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A clash of religions? Religion, territory, and conflict after the Cold War

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Abstract

Different religious (or ethnic) groups create different worlds to which they want to belong. Problems arise, when different religious groups live on the same state territory. Whether conflicts are the result, depends on the way the state (elite) deals with this religious diversity and the demands of the religious minorities involved. Marginalisation of religion from the public to the private sphere or some kind of institutionalisation provides fewer chances for conflict than elimination options. But also the kind of institutionalisation matters. From the viewpoint of the stability of the political system 'personalistic' arrangements seem to be preferable over territorial arrangements. Not only because it is almost impossible to create religiously homogeneous territories, but also because these territories may function as containers for the construction and maintenance of sub-national identities and therefore contribute to political fragmentation and even falling apart of the state involved. However, institutional arrangements will only work when some necessary conditions are fulfilled, among which the infrastructural power of the state and its performance in providing its main functions (safety, welfare, education, health, etc.) are the most important.

Key words: geography of religion, clash of religion, political geography, conflicts

Introduction

Northern Ireland, Israel, Macedonia, Indonesia, Kashmir, Chechnya, Sudan, Sri Lanka: an easy to expand list of places, where people of different religions fight their often vehement and continuing territorial struggles. The proclaimed new world order after the Gulf War proves to be not a peaceful one. Sometimes, it seems as if the world is back to the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, or even to the Middle Ages, when Christianity opposed the Muslim world.

On the other hand, it is claimed that the people of the world live in a global village (McLuhan 1960), a transnational society (de Swaan 1995), where they depend on each other, communicate with each other by modern digital media and share a global culture (Featherstone 1990; Robertson 1992). Geographical distance and territorial boundaries seem to lose their relevance for the functioning of this world system. The world of territorial states has been changed into a network society (Castells 1996). The cartographic representation of the world as a mosaic of differ-

ent coloured states is no longer adequate. There is a need to change this meta-geography – in our atlases as well as in our minds – into cartographic systems of nodes and linkages (Taylor 2001).

How to explain this paradox? In this paper, I shall try to contribute to this issue by analysing the relationship between religion, territory and conflict in the post-Cold war period. A discussion of Huntington's well-known thesis about the clash of civilisations will be my starting point. Especially after September 11, 2001, this thesis became very popular.

The Huntington thesis

The American political scientist Samuel Huntington first published his thesis in an article in Foreign Affairs in 1993. Later, he extensively elaborated his ideas in his book *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order* (Huntington 1996).

To show the major changes that have been taken place after the collapse of the Soviet empire, Huntington compares two maps (see Fig. 1 and 2) (Huntington 1996, 21–29). The first one is a world political map showing the situation during the Cold War. The world is divided into two blocs and a remaining group of nations: first, the Free World of mostly wealthy, more or less democratic countries under the leadership of the United States of America; second, the World of the somewhat poorer Communist countries associated with and led by the Soviet Union; and third, the World of often very poor and unstable so-called Unaligned countries. The main differences are ideological and economic. These differences predominantly shaped international relations and conflicts during the post-war period until 1989. Most of the conflicts between the first two ideological blocs occurred in the countries of the Third World many of which gained their independence only recently.

The second map shows a more complex picture. It is a world political map after the Cold War. The bipolar world has been replaced by a multipolar world. The world is divided into a number of so-called civilisations. The differences are not economic, political or ideological, but cultural and predominantly religious according to the main world religions. There are eight civilisations: Western-Christian, Slavic-Orthodox, Islamic, Hindu, Sinic, Japanese, Latin American, and African. Huntington has some doubts about an African civilisation, since most scholars do not recognise a distinct African civilisation, but, because Africans increasingly are developing a sense of African identity, sub-Saharan Africa could cohere into a distinct civilisation. The Buddhist religion, although shown on the map, has not been the basis of a major civilisation since the virtual extinction of Buddhism in India and its adaptation and incorporation into existing cultures in China and Japan (ibid., 47–48).

Huntington's main thesis is that after the Cold War world civilisations replaced the ideological blocs as the main source of global conflict and as the greatest

