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Identity and Conflict: Ties that Bind and Differences that Divide

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Conventional wisdom suggests that cultural differences make conflict more likely. Culture can unite and divide, but there exists little agreement among scholars over *how* identity forms among states, *what* distinctions are most salient, and *when* conflict is more likely. Researchers have tended to 'confirm' the role of identity in an ex post facto fashion, looking only at actual conflicts with cultural differences, without considering the opportunities for conflict among groups. We address a series of problems with existing conceptions of identity and ethnicity. We distinguish between shared and different culture by religion, language, and ethnicity. Rather than equating states with just the dominant groups, we also consider how relations involving secondary groups present in other states can give rise to conflict. We examine empirically the relationship between cultural similarities and differences and international dispute behavior in the post-World War II era. Our results suggest that culture and identity influence dispute patterns, but in ways that run counter to conventional beliefs. We find little evidence that conflict is more common between states where the dominant groups come from different cultural affiliations. If anything, our results suggest that violence is more likely among states with similar cultural ties, even when controlling for other determinants of conflict. Moreover, dyads where a group is politically privileged in one state but a minority in another tend to be particularly conflict prone. We conclude with suggestions for reorienting the study of identity and conflict in more constructive ways than the clash of civilization thesis.

KEY WORDS ♦ affinity ♦ civilizations ♦ culture ♦ identity ♦ international conflict ♦ international cooperation ♦ international integration

1. Introduction

> In this new world order . . . the most persuasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will . . . be . . . between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. (Huntington, 1996: 28)

> [T]he number of potential differences . . . is infinite but very few become effective differences . . . that make a difference. (Bateson, 1979: 98)

It has long been argued that identity matters in the conduct of international affairs. Yet, how identity impacts interstate conflict in particular, and what elements of identity matter most, remains a subject of considerable debate. Some assert that differences in culture can form the basis for deep psychological distrust or enmity (see, e.g. Connor, 1994; Horowitz, 1995; Huntington, 1993a, 1993b, 1996). Others emphasize how cultural differences inhibit effective communication, leading to international misunderstandings and violence (see, for example, Cederman, 2001a, 2001b; Comor, 2001; Johnston, 2001). Still others see identity as an important cue for collective action under the security dilemma (see Barth, 1969; Hardin, 1995; Hechter, 1987; Wendt, 1992, 1994). Group relations may also lead to transnational tensions, in particular when a given group is dominant in one state but a politically repressed or under-represented minority in another state (see Moore and Davis, 1997; Moore, 2002). Finally, researchers differ on what identities are most likely to form and become salient in international relations. Whereas the Huntington quote above suggests that it is the large and insuperable cultural differences that will divide groups, the Bateson quote reminds us that if familiarity breeds contempt, it is often the smaller differences among many similarities or shared ties that are more likely to be recognized as 'making a difference'. Identity formation can both exacerbate and ameliorate threats — Axelrod (1997) suggests that convergence among individuals or groups can lead to increased differentiation. As such, factors identified as creating common identities — e.g. European integration and other aspects of globalization — can also increase the salience of perceived differences.

While the literature on identity and conflict offers a healthy diversity of views, theory-building often advances most quickly when conceptual debates are confronted by empirical evidence. In this article, we try to refine work on identity and conflict and explore whether markers of identity and ethnicity appear to influence disputes between states. We identify weaknesses in existing work, and suggest new ways to delineate salient forms of cultural similarity and difference. Our analyses linking ethnicity, language and religion to interstate dispute behavior suggest that cultural traits and identity influence dispute patterns, but in ways that run counter to conventional beliefs. Most notably, we find little evidence of clashes between civilizations,

or that conflict is generally more common between states where the dominant groups possess different cultural affinities, broadly defined. Indeed, if anything, our results suggest that ties of similarity rather than difference more often give rise to conflict — violence appears to be more likely within than between civilizations or groups of similar states, even when controlling for other factors affecting the risk of disputes. Further, although Islamic and Christian states have clashed more often in the past, there is little evidence that such conflicts have become more prevalent after the Cold War. Finally, we find that transnational relations beyond dominant groups influence conflict, as dyads where a majority group in one state is a minority in another tend to be particularly conflict prone. We conclude by offering some suggestions for reorienting and widening research on identity and conflict.

2. The Resurgence of Culture in International Relations

In spite of the near exclusive focus on power and structure in much of traditional International Relations theory, a great deal of historical anecdote suggests that elements of culture have provided a basis for mobilization for conflict. Military campaigns have been given religious or cultural justifications since earliest times. In the late feudal era, Christians launched 'holy crusades' against perceived Muslim threats. European colonial powers justified efforts to conquer existing political entities elsewhere in the world as a noble effort to spread Christianity, blessed by the Church.[1]

A renewed emphasis on cultural factors as determinants of war and peace followed the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Huntington's (1993a, 1993b, 1996) influential article and book on the *Clash of Civilizations* claimed that patterns of conflict and cooperation follow the fault lines between major world civilizations.[2] The Cold War had obscured the historic tendency for conflict to erupt across cultural divides. 'Civilizations' denote the largest and most encompassing group with which individuals can identify. Although civilizations encompass groups of quite different backgrounds, there is a common overarching identity that can prevail among all the numerous groups. However, no such common bond can exist between putatively irreconcilable civilizations, such as Islam and Christianity.

