and estimated civilizations and their place in the next era.

Huntington wants nations to go into the next era after the Cold War and understand that culture, identity and history matter, “People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations...People use politics not just to advance their interests but also to define their identity.”<sup>84</sup> We have to understand the unique histories and identities of those around us and those across the globe in order to maneuver the next era on the global stage. Needs and interests differ between civilizations, so one key to navigating interests and needs can be met is understanding of one another.

Although there is recognition of these historical truths, how Huntington uses them and makes meaning of them throughout the text (and his other works) cause debate, as well contributes to his alignment to modern conservatism. Huntington wants us to understand one another in order to cooperate and find needs met between nations and civilizations. However, what does it mean for the United States, for me, for you, for the left or right, for the Russians or the Chinese to have their needs met? What would it mean for the United States to maintain its power? As Huntington states, it was done through violence and war, through colonialism and imperialism like much of the Western world in the modern era. The needs that Huntington means

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 51.

<sup>84</sup> Huntington, 21.

are namely of national security and maintaining western power and those are not aligned with everyone around the world, within Western civilization, nor the United States.

Understanding one another through history is a timeless lesson to consider, yet it is Huntington's perspective on how he proposes citizens of the United States need to understand themselves that causes controversy, and can set him aligned with the promotion of harmful rhetoric. To reiterate, the idea is that we understand ourselves and unite within our cultures, then unite within our civilizations to then seek civilizational interests among other civilizations. To do this, each civilization must go back to its roots and find unity. For the United States, that means revisiting Protestant, or capitalist, Anglo-Saxon values that were the foundation of the nation. Not everyone stands behind these values in the United States.

Where Huntington and history books would state that decolonization has happened, there are alternate perspectives from those who have lost their landmass culture to colonization that argue decolonization has not fully happened. Thus there are many in the United States that would argue decolonization has not happened until land taken during colonial conquests is mostly, if not fully, restored to the original inhabitants and the West is fully separate from these entities.<sup>85</sup> The success of the settlers (or colonizers) and the formation of the United States came with oppression to a variety of people with lasting implications to the present as seen through a variety of social movements throughout the United States history. Huntington's understanding of the magnitude of history, identity and culture offer an ageless lesson to consider, yet his reality that determines his estimations reflect a mainstream view of the world from his position in power, and those in a similar position of power.

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<sup>85</sup> Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang. Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. Vol. 1, 2012. 1-40.

Therefore as it is true Huntington recognizes historical truths, and the importance of identity and culture, it is how he uses them and makes meaning of them throughout the text that cause debate and is tied to harmful rhetoric. For example, the assertion that decolonization still needs to happen implies that historians have not told the whole truth. This notion is larger than Huntington. What is a fact and does that fact represent truth, is something being battled over in the present. What Huntington considers fact is truth based in what is considered a collective reality, perspective and values. When those collective values change, or another has challenging values is where we find a clash and where we find more separation from Huntington's suggestions and claims. There can be general feelings of justice on one end and feelings of dilemma on the other when it comes to re-writing history to be inclusive of multiple perspectives. The centering of voices that are often not considered central to the norm can feel unsettling when you have a certain notion of what history is. History is done in hindsight, and in that hindsight we find ourselves thinking we have the facts and knowledge to correctly assess our history, only to realize multiple elements are missing from not just the actual documentation and representation, but from our perspectives of that history. Though it might seem as if there is a loss of history in re-writing it, perhaps it rather gives access to an encompassing picture of reality to analyze. After all, it would be an injustice to history itself to not include a full picture of reality. Perhaps Huntington can offer this wisdom, that it is not only non-Westerners that do not forget their history and violence directed at them by the West, but as well those whom Western civilization has not until recently, and still is (seemingly) working towards including at the table.

Values are being actively analysed and have created divisions in the United States. We could assume where Huntington would stand in the present political scene, but what we can



know is that Huntington urged an understanding of history, culture and identity that seems to be incredibly applicable to understanding the present. It comes down to how one chooses to use that understanding. Trump losing the election does not then mean that those particular values and perspectives can and will go away because they run much deeper than party lines.