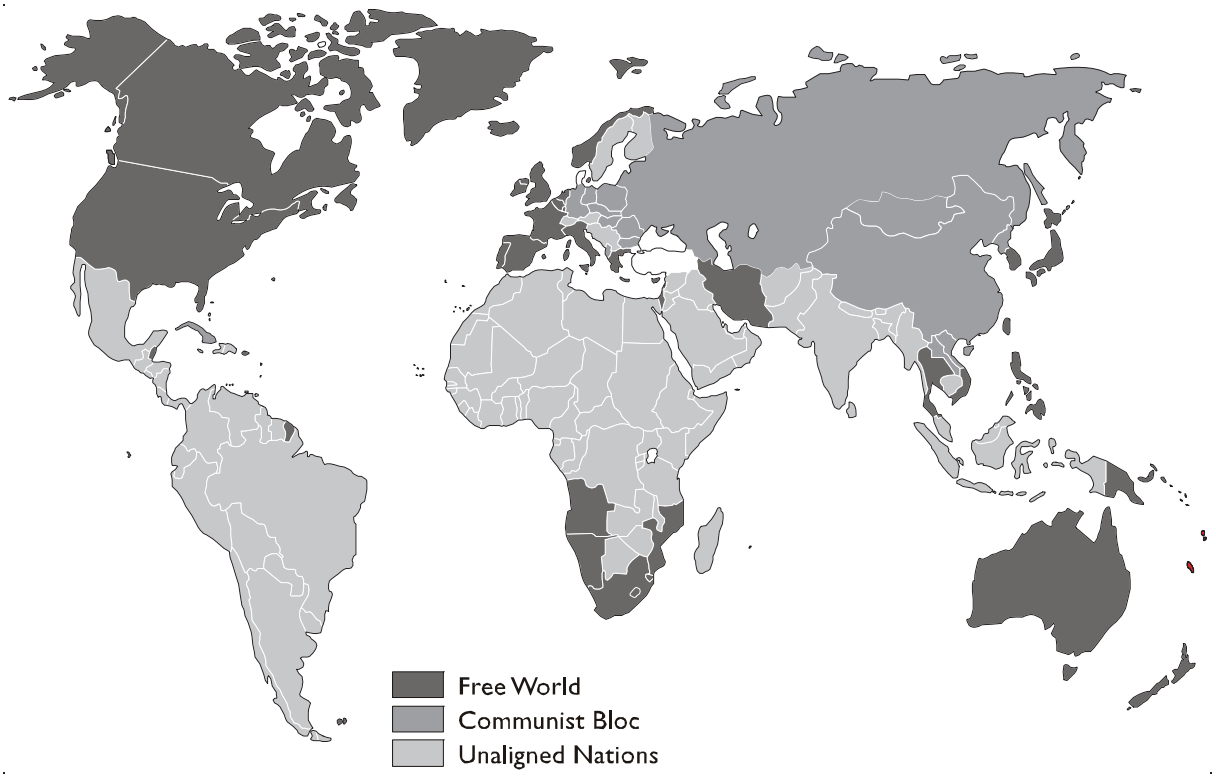

Fig. 1 The world political map during the Cold War. Source: Huntington 1996, 24–25.