Huntington's argument provided a locus for the common pessimism concerning security threats after the end of the Cold War (e.g. Maynes, 1995; Mearsheimer, 1990; Mueller, 1994). The idea that cultural tensions would spur conflict was further fuelled by the perceived explosion of ethnic conflict following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia (see Stofft and Guertner, 1994; Gurr, 1994; Sadowski, 1998). The notion that conflicts tend to have a rote basis in culture achieved new

impetus with the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the ongoing 'War on Terrorism'. Protagonists quickly became defined by cultural differences, and religious allegories often prevailed over ideological or geopolitical references in the rhetoric of the war, as witnessed by US President Bush's call for a 'crusade' against terrorism and evil-doers (largely in Muslim countries)[3] and the claims of US General Boykin that Islamic militants sought to destroy the USA 'because we're a Christian nation' and that the enemy in the war on terrorism was Satan.[4]

It is at best questionable whether post-9/11 events by themselves support Huntington's thesis. Key villains in the 'War on Terror' such as Al-Qaida and Saddam Hussein have mainly targeted fellow Arabs and Muslims. Whereas many Arab or Muslim governments were willing to support US retaliation efforts, Christian France openly sought to subvert the US proposal for military action against Iraq in the UN Security Council in 2003. Still, the recurrent framing of tensions in cultural terms suggests that these concepts resonate with many, including policy-makers and various experts. Even if Huntington's particular formulation of clashes between civilizations is questionable, refinement of research on the potential broader links between identity, culture and international conflict deserve scholarly attention, particularly in a time of heightened political sensitivity to cultural tensions.

Huntington (1996) did not attempt to evaluate his claims about the relationship between culture and conflict systematically, while initial replies offered more sophistry than substance (see, e.g. Heilbrunn, 1998; Kaplan, 1997; Said, 2001; Walt, 1997; Kirkpatrick et al., 1993).[5] More recently, there have been a number of studies examining culture and conflict (see, e.g. Henderson, 1997, 1998, 2004; Henderson and Tucker, 2001; Chiozza, 2002; Bolks and Stoll, 2003). Although valuable in their own right, the fact that many of these studies focus so specifically on Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis has limited their ability to evaluate linkages between culture and conflict more broadly. Existing quantitative research casts substantial doubt on Huntington's claims of clashing cultural identities, but our knowledge of linkages between culture and interstate conflict remains limited.[6]

In the subsequent section, we discuss three central problems in the existing research on the relationship between culture and conflict; (1) The need for a baseline in assessing conflict proneness, (2) the necessity of avoiding *post hoc* bias in distinguishing relevant identities based on actual conflict and (3) the slippage between dominant groups and social groups in attributing ethnic affiliation to states. The points we raise apply beyond studies defining cultures as civilizations à la Huntington. However, we will use many examples from this literature to structure our discussion.

3. Advancing the Study of Culture and Conflict

Conflict Proneness: The Need for a Baseline

Huntington and other advocates rely on historical examples to illustrate arguments about culture and conflict. Of course, researchers tend to select examples consistent with their claims, and debates about the proper interpretation of cases consume considerable attention. But even if we accept particular interpretations as basically sound, one cannot determine the pervasiveness of conflict along cultural divisions from examples where there is conflict alone. The relevant issue is not whether we can cite examples of cultures that clash, but whether clashes between cultures are more common than clashes in other situations. To determine whether clashes across cultural groups are especially numerous or notable, we must also look at the relative frequency of clashes *within* civilizations. We need a baseline for expected dispute frequencies; i.e. how much interstate conflict would we expect to observe among countries, given what we know about the opportunities for conflict and other factors affecting the likelihood of war. Case studies are useful for many purposes, but poorly suited to testing claims about tendencies or modal trends.[7]

To illustrate the need for a baseline, consider the matrix of the possible pairings of the nine civilizations identified by Huntington in Figure 1, assuming for the time being that these are useful categories for cultural differences and similarities (we will have more to say about this later). Each off-diagonal cell in the matrix identifies a possible conflict between two civilizations. The lower triangle of the matrix in Figure 1 provides some commonly cited examples of conflicts between cultures. Displaying the possible pairings of cultural groupings in this manner also reveals key weaknesses in relying on selected conflicts as evidence of the centrality of cultural divides in conflicts. Even a cursory review of the empirical record makes it clear that one can easily identify similar examples of conflicts *within* civilizations for every on-diagonal cell in Figure 1. Likewise, it is difficult to come up with examples of actual armed conflicts for many pairings of cultural groups in the matrix, such as the intersection of African and Sinic civilizations.[8]