These contests to the values of the United States are not new as much as the promotion of its values are new. Ideas build, movements and coincidentally events, build up over a course of time and factors. Those who were not given rights under the powers at hand have fought longer than we generally accept they have for their rights. During the Revolutionary War, there were more former slaves on the side of the British forces than of the Continental army because they were promised freedom in exchange for service, likewise to their plantation owners who would talk amongst themselves of liberty that deliberately excluded anyone but white, land owning men. The American Civil War, the suffragette movement, Labor reform, The Civil Rights movements of the 1960s, did not just happen, but were built up challenges that are still happening to a similar but different degree today.

This is a timeless lesson Huntington shares, that our histories are important and formative to our present realities. In a time when the future was uncertain and a new era was apparent, Huntington came to speak his own insights. Whether you agree with them or not, it created a conversation and drove a direction simply by doing so. As Carl Lozada says in his article- Huntington switched the question from “what side are you on?” to “ who are you?”<sup>86</sup>. Examining where his ideas lasted and how are not nearly as ageless as what it means to truly understand the importance of history and the nature of its flow. One can criticize Huntington's

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<sup>86</sup> Carlos Lazoda, “Samuel Huntington, a prophet for the Trump Era”

perspective and what he promotes and at the same time can acknowledge he has insights within his work. As easy as it is to make it so, ideas and people are not necessarily monolithic. It is vital to recognize that people, their lives and history must be whole if we are to truly recognize the lessons they can teach us. Every broad statement, theory or bit of knowledge, if it is to reflect reality, comes with a yes and no to that statement.

Fareed Zakaria shared a perspective Huntington promoted to his students which is, “If you tell people the world is complicated, you're not doing your job as a social scientist. They already know it's complicated. Your job is to in some way distill it and simplify it.”<sup>87</sup> Where some would call Huntington contradictory, his life and the Clash of Civilizations theory shows at the very least he understands where reality lies, in the grey. The job of the social scientist is to make sense of it, and help others to make sense of it. Huntington makes numerous statements that appear to have a black and white set of statements that in reality are based in analysis of the grey. The thing about the grey is that it is grey, is that it is complex, contradicting and abstract as a way to understand reality, yet it is necessary. Individuals, their actions and ideas do not alone have the power to change history, but simply become a large or small part of the movement of history as it occurs. So no, Huntington did not shape the new world order necessarily, or cause September 11th, or the war on terror that followed, but directly and indirectly he was part of that process of history through the prevalence of his ideas and the impact of his words. Huntington created a broad theory drawing from truths of history and the reality of the world in the 1990s that not only helped shape the next era, but encouraged the importance of aspects such as history, identity and culture that affect and explain human lives.

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<sup>87</sup> Gideon Rose, “The Clash at 20”

Reality is in the grey and in order to find value or truth in the grey will depend on how one uses the grey based on their own perspective. Huntington's Clash of Civilizations could be right, wrong or both based on a variety of valid arguments. This is not to say we should dismiss examining something being right or wrong, doing so is a part of a larger collective process that should not be set aside and is an important ground to examine and define. What is important is not whether something is right or wrong, but how we choose to make meaning out of it. In the case of Huntington there are a variety of takes that have shaped the meaning of his work and the conceptualization of the world following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Prior to his death, Huntington was considered a dying breed of democrat. What it meant to be a democrat in the sixties, nineties, and in the present is not necessarily the same, and yet neither of these eras of democrats are separate entities from another. Though the current political gap makes the differences seem wider, ultimately the goal is to preserve and better the lives and values of Americans across party lines. What it means to do so, how we should go about it, and why we need to proceed a certain direction is a conflict protruding evident in the present, and not absent from American history and politics. Huntington and his Clash of Civilizations was a provocative, impactful voice during a time of great change in American and global history.

Huntington's works are not important because they are necessarily right or wrong, but because of the way they made those who seriously read and consider his works think. Ideas are not important in themselves, but how we create meaning from them. Ergo, the Clash of Civilizations is not important in itself, but is important in the way it makes people think about where they stand in the world and what to do about the world. This broad notion can lead down a

variety of pathways, one that is still apparent in the present, and will continue to be during times of tremendous change.

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