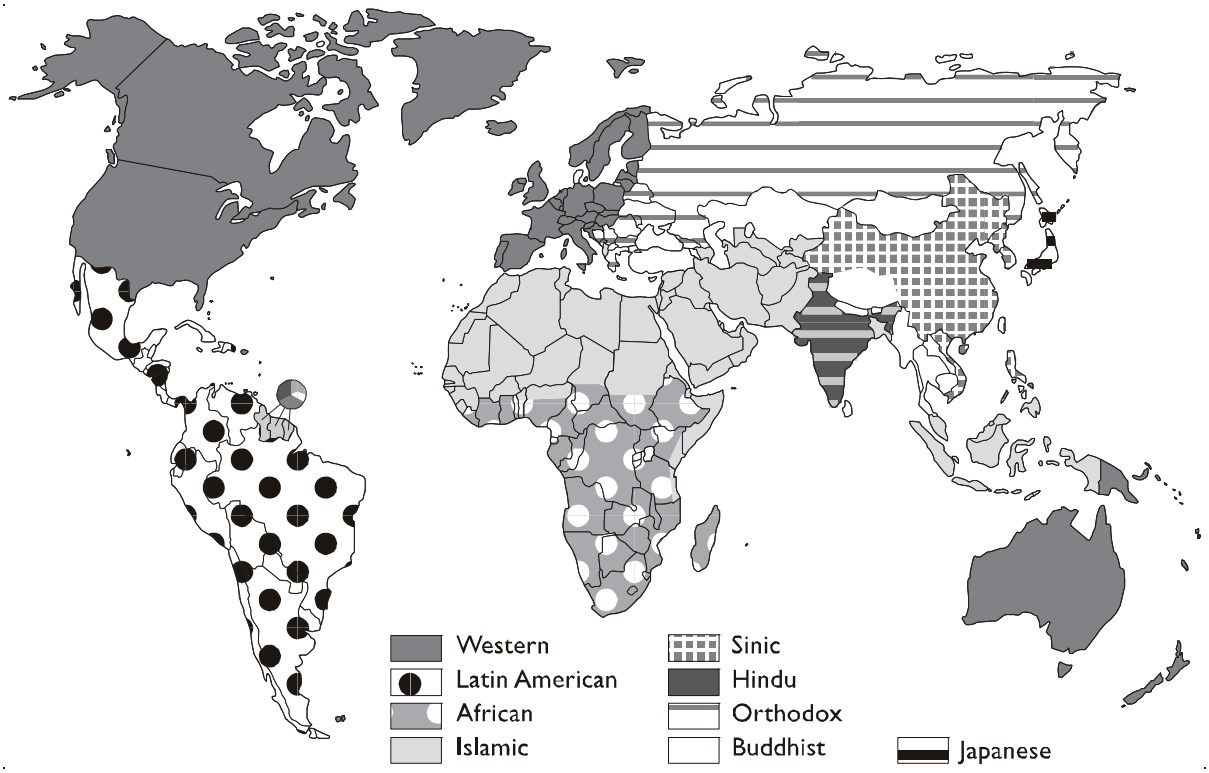

Fig. 2 The world of civilisation after 1990. Source: Huntington 1996, 24–25.

threat to world peace. 'The clash of civilisations will dominate global politics', he wrote already in his article. And his book ends with the conclusion that 'an international order based on civilisations is the surest safeguard against world war' (ibid., 321).

What are the grounds upon which this thesis is built? Huntington mentioned six arguments. First, the differences involved are basic. The differences between the world civilisations are the product of a history of many centuries and therefore will not disappear soon. Second, globalisation encourages interactions between peoples of very different cultures, which become increasingly conscious of these cultural differences. Third, modernisation and social change have eroded local and national communities and identities. Often, this vacuum is filled by religion, mostly in its fundamentalist form. In this context, phrases such as 'the unsecularisation of the world' (from George Weigel) or 'la revanche de Dieu' (Gilles Kepel) have been used (ibid., 95–101). Fourth, in reaction upon primary Western domination, many non-Western civilisations witness a 'return to the roots' tendency, thus strengthening indigenous cultural consciousness. This has also been referred to as the indigenisation of the non-Western world or the resurgence of non-Western cultures: for example the Asianization of Japan, or the Hinduization of India, or the Islamization of the Middle East, or the Africanization of South-Africa (ibid., 91–95). Fifth, it is less easy to compromise on cultural issues, than it is on economic or political issues, as we have witnessed for example in Bosnia. Finally, the growing importance of economic macro regions, such as the European Union and NAFTA, may strengthen civilisational identities.

Huntington's publications stirred up much debate. His 1993 article in Foreign Affairs provoked more reaction than any other article in this Journal since 1940 (ibid., 13). People were variously impressed, intrigued, outraged, and perplexed by his argument that the central and most dangerous dimension of the emerging global politics would be conflict between groups from differing civilisations. Apparently the article struck an open nerve.

Since the Huntington thesis has important geographical aspects, this debate is also relevant for geographers. Following Nierop (2001) we shall focus on four points of debate: the geography of the civilisations, the role of the state, the structural characteristics of the contemporary international state system, and the issue of geographical scale.

A first point of debate concerns the geography of the civilisations itself. Why, for example distinguish Latin American from Western civilisation? Both cultures are basically Western or European; both adhere to the same Roman-Catholic or Protestant religion. On the other hand, it is obvious that the Islamic civilisation is very heterogeneous, including such diverse countries as Algeria, Albania, Turkey, Iran, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. Why, for example not distinguish a separate Arab culture? Concerning the main world religions, the Jewish religion is missing. Why not distinguish a separate Jewish civilisation? Huntington recognises that his civilisations could be subdivided into sub-civilisa-

tions. And he did not distinguish a separate Jewish civilisation for several reasons (Huntington 1996, 48). In terms of numbers of people Judaism clearly is not a major civilisation. Moreover, many Jews live in other cultures and have distributed themselves along a continuum stretching from total identification with Judaism and Israel to nominal Judaism and full identification with the civilisation within which they reside. As a consequence, also the cultural differences within Israel are immense.

A second point of debate concerns the role of the state. The global perspective of a clash of civilisations or religions presupposes that these civilisations or religions are relevant units that can act in global conflicts. In reality, these units do not exist. Civilisations cannot act as civilisations, unless the civilisation covers more or less the territory of one single state, such as in the case of the Japanese and Sinic civilisations. In fact, this point refers to the importance of territoriality, which Robert Sack in his well-known book about human territoriality defined as a strategy to control people, phenomena, or relations by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area (Sack 1986, 19). Also Huntington is aware of the importance of territory. In his book he shows some striking statistics about the loss of territory controlled by Western civilisation during the second half of the twentieth century (see Table 1).