A more systematic look at data indeed suggests that conflicts generally are far more common *within* civilizations than conflicts *between* civilizations. Table 1 compares annual data on militarized interstate disputes (MID) among pairs of states against whether the states belong to the same or different cultural groupings, collapsing the categories in Figure 1.[9] Although a majority of the disputes that were fought pitted states from different civilizations against one another (63.49 percent), looking only at the conflicts that were fought overlooks how the vast majority of dyads, or

Figure 1
Matrix of civilization pairings

	African	Buddhist	Hindu	Islamic	Japanese	Latin American	Orthodox	Sinic	Western
African	Ethiopia-Eritrea								
Buddhist	?	Indochina, Burma							
Hindu	Guyana, Mauritius	Sri Lanka	Insurgencies						
Islamic	Sudan	?	India-Pakistan	Yemen, Iraq-Kuwait, Iran-Iraq					
Japanese	?	World War II	?	?	Civil war (Meiji restoration)				
Latin American	?	?	?	?	?	Honduras-El Salvador, Chike-Peru			
Orthodox	?	?	?	Chechnya, Bosnia	Russia-Japan	?	Greece-Macedonia, Transdniester		
Sinic	?	Vietnam-China	China-India	Insurgencies	World War II	?	China-USSR	Taiwan-China	
Western	South Africa	?	?	Gulf war, Bosnia* Afghanistan	World War II	Mexican-American War	Yugoslavia, (Russia)*	Opium War China*	WWI WWII, Northern Ireland

Table 1
Civilization pairings and conflict, annual dyadic observations

	No MID	MID
Different civilization	428,905 (99.60%)	1708 (0.40%)
Same civilization	80,188 (98.79%)	982 (1.21%)

possible pairings of states, involve countries from different civilizations (84.14 percent). Of course, many empty cells in Figure 1 can be dismissed as unlikely candidates for conflict if we take into account other influences. Given the distance separating states in, say, the African and Sinic civilizations and its implication for interaction opportunities, one would not expect to observe many wars in this cell. Similarly, conflicts within civilizations may be over-represented given greater opportunities for conflictual interaction between proximate states. Conflicts are common within families not because families create conflict, but because more frequent contact breeds issues over which conflict arises. To use an analogy from conflict studies, one should not conclude from a positive bivariate relationship between trade and conflict that more trade causes conflict, since distance affects both. Indeed, once the effect of distance is accounted for, the partial correlation between trade and conflict becomes negative.

To assess whether conflicts are 'more common' between cultural group-ings requires a more systematic approach, recognizing that pairs of countries vary in other respects besides culture (power relations, regime type, ideology, contiguity, etc.). Many scholars accept that ideology dominated conflict and cooperation during the Cold War, though culture was presumably salient even for the superpowers. Even if culture matters, ideology or other preferential ties such as alliances can modify linkages between culture and conflict that otherwise would be expected to hold, and reveal cross-cutting ties and cleavages across highly charged cultural divides. For example, in 1494, when King Charles of France threatened to depose Pope Alexander VI and seize control of the Papacy, Alexander sought a military alliance with Muslim Sultan Beyazit II of Constantinople.

Many studies of identity and conflict have tried to develop plausible baseline models. Henderson (1997) considered the role of distance in mediating the links between culture and the risk of interstate war, while Henderson (1998) explores the additional impact of joint democracy, contiguity and major power status. However, Henderson (1997, 1998) uses a measure of cultural similarity based on multiple groups which we find problematic (for reasons we will discuss in more detail later), does not take

into account alternative indicators of preferential attachment such as alliance ties or UN voting similarity, and only considers large wars with more than 1000 battle deaths. Many recent studies have used less restrictive conflict measures. Russett et al. (2000) examine the likelihood of militarized interstate disputes (MID), which need not include casualties, among similar and dissimilar civilizations, within the model from their work on the liberal peace. Chiozza (2002) includes an even wider range of conflict behavior yet, using the Kosimo data (Pfetsch and Rohloff, 2000). Henderson and Tucker (2001) consider the tendency for conflict to recur over time. Bolks and Stoll (2003) consider whether conflicts are more likely to escalate among countries from different civilizations.

Although these studies are valuable efforts to evaluate Huntington's particular thesis, we believe that they have often reached largely negative conclusions on the role of culture due to a narrow conceptualization of identities and how these can influence conflict. In the next section, we discuss potential difficulties in the classification of cultural similarity and difference and their linkage to conflict.