In 1920 Western civilisation controlled almost half the world's territory. This was of course a consequence of Western colonization of great parts of the rest of the world in the preceding period. In 1993, as a consequence of de-colonization, this territory had been cut in half to about 24 %. The falling apart of the former Soviet Union caused some loss for the orthodox civilisation, too. The winners are the Islamic, Hindu, and African civilisations.

However, these statistics are somewhat misleading. By presenting these figures, Huntington suggests that civilisations do control their territory. But there are no institutions that control the territories of civilisations, and there were none in the past. We all know that in the pre Cold War period, Western civilisational territory was the scene of two immense World Wars, which had consequences outside Western civilisation, but can not be considered as conflicts between civilisations; on the contrary. But also after the Cold War, despite all globalisation tendencies, states still are the most powerful territorial units; not civilisations. Civilisations do not control states, but states shape and control civilisations (Ajami 1993; Nierop 2001, 59). States can act; states can make war. And as far as supranational territorial institutions, such as NATO and the European Union exists, they act on behalf of the states that they consist of. In this context, NATO is an interesting example since this defender of Western civilisation also consists of members from other civilisations as defined by Huntington: namely Greece and Turkey. Huntington recognises this anomaly but considers these memberships as products of the Cold War (Huntington 1996, 162–163). Moreover there are signals of a new orthodox alliance between Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria against the Muslim threat from Albania and Turkey (ibid., 126).

Table 1 Territory under the political control of civilizations, 1900–1993

	Western	African	Sinic	Hindu	Islamic	Japa-nese	Latin Ameri-ca x	Or-thodo	Other
in thousands of square miles (estimates)									
1900	20 290	164	4 317	54	3 592	161	7 721	8 733	7 468
1920	25 447	400	3 913	54	1 811	261	8 098	10 258	2 258
1971	12 806	4 636	3 936	1 316	9 183	142	7 833	10 346	2 302
1993	12 711	5 682	3 923	1 279	11 054	145	7 819	7 169	2 718
in percentages (estimates)									
1900	38.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	6.8	0.3	14.7	16.6	14.3
1920	48.5	0.8	0.1	0.1	3.5	0.5	15.4	19.5	4.3
1971	24.4	8.8	2.5	2.5	17.5	0.3	14.9	19.7	4.4
1993	24.2	10.8	2.4	2.4	21.1	0.3	14.9	13.7	5.2

Source: Huntigton 1996, 84

Still, also in these examples, states are important. And, generally speaking, states have other motives for their actions than only cultural or religious ones. These motives have to do with power, security and wealth, as they have in the past. For such reasons, the United States supported Muslim Kuwait against Muslim Iraq and invaded Afghanistan and Iraq. And, to take another example, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo were provided with support from western NATO troops, not from Islamic civilisational troops. Even in Bosnia, where some Pakistani, Turks, Afghani and Irani appeared in the streets of Sarajevo, Western states were the strongest defenders of the Muslim people against the orthodox Serbs or the catholic Croats.

The underestimation of the role of states and territoriality in the Huntington thesis also expresses itself in his underestimation of the absence of clear hegemonic structures within most civilisations. During the Cold War, there were clear hegemonic structures: two blocs united in military alliances, NATO and Warsaw Pact, under the leadership of two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. After the Cold War only the US remained as a superpower and the leader of Western civilisation, with NATO as the most important military alliance. Other civilisations, the Islamic, Latin American and African in particular, are lacking such a hegemonic structure. Latin America has several states, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, and Argentina, which cooperate in and compete for leadership. The Latin American situation is further complicated by the fact that Mexico has attempted to redefine itself from a Latin American to a North American identity and Chile and other states may follow. Huntington speculates that in the end, Latin American civilisation could merge into and become one sub-variant of Western civilisation (ibid., 136).

The ability of any potential core state to provide leadership to sub-Saharan Africa is limited by its division into French-speaking and English-speaking countries. Moreover, in considerable measure, the core state of French Africa has been France, which after independence maintained intimate economic, military, and political

connections with its former colonies, as Huntington (ibid., 136) himself rightly stated. The potential leader of English-speaking Africa is undoubtedly South Africa. Its peaceful transition from apartheid, its industrial strength, its higher level of economic development compared to other African countries, its military capability all qualify South Africa for that role, and maybe for the leadership of all sub-Saharan Africa in the future.

The hegemonic structure of the Islamic civilisation is even more problematic. Huntington (ibid., 174) cites Ira Lapidus, who has observed that as far as loyality and identity are concerned, there are two fundamental and persisting structures in the Muslim world: the family, the clan, and the tribe, on the one hand, and the unities of culture and religion, on the other. So, there is little or no place for the nation-state or state territoriality in this view. One may doubt if this is not an underestimation of state power. The bloody war between Iraq and Iran was a war between states and despite his defeat in the Gulf War and UN boycott, Saddam Hussein controlled most of Iraqi territory until the US attack in 2003. Afghanistan is another example. In March 2001, the Taliban regime deliberately destroyed centuries old Buddha statues, which, according to all experts, were considered to be unique and most valuable examples of the cultural heritage of mankind. Efforts from all over the world of all kind of representatives, including those from other neighbouring Muslim countries, failed in preventing this cultural disaster. The fundamentalist ideas of these Afghan Muslims did not allow them to tolerate these prominent symbols of Buddhist religion. It is an interesting case, because it illustrates both the lack of civilisational unity and the importance of state territoriality. There was no Islamic unity on this issue. The Pakistani neighbours, for example, seriously tried to stop the Taliban. However, there was no civilisational institution that could prevent the damage of the Buddhist statues. On the contrary, by resisting the immense world pressure, the Taliban showed that, at that moment, they, and only they had the sovereignty over the territory of Afghanistan (Knippenberg & Mamadouh 2001).

Are there any core states or potential core states that could qualify for the leadership of the Islamic civilisation? In fact, there are too many candidates: Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. None of them has the power and authority to fulfil this role adequately and to unite the Islamic civilisation (Huntington 1996, 177–179). Indonesia, the largest Muslim country, is growing economically, but is lacking authority in religious matters. Its culture is a mixture of indigenous, Muslim, Hindu, Chinese, and Christian influences. Moreover, its location in the Muslim civilisation is rather peripheral. Egypt's location is far more central and strategically important. It also possesses the Al-Azhar University, the leading institution of Islamic learning and has a large and rapidly growing population. However, it is also very poor and economically dependent on the USA, Western-controlled international institutions, and oil-rich Arab states. The conditions of Iran are more in favour of a leading role in the Islamic civilisation, but the great majority of this civilisation is Sunni Muslim, whereas the Iranians are Shi'ites. Pakistan also is a serious candidate for the position of leader of the Islamic civilisation. It combines

a large population with military power and its leaders have consistently promoted cooperation among Islamic states. However, the country is also relatively poor and politically instable. Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam and has its holiest shrines. It is very rich, due to the world's largest oil reserves. On the other hand, it has a relatively small population and it is very much dependent on the West for its security. Finally, in many respects Turkey has the competence (population, economic and military power) and tradition (Ottoman empire) of being a core state in the Islamic civilisation. However, the secular character of the modern Turkish state and its membership of Western alliances disqualify this country for that role. In fact, the Muslim world misses a leading state and is too divided to take a strong united stand *vis-à-vis* other civilisations (Nierop 2001, 60).

A final point of debate concerns the question of geographical scale (ibid., 62–63). At what geographical scale do inter-civilisational conflicts occur? At this moment, there are many conflicts in the world between members of different religions, as we saw in the introduction. But can we label these conflicts as conflicts between civilisations? For conflicts to be identified as inter-civilisational they need a real or potential global scope. Otherwise, these conflicts are mere local conflicts in which religion is an important element, and not clashes of civilisations that threaten world peace as supposed by Huntington. Most political scientists agree on the observation that in the post-Cold War period, there is a trend from *inter*state conflicts to *intra*state conflicts. Almost all modern conflicts concern the control over the government or territory of one state. This trend contradicts the Huntington thesis of a growing risk of escalation of local conflicts into interstate or even global civilisational conflicts.

Does this mean that religion or civilisation is not important in the relations between states? The answer is no. Culture has an impact on international relations. In general, nations of a similar civilisation or religion have a better chance for (institutional) cooperation. Also diplomatic representation and trade are influenced by cultural similarity (Nierop 1994, 191–194). But this does not mean that there is a high risk of global or international conflicts along civilisational or religious fault lines.

Religion and intra-state conflict

What can we conclude so far? The Huntington thesis has some serous shortcomings concerning its geography, the role of states, the hegemonic structure of the state system, and the geographical scale at which the religious conflicts occur. In general, what has been called 'the territorial factor' (Dijkink & Knippenberg 2001) has been underestimated. Despite globalisation and the Internet revolution, the control of territory still is an important strategy to control people and resources.

Globalisation does not mean the demise of the modern territorial state. States are still important. As long as there is no political unity at the global level with a world

government, that has a world monopoly on the use of violence, that control the world's territory, that has a world army, that gathers world taxes etc., states are the corner stones of world political order. Even economic and financial globalisation needs well-functioning territorial states that provide the necessary infrastructure and legal frameworks. 'Without the territorial states there would be no capitalist system' (Taylor & Flint 2000, 191). State and market are ordering powers dependent on each other (Van der Wusten 1997, 11). 'Transnational corporations require the state system' (Storey 2001, 120). 'Although many states did not perform very well on this point, there is no institution other than the territorial state that can fulfil better the basic needs of safety and prosperity' (Knippenberg & Mamadouh 2001, 391).