Defining Difference: de facto Conflict and Aggregation Bias

A basic problem with existing studies of culture and conflict is that cultural difference and similarity often seems to be identified based on where conflict occurs. This is seen clearly in Huntington's suggested civilizations, where 'Western' is considered a distinct civilization from the Orthodox. Positing that Catholics and Orthodox constitute irreconcilable groups, rather than sharing a Christian identity, seems to be based on recent conflict in the Balkans rather than the theological differences between the Orthodox and the Catholic churches, which are largely unintelligible to most adherents.[10] Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs in the former Yugoslavia share many similarities such as language, and many Serbs and Croats have argued at other periods in history that a common Southern Slav identity unites the two.[11] Moreover, until recently, the Catholics and Protestants lumped together as Western were often considered distinct. The Protestant reformation prompted a period of intense warfare in Europe in the late 16th and 17th centuries (see Dunn, 1979), and sectarian violence between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland has, at best, only recently come to an end. Similarly, there are many cases where quite different ethnic groups are lumped together as belonging to the same civilization in Huntington's typology. Basques and Spaniards are both predominantly Catholic, but speak unrelated languages, and the conflict over Basque autonomy and possible independence has generated a long series of violent events. Tensions between Iran and many Arab states have led some observers to emphasize

differences between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. Similarly, tensions between Muslim and Hindu in South Asia must be compared with tensions between Sikh and Hindu, and between Pakistani and Bangladeshi, groups that Huntington does not recognize as different.

Clearly, many other distinctions could potentially be used to demarcate cultural identities. To avoid ex post ergo propter hoc reasoning, difference must be defined on the basis of ex ante characteristics. Most statistical analyses have simply adopted Huntington's classifications of the relevant cultural groups (e.g. Russett et al., 2000; Henderson and Tucker, 2001; Chiozza, 2002; Bolks and Stoll, 2003). Although this is appropriate if the main interest is assessing empirical support for Huntington's claims, it clearly runs into the problem noted here when attempting to move beyond the particular, even peculiar, Huntington typology. The only existing studies of linkages between culture and conflict that do not rely upon Huntington's list of civilization, notably Henderson (1997, 1998) and Richardson (1960), actually find more evidence of systematic relationships between cultural differences, similarity and conflict.

We try to avoid these problems by identifying cultural similarity and difference by more easily ex ante identifiable characteristics such as language and religion. Identity is clearly fungible, or at least malleable with multiple identities operating in variable salience in relation to given concerns or crises. We outline our approach to measuring similarity and differences in identity in a subsequent section.

States: Dominant Groups and Social Diversity

Although existing work on culture and identities challenges the traditional view in International Relations theory of states as undifferentiated, it makes other assumptions that are oddly inconsistent with the turn towards domestic–international linkages that has become increasingly prominent. More specifically, existing work treats identity and culture as attributes of nation states, typically based on either the numerically or politically dominant ethnic group.[12] The approach assumes that states are homogenous when in fact almost all nation states are not, and usually encompass more than one ethnic group, with multiple bases for shared or different identities. Hence, for any imputed state identity, there will be portions of the population with different, distinct identities. Consider, for example, the case of Iraq — although the country is predominantly Muslim (about 97 percent of the population), a substantial share of the population are not Arab (about 20 percent, mainly Kurds). Among the Arabs, we find additional differences in religious groups; the majority are Shiite, while the Sunni minority (about 15.5 percent) share religious affiliation with the ethnically distinct Kurds.

Assuming that states have cultural affiliations determined by the dominant group alone would not be particularly problematic if one could assume that only dominant groups influence a state's foreign policy behavior, and that other groups exert no influence on its interactions with other states. However, this clearly does not hold. If shared ties and differences between dominant groups can influence disputes between states, then group relations within countries can also give rise to tension that may escalate to violent hostilities. Although not all civil wars are ethnically based, the antagonists are often ethnically polarized (see, for example, Sambanis, 2001; Ellingsen, 2000; Gleditsch, 2005). Moreover, since state borders do not line up with ethnic group boundaries, many ethnic groups are present in more than one state. State repression or abuses against ethnic groups are likely to spur reactions from co-ethnics, and when these carry political clout in other states, disputes among states at the governmental level are more likely.[13]

In our analyses, we will consider how ties both between dominant groups as well as secondary groups across boundaries influence dispute propensity. In the next paragraph, we describe in greater detail how we identify potentially relevant cultural attributes.

4. Identifying Identities

We have argued that existing work suffers from questionable or overly restrictive coding of culture and identity. In particular, the categories singled out as relevant often seem to be determined by the extent of conflict between groups, and potentially biased toward suggesting conflictual relations. We instead consider independently classified linguistic, ethnic, and religious delimiters as potential sources of differences and similarity. Our data on cultural variables come from Ellingsen (2000). These data indicate the name and proportional size of the largest and the second largest linguistic, religious, and ethnic group, from 1945 to 2000.[14] We use these data to define difference and similarity for pairs of states (dyads) in the post-World War II period.