On the other hand, there is no doubt that 'pressures from above and below' (Storey 2001, 98–115) affect modern states and state territoriality. In general, state territoriality is challenged along two dimensions: control/coordination and legitimacy/culture (Dijkink & Knippenberg 2001, 18). Ruggie (1993) has characterised the most basic change along the control/coordination dimension as the 'unbundling of territoriality': fewer activities than before can be traced back to one ultimate territorial authority (the state). That applies to multinationals as well as non-governmental organisations. Mamadouh (2001) has analysed the territoriality of the European Union in which part of the former competences of the member states have been transferred to the European Commission. She points out that a new kind of territoriality is emerging, that is less fixed and less exclusive than traditional state territoriality.

State legitimacy has also met with challenges, which can be characterised as the development of global and sub-national (ethnic, linguistic, religious, local, regional) identities. At the global scale, there is a growing consciousness of the (nuclear, environmental, etc.) risks that face the world as a whole. This consciousness is often combined with a feeling of responsibility for future generations (Claval 2001, 42–43). This global responsibility counters state sovereignty, since state actions could threaten the development of future generations of other states. At the intra-state level national identities are challenged by sub-national identities based on (imagined) communities that are not sufficiently represented at the state level. A declining legitimacy of or trust in the state with possible violent consequences is often the result.

In this context, religion is relevant. Religion is an important source of values and identity, providing feelings of belonging to a larger community as if it were your family (see for instance the use of family terms in Christianity: father, mother, brothers and sisters) and providing a transcendent world that counters human mortality. Like other kinds of sub-national identities (ethnic, linguistic), this kind of identity can become increasingly important, when national identity is eroding or never has been important. In most cases, that has to do with a diminishing legitimacy of or trust in the state. Legitimacy of or trust in the state will – among other things – depend on the way in which the state is able to perform its basic functions:

providing safety, infrastructure, education, health, welfare, human rights etc. When a territorial state fails in providing these basic functions, other political entrepreneurs may fill the power vacuum and mobilise their rank and file on other than national criteria, for instance religious or ethnic criteria, or a combination of them. So, the strength of the state, in terms of infrastructural power as defined by Michel Mann (1984) and its performance, is very important (Van der Wusten & Knippenberg 2001, 284). It is clear that for example almost all post-communist states have serious problems in this respect. It is also clear, that in these states the relevance of religion (and ethnicity) has increased dramatically. In 1994, 30 percent of Russians below the age of twenty-five said that they had switched from atheism to a belief in God. The number of active churches in the Moscow area grew from 50 in 1988 to 250 in 1993. Simultaneously with the revival of orthodoxy in the Slavic republics, an Islamic revival swept through Central Asia. In 1989, 160 functioning mosques and one Islamic seminary existed in Central Asia; only four years later, in 1993, there were about 10,000 mosques and ten Islamic seminaries in the same area (Huntington 1996, 96).

However, whether this religious revival is also a source of potential (territorial) conflict very much depends on the religious homogeneity or heterogeneity of the state population, and in the case of religious heterogeneity, the way the state deals with the religious minorities on its territory. In general, the state is an important actor in the development of sub-national collective identities and conflicts. The state is not just an arena where sub-national groups fight out their conflict, nor is the state only responsive to the demands of the (religious) minorities on its territory (Roessingh 1996, 268–270). The political system itself plays a crucial role in the emergence of (religious) conflict. That central role rests not only on its effects on the minority as a whole and on its leaders, but also on the state's effect on the interaction between the religious groups and their leaders. 'The key is to find the institutional arrangements which provide the political incentives for accommodation and penalize extremism' (Horowitz; cited in Roessingh 1996, 269).

Van Amersfoort (1995) distinguishes three kinds of options for the state in dealing with religious (or in general cultural) diversity: elimination, marginalisation, and institutionalisation. By eliminating religious diversity, the state tries to suppress minority religions by way of violence or a policy of assimilation. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan is a recent example. The way rulers in the past imposed their religion on their subjects according to the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* is an example from earlier times. Genocide or (ethnic or religious) 'cleansing' can be the ultimate consequence of this kind of policy, as was witnessed in Nazi Germany or former Yugoslavia.

A more gentle way of making a population homogeneous involves marginalisation. Marginalisation means that minority religions are not suppressed or forbidden, but are banned from the public to the private sphere. Religious diversity may be marginalized by a religiously neutral state, or by freedom of religion.