Some cultural features are relatively common and encompass a large number of people. Others are more unique. Which cultural marker is used to define similarity and difference strongly influences our inferences about how widespread cultural differences and similarities are in dyadic relations. Disregarding dialects, there are 90 different main languages in our sample. Even the language shared by the largest number of nations, Spanish, is the primary language in only slightly more than 10 percent of the countries in the sample.[15] As can be seen in the first section of Table 2, slightly more than 4 percent of the dyads in the sample share the same main language. Similarly, most ethnic groups are limited to few states. The second part of Table 2

Table 2
Culturally similar dyads, annual observations

Language	N cases	% of cases
Same	20,815	4.28%
Different	465,576	95.72%

Ethnicity	N cases	% of cases
Same	16,117	3.24
Different	481,350	96.76

Religion	N cases	% of cases
Same	185,567	37.21
Different	313,082	62.79

shows that, even accepting very broad categories for ethnicity such as Africans, Arabs and Europeans, less than 4 percent of dyads involve the same dominant ethnic groups in each state. Of our three cultural indicators, religion is the most encompassing potential marker. Although few dyads have the same dominant ethnic groups or language, the lower part of Table 2 reveals that a relatively large share of the dyad years, almost 40 percent, pair two states with the same main religion. As can be seen in Table 3, by far the most common religion is Christianity, which is dominant in over half of the country years in the population.[16]

The categories in Table 3 may seem somewhat incongruous, as they combine relatively well-defined theologies (e.g. Christianity and Islam) with

Table 3
Largest religion, country years

	N cases	% of cases
Christianity	5091	57.81
Islam	1934	21.96
Animism	642	7.29
Buddhism	506	5.75
Atheism	353	4.01
Hinduism	169	1.92
Shintoism	57	0.65
Judaism	54	0.61

summary categories of a broad array of beliefs (e.g. Animism) and official doctrines and varieties of areligiosity (i.e. Atheism). However, these categories are similar to those identified by standard reference works. Sociologists of religion argue that there are similarities among Animist or primal-indigenous religions/cultures, such as use of an oral rather than written canon, and a lack of rigid boundaries between the sacred and secular (profane) aspects of life, that make it meaningful to treat these as a group although we recognize that these similarities may be a weak tie for forming a bond between individuals. In the case of Atheism, this could reflect both individuals who do not report themselves to be religious, as well as an official doctrine, where religious freedoms are suppressed. Atheism is dominant only in socialist states. We believe that it makes sense to treat Atheism as a common dominant state outlook in this application, even if much of the population of these states may hold other religious beliefs.[17]

Although much of the existing research has focused on encompassing categories (such as Huntington's typology of civilizations), we believe that cultural differences within encompassing clusters may be just as important. In this section, we detail how we use the Ellingsen data to identify similarities and differences between states, and how we expect these to be related to conflict and cooperation.

We use information about the dominant groups in each state to classify whether the two states in a dyad have the same dominant ethnic group, language, or religion. Ideally, we would like to be able to consider actual control of the state rather than just proportional population size, but currently there are no such data available.[18] We surmise that the view that differences divide and greater differences divide even more is overly simplistic, and instead expect to find a more complex relationship between similarity and differences. More specifically, we expect that many forms of similarity are actually associated with more disputes, as states that are 'too similar' often have more shared issues over which conflict may arise. Multiple states often compete for the same legitimacy. Both the mainland People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) claim to be the 'true' China. Similarly, many Arab states have poor relationships, and often claim to be a more legitimate voice of the Arab world than their rivals. In the 19th century, several countries competed for dominance among the German-speaking population of Europe. Nor is this kind of competition an artifact of ancient times. Many Romanians and Bulgarians consider the culturally similar new states of Moldova and Macedonia 'illegitimate states' that ought to be part of their 'true' national states.[19]

It is also certainly plausible that appeals to shared ties may exert a moderating effect on the risk of disputes among states in more encompassing categories. Identity is malleable and multiple aspects of cultural ties can

operate in a crisis. For example, European integration has explicitly been justified by reference to a shared identity, building on its Christian heritage (see, e.g. Nelsen and Guth, 2003). However, whether such broadly encompassing categories of similarity will have an effect on dispute propensity is likely to depend on the degree of community, or sense of 'we-ness' among the constituent members. Although some encompassing groups may have developed elements of integrative communities in the sense envisioned by Deutsch et al. (1957), not all culturally similar clusters have integrated to the point where we should expect a restraining influence on disputes. In this article, we take an empirical approach to determining the degree of community between states with the same particular dominant religion. We separate dyads with the same dominant religions — i.e. *Animism, Atheism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism*, or *Islam* — and examine whether these are more peaceful than other dyads with the same religion.[20] We then examine to what extent differences between cultural clusters can be accounted for by the extent of integration or affinity among the constituent members.

Although a naïve comparison suggests that dyads of states from different cultural affiliations are not particularly conflict prone, it is possible that some fault lines or particular combinations of differences may be more disputatious. The eight different main religions in our data give rise to $[8 \times (8-1)]/2 = 28$ different dyadic religious combinations. Many of these combinations involve distant states and are unlikely to be salient. However, we will examine whether dyads pitting Muslim and Christian states against one another are more dispute prone than other dyads, as often hypothesized.