A third way for the state to deal with religious diversity is by recognizing this diversity giving certain rights to certain religious groups or to the territories where they live, as in a federal state. Some manner of political or cultural autonomy could be the result. Two kinds of institutionalisation can be distinguished, based on two different principles: a personalistic and a territorial principle. The difference between these two principles had been elaborated in the beginning of the twentieth century by two leading Austro-Marxists: Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, who were confronted with the nationality question (Die Nationalitätenfrage) in the Hapsburg Dual Monarchy (Bauer 1907, 324–366; Renner 1918, 71–79). The personalistic principle (das Personalitätsprinzip) meant that certain rights or even autonomy were provided on the basis of the membership of a national community (Nationalgemeinschaft) without regard to the place of living. The territorial principle (das Territorialprinzip) meant that these rights were provided on the basis of the place or (subnational) territory where one was living.

A comparison between my own country, the Netherlands, and the former Soviet Union may illustrate the importance of which option is chosen (Knippenberg 1996). Although of a different scope, both countries had cultural minorities. For centuries, the country of the Netherlands consisted of different religious groups: different kinds of Protestants, such as Calvinists, Lutherans, and Mennonites; Roman-Catholics; and Jews. The former Soviet Union showed a much greater cultural diversity: ethnic, linguistic, and religious. In the past, both states have tried to accommodate the cultural diversity of the people living on their respective territories. However, the outcome of that historic interaction between state and society has been very different, based on two very different principles. In the Netherlands, there was an institutionalisation of the religious diversity in the political system by what has been called: the *verzuiling* (pillarisation) of Dutch society: the social and political segmentation in four *zuilen*: an orthodox protestant, a roman-catholic, a socialist, and a liberal segment. Each *zuil* or segment of society was provided with its proportionate share in state funding. And the *zuil* elites compromised at the national-political level, thus providing the country with a relatively stable political system, labelled as a consociational democracy by the Dutch-American political scientists Arend Lijphart (1969). This institutionalisation was essentially based on a non-territorial, personalistic principle. Not the place where one was living, but the membership of the *zuil* was essential.

After much debate, the Soviet Union chose another option for accommodating the country's immense cultural diversity: the introduction of a territorial federation based on ethno-nationalistic criteria. By this policy, the main nationalities were provided with their own homelands, which were formally recognised as Union republics or units of a lower political level such as Autonomous Republics or Autonomous Regions. In the long run, this had two important consequences. First, a political infrastructure was created that facilitated the disintegration into independent states, and still does on a lower level. Second, these homelands were an essential element in the development of a sub-national identity on the level of these home-

lands. Instead of nation-building on the level of the Soviet Union as a whole, nation-building took place on the level of these autonomous political units, the Union republics in particular. So, this territorial kind of institutionalisation had, in the long run, important consequences for the stability of the political system in the former Soviet Union. Of course, there were other important factors involved, such as the communist ideology and the economic performance of the communist system. But the provision of the main non-Russian cultural minorities with their own territories in the long run contributed to the falling apart of the Soviet Union.

So, the way the state deals with religious or in general cultural diversity on its territory proves to be crucial for the mobilisation and activation of religious (cultural) groups and religious (cultural) identities, which can result in conflict and violence. Apart from these state-society interactions, international conditions are important, too. Following Van der Wusten & Knippenberg (2001, 279–280), three types of factors are relevant: a state system in disarray and/or a relative weakening of the state; religious politics or religious conflicts elsewhere; a cross-border inducement for a religious actor in the state (think in particular of diaspora groups). First, mobilisation on the basis of religion (or ethnicity) is strongly supported by a sense of fear. A weak state implies uncertainty and fear and will therefore increase the chances for religious mobilisation and conflict. A general weakening of the international state system or relevant parts of it (see for instance World Wars I and II, and the collapse of the Soviet empire) can provide such conditions.

Second, religious mobilisation is highly contagious. The combination of general uprootedness by the forces of modernisation and globalisation on the one hand, and the availability of a traditional heritage in the hands of religious political entrepreneurs on the other, provide the conditions for a captive audience for a religious (imagined) community. A successful mobilisation in one country can easily diffuse to another and so spread like wildfire. There are indications that this was the case for instance with the spread of Islamism in Asia and Africa, and with Christian (Protestant) fundamentalism in Latin America.

Third, emigrants who have kept some of their ties with the old motherland intact may nurture the religious ideas in the old homeland and may provide material base and necessary guidance for religious mobilisation. One can for instance think of Islamists in London who enjoy more freedom to express their religion and fundamentalist ideas than in their home country; or, of the role Khomeini and his followers in Paris played concerning the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Conclusion

Which conclusions can be drawn from this brief discussion on the relationship between religion, territory and conflict? First of all, culture and religion are back in the minds of political scientists and politicians. In geography and other disciplines,

like in political science, there has been a cultural turn. Globalisation has strengthened the consciousness of cultural and religious differences in the world and contributed to a religious revival. On a theoretical level, this means that culture and religion are not just dependent functions of the world economic or political system (Beyer 1994). Culture matters. Religion matters.