Unlike previous studies, we also consider similarities and ties between states beyond the dominant group by looking at similarities and shared ties to secondary groups. In particular, we expect that cases where a minority group in one state is a majority group in another state should be particularly likely to be associated with more conflictual interactions between states.

Finally, we consider whether cultural differences and ties vary in their impact over time periods. Some efforts to test the clash of civilization thesis have been dismissed for using outdated conflict data. Notably, in a reply to Russett et al. (2000), Huntington (2000) argues that his theory involves predictions about the post-Cold War world, and cannot be assessed on data from the Cold War period. Statements about the future are impossible to falsify, but we now have data up through 2001, more than a decade beyond the end of the Soviet Union. This allows us to test whether there are structural shifts in the impact of identity-related variables during and after the Cold War.

Although other ways to distinguish identities have been suggested, we feel that our delineations of cultural difference and similarity are cleaner and

easier to interpret. Previous research by Henderson (1997, 1998) on the relationship of culture to conflict also relies on more objective, predefined cultural indicators such as ethnicity and religion, but these studies combine information about the proportional size of all groups present in two states A and B into a similarity index.[21] We believe that Henderson's similarity index conflates different constellations of cultural groupings by considering *all* the notable groups in two countries, and taps a quite different component than our separate measures of dominant and secondary groups. Henderson's measure would for example yield a higher similarity score for Israel with its Muslim neighbors, given Israel's large Muslim minority (*c.* 15% of the population). Our measures distinguish the potential peaceful influence of similarity in dominant religion from the possible conflictual influence of common majority–minority relationships.

5. Research Design

We conduct analyses on data for all dyad years (1950–2001), based on the Gleditsch and Ward (1999) list of independent states with more than 250,000 inhabitants. A size threshold ensures that our results are not overly influenced by adding numerous dyads with very small countries such as Nauru (with a population barely above 10,000) that are unlikely to experience conflict and overwhelmingly tend to be Christian. We estimate the likelihood of conflict in a dyad conditional on cultural attributes and other covariates, using logistic regression with robust standard errors and a control for duration dependence. In the following section, we review the construction of the dependent variable and the independent variables.

Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable is based on the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data, Version 3.0 (see Gochman and Maoz, 1984). We use a dichotomous variable indicating the onset of a dispute in a dyad, coded 1 for the initial year of an event and 0 for years without disputes. Since our focus is on the onset of new disputes (as opposed to conflict continuation), we drop subsequent observations for dyads with ongoing disputes.

The MID data are intended to include all official disputes between states that have a militarized component. However, the MID data include many events where the military component is not particularly salient, such as fishing disputes (see, for example, Gleditsch, 2002a: 76–8). It could be argued that the sample of all MIDs implies an overly broad definition of conflict, whereas theories of culture and conflict apply only to severe conflict.[22] To ensure that our results do not depend on a particular conflict

measure, we replicate our analyses with more restrictive versions, limited to only MIDs that involve casualties (MIDCs) and the Uppsala Armed Conflict data (see Gleditsch et al., 2002).[23] For considerations of space, we report these alternative estimates in a separate Appendix, available on the internet.[24]

Independent Variables

We use a number of different indicators of cultural difference and similarity. We construct three different variables indicating similarity and differences in a pair of states (A and B) — *linguistic similarity* (coded as 1 if A and B have the same dominant linguistic group, 0 otherwise), *religious similarity* (coded as 1 if A and B have the same dominant religious group) and *ethnic similarity* (coded as 1 if A and B have the same dominant ethnic group). Furthermore, we create separate variables for each case of dyadic religious similarity, *Animism, Atheism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam*, each of which is coded as 1 if the same religious belief is dominant in both A and B. We explore the extent to which these differences in the effects of various religious communities on conflict can be explained by differences in integration or affinity, by considering Gartzke's (1998) measure of the similarity of states' votes in the United Nations General Assembly. This can be seen as tapping revealed preferences, where more similar voting records indicate states with more compatible views on key issues.

In addition to shared dominant cultural traits, we also consider a separate variable coded 1 for dyads that combine an Islamic and a Christian state. We also evaluate differences during and after the Cold War. We take British Prime Minister Thatcher's 1985 declaration that the new Soviet head Gorbachev was 'a man she liked, and could do business with' and the 1986 USA–USSR summit in Reykjavik as the first signs auguring the end of the Cold War. We consider subsequent years as the post-Cold War era. Many scholars have noted that the end of the Cold War was marked by a brief increase in armed conflict associated with the break-up of two large multinational socialist states (the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia). Since the early 1990s, the number of armed conflicts has decreased dramatically and fallen to a level below that of most of the Cold War period (see, for example, Eriksson et al., 2003; Gleditsch et al., 2002). To separate the longer-term post-Cold War period after 1992 from the immediate effects of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, we add a separate dummy for the period 1986 to 1992. An increase in conflict for 1986–92 that does not persist beyond 1992 would not corroborate the alleged salience of cultural divides in shaping conflict in the post-Cold War era. We also create interactive terms for Islam–Christian dyads with the two temporal dummy variables.

Finally, we indicate the presence of politically salient transnational ethnic groups with three variables — *linguistic majority-minority* (coded 1 if the dominant language group in state A is the second largest in state B and vice versa), *religious majority-minority* (coded 1 if the dominant religious group in state A is the second largest in state B and vice versa) and *ethnic majority-minority* (coded 1 if the dominant language group in state A is the second largest in state B and vice versa).

Control Variables

We include the following control variables, largely similar to those used in the Oneal and Russett (2001) study.

Democracy Democratic states have been found to have a consistently lower risk of disputes. We measure the extent of democracy using the 21-point institutionalized democracy scale in a modified version of the Polity IV data, with some alternative estimates for observations not in the original data (Gleditsch, 2003).[25] We classify the extent of democracy in a dyad by the least democratic country (the so-called 'weak link' assumption). The literature on the liberal peace suggests that disputes are less likely the higher (i.e. more democratic) the lowest of the two democracy scores.

Trade Interdependence A large body of research suggests that economic interdependence among states reduces the risk of conflict. Our trade interdependence measure is based on the lower of the two total trade (i.e. imports plus exports) to GDP ratios in a dyad. Our trade and GDP data are taken from the expanded data in Gleditsch (2002b), and all figures are in current US dollars.

GDP per Capita It is well known that many states in developing countries are too weak to be able to muster effective rule and functional armies. Although these states may be prone to civil conflict, they almost never engage in interstate wars (see, for example, Lemke, 2002). To control for the influence of development and proxy for state capacity we consider the lowest value of the natural log of the GDP per capita for the two countries in a dyad. Our GDP per capita data are in real 1996 US dollars, taken from Gleditsch (2002b).

Geographic Contiguity and Distance Proximity shapes the opportunity for conflict, and greater distances make disputes less likely, as states find it increasingly costly — if at all feasible — to fight one another. Distant states usually also have less contact and develop fewer issues over which conflict

may arise. We use a dichotomous variable scored 1 if dyadic partners are contiguous (shared land border or separated by less than 150 miles of water). As some non-contiguous states are much closer than others, we also include the natural log of distance in kilometres between capital cities.[26]

Military Alliances Alliances reveal alignment or preferential ties between states, and should be associated with a lower likelihood of disputes. We consider a dichotomous variable scored 1 if a dyad entails the presence of a defense pact, neutrality pact, or entente, based on the Correlates of War (COW) Alliance data (Gibler and Sarkees, 2004).

Relative Capabilities Traditional International Relations theory places substantial emphasis on power, and many empirical studies argue that conflict is less likely when one state is considerably more powerful than the other. We measure power by a state's total real GDP in 1996 US dollars. Our relative capability measure is the logged ratio of the larger to smaller GDP from Gleditsch (2002b).

Major Power Status Major powers are often thought to behave differently than other states. We consider a dummy variable scored 1 if at least one state in a dyad is classified as a major power by the COW project. China, France, the USA, the UK, and the USSR are classified as major powers since 1945, as are the German Federal Republic and Japan after 1991.

6. Analysis

We first estimate the risk of dispute onset conditional on whether a dyad has similar ethnic composition, language or religion. The first thing to note from the results for Model 1 in Table 4 is that although all three cultural variables are statistically significant and appear to influence conflicts, the coefficients have different signs. Whereas dyads that have the same religion are less likely to experience conflict, the opposite result is obtained for other elements of culture. Dyads that share the same language or same dominant ethnic group are significantly more likely to have a dispute. Moreover, the positive coefficients for language and ethnic group are larger than the negative coefficient for the religion. Adding up the terms we find that two states that shared all these ties would have about 1.5 greater odds of conflict than two states without shared cultural ties. The results in Table 4 demonstrate that culture matters, but it is also clear from our results that the impact of culture is more complex than contemplated by Huntington and others. Dyads made up of states of similar background cannot be characterized as generally more peaceful or conflict prone than other dyads.

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Table 4
Model 1: Risk of onset by measure of shared ethnicity, language,
and religion

Variable	Coefficient	(Std. Err.)
Same religion in dyad	–0.385**	(0.064)
Same language in dyad	0.423**	(0.110)
Same ethnic group in dyad	0.318**	(0.114)
Log of distance between capital cities, km	–0.586**	(0.033)
Countries directly contiguous	2.039**	(0.087)
Lower of democracy scores	–0.048**	(0.005)
Natural log of lower GDP per capita	0.237**	(0.036)
Lower of trade to GDP ratios	–26.557**	(9.704)
Capability ratio, log of larger to smaller GDP	–0.013	(0.015)
Dyad contains at least one major power	2.087**	(0.067)
Countries are allied	–0.165*	(0.085)
Peaceyears	–0.389**	(0.017)
Spline 1	–0.002**	(<0.001)
Spline 2	0.002**	(<0.001)
Spline 3	<0.001**	(<0.001)
Intercept	–1.497**	(0.424)
N	470,477	
Log-likelihood	–7873.082	
$\chi^2_{(15)}$	8189.904	

Note: The symbols ** and * indicate significance at the 0.05 and the 0.1 level in a two-tailed test.