Second, though religion is an important element in many conflicts between and within states, nowadays, there is no clash of religions on a global scale and probably, there will not be one in the near future. Although civilisations exist, they lack institutions for territorial control. And the most important territorial institutions of our time – the territorial states – have other than civilisational motives for their behaviour. For example, the disposal over natural resources, such as oil and water, seems to be more important than religion as a potential source of conflict between states (see for instance Amineh 1999). So, on the global and *inter*state level, the 'territorial factor' should not be underestimated.

Third, on the *intra*state level, religion – just as other cultural characteristics such as language or ethnicity – is an important issue for mobilising people by political and religious entrepreneurs that follow their power, cultural and/or material interests, and compete with the state elite. Religion is an important source of values, symbols, and identity. It is a way of making 'cosmos out of chaos' (Schöpflin 2000, 53). Different religious (or ethnic) groups create different worlds to which they want to belong. Problems arise, when different religious groups live on the same state territory. Whether conflicts are the result, depends on the way the state (elite) deals with this religious diversity and the demands of the religious minorities involved. Marginalisation of religion from the public to the private sphere or some kind of institutionalisation provides fewer chances for conflict than elimination options. But also the kind of institutionalisation matters. From the viewpoint of the stability of the political system 'personalistic' arrangements seem to be preferable over territorial arrangements. Not only because it is almost impossible to create religiously homogeneous territories, but also because these territories may function as containers for the construction and maintenance of sub-national identities (Taylor 1994) and therefore contribute to political fragmentation and even falling apart of the state involved. However, institutional arrangements will only work when some necessary conditions are fulfilled, among which the infrastructural power of the state and its performance in providing its main functions (safety, welfare, education, health, etc.) are the most important.

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Résumé

Střed religií? Náboženství, území a konflikt po skončení studené války

Příspěvek je stručnou diskuzí o vztahu náboženství, území a konfliktu, což mj. znamená, že politologie a politika se začínají opět zabývat náboženstvím a kulturou. V geografii a jí příbuzných vědách se užívá pojem „culture turn“. Globalizace zesílila kulturní a religiózní rozdíly ve světě a přispěla k návratu zájmu o religie. V teoretické rovině je tím myšleno, že kultura a náboženství nejsou závislou proměnou ve světovém ekonomickém a politickém systému (Beyer 1994).

Za druhé je náboženství významným prvkem mnoha konfliktů mezi a uvnitř států. Nejedná se přitom o střed religií na globální úrovni a pravděpodobně tento střed není očekávatelný ani v budoucnosti. Ačkoliv civilizace existují, vykazují přitom nedostatečnou územní kontrolu. Nejvýznamnější institualizované území dnes – stát – vykazuje jiné civilizační motivy svého chování. Například přírodnímu bohatství jako ropa nebo voda je přikládán větší potenciál konfliktu mezi státy než je tomu třeba u náboženství (Amineh 1999). Tedy na globální a mezistátní úrovni by „teritoriální faktor“ neměl být podceňován.

Za třetí je náboženství na vnitrostátní úrovni významným faktorem mobilizace lidí politickými a náboženskými podnikateli, kteří sledují svoji moc i kulturní a materiální zájem a soupeří přitom se státní elitou. Náboženství je významným zdrojem hodnot, symbolů a identity. Je to cesta, jak vytvořit „cosmos out of chaos“ (Schöpflin 2000). Různé náboženské nebo etnické skupiny vytvářejí různé světy, kam se chtějí mj. i zařadit. Problém ale nastává v okamžiku, když tyto náboženské skupiny žijí na stejném státním území. Přitom konflikty jsou závislé od vztahu státu k jeho religiózní diverzitě, resp. integraci náboženských minorit do společnosti. Marginalizace náboženství z veřejné do privátní sféry nebo určitý druh institucionalizace religií představuje menší pravděpodobnost konfliktu než eliminace vlastní náboženské skupiny. Z pohledu stability politického systému je „personální“ opatření důležitější než uspořádání územní. Už jen z toho důvodu, že je nemožné vytvořit nábožensky homogenní území, ale také proto, že teritoria vykazují funkci zásobníků budování a podpory subnárodních identit (Taylor 1994), proto tedy religie přispívají k politické fragmentaci a dokonce k rozpadu státního území. Institucionální uspořádání fungují jen, když jsou splněny určité podmínky mezi infrastrukturální mocí státu a naplňování jeho základních funkcí (bezpečnost, prosperita, vzdělání, zdravotní zabezpečení atd.).