Cultural ties can both divide and unite. If we look at the most inclusive factor, religion, however, there is some evidence that dyads containing states that are similar are less conflict prone.[27] We stress that these results are based on a model that controls for the standard factors thought to tap opportunity and willingness to engage in conflict, and as such pertain to the estimated effects after other influences have been partialed out. Hence, unlike the simple comparison between disputes and cultural similarities, these results cannot be dismissed as mere artifacts or spurious relationships due to omitted factors such as distance or relative power.

The results for the control variables are largely as expected. Countries that are farther apart are less likely to fight. Democratic dyads are less likely to be involved in a dispute. Wealthier states are more likely to be involved in a conflict, and countries with greater bilateral trade are less likely to fight. Power preponderance makes conflict less likely, while dyads with a major

Table 5
Model 2: Risk of onset by shared religion and type

Variable	Coefficient	(Std. Err.)
Atheists in both states	−0.760**	(0.253)
Animists in both states	−2.237**	(0.553)
Buddhists in both states	0.948**	(0.162)
Hindus in both states	0.439	(0.560)
Muslims in both states	0.331**	(0.092)
Christians in both states	−0.607**	(0.077)
Log of distance between capital cities, km	−0.641**	(0.032)
Countries directly contiguous	1.944**	(0.086)
Lower of democracy scores	−0.038**	(0.006)
Natural log of lower GDP per capita	0.237**	(0.036)
Lower of trade to GDP ratios	−23.381**	(8.641)
Capability ratio, log of larger to smaller GDP	−0.012	(0.015)
Dyad contains at least one major power	2.138**	(0.067)
Countries are allied	−0.031	(0.084)
Peaceyears	−0.386**	(0.017)
Spline 1	−0.002**	(<0.001)
Spline 2	0.002**	(<0.001)
Spline 3	<0.001**	(<0.001)
Intercept	−0.967**	(0.420)
N	470,477	
Log-likelihood	−7811.015	
$\chi^2_{(15)}$	8505.210	

Note: The symbols ** and * indicate significance at the 0.05 and the 0.1 level in a two-tailed test.

power are more prone to conflict. The results remain consistent with the alternate conflict measures, with only minor differences (see Appendix).

Next, we discriminate between different forms of religious similarity. The results for Model 2 in Table 5 suggest that some religions are less conflict prone than mixed dyads, but other similar religion dyads appear to be more conflict prone. Of the two major world religions, a pair of Islamic states are somewhat more likely to fight than mixed dyads and two Christian states are somewhat less likely to experience conflict. However, we find larger negative coefficients both for dyads where Atheism prevails as well as dyads where Animism is the modal religious orientation. In particular, the latter reduces the odds of conflict to about one-tenth of the baseline. Moreover, despite the popular conception of Buddhism as a peaceful religion, these results

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suggest that dyads of two Buddhist countries have 2.5 times greater odds of conflict than mixed dyads. Replacing the dependent variable with the alternate conflict measures again yields generally similar patterns of risk by shared religions (in fact, there are no armed conflicts between Animist states in the Uppsala data, see Appendix). We have previously argued that the pacifying potential of appeals to similarity will reflect the extent to which such groupings have achieved some kind of community or feeling of 'we-ness'. We will return to this issue more formally later, after first considering whether particular differences between identities are more prone to conflict and possible differences over time.

Model 3 in Table 6 provides the results when we single out dyads on the Islam–Christianity faultline, dyads where the dominant majority in one state is the second largest minority in the second, and also control for differences before and after the end of the Cold War. Our results lend little support to the idea that conflict is particularly prevalent between Islamic and Christian states, or that the end of the Cold War unleashed a Pandora's box of culturally based conflict.[28] The sum of the individual coefficients for the Islam and Christian faultline, the Cold War dummy, and the interactive term is negative, suggesting that Islam/Christian dyads historically have been *less* likely to experience conflict. The results also suggest that in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, Islamic states were about as likely to fight one another as they were to fight Christian states.[29] Moreover, the interaction term for post-Soviet Union period and Islam/Christian dyads is negative, and of greater magnitude than the difference from other dyads during the Cold War period. Overall, these results lend little support for the alleged prevalence of conflict between Muslim and Christian states, save for the period 1985–92 or around the end of the Soviet Union and the break-up of Yugoslavia.[30] The results in Table 6 also suggest that dyads where a majority in one state is the second largest group in the other state are generally more conflict prone. This reveals a more complex relationship between cultural similarity and difference than has been suggested by previous studies, focusing either on dichotomies where states are treated as homogenous as in the tests of the clash of civilization thesis, or measures of similarity that combine all groups together as in Henderson (1997). The conclusions from Model 3 remain largely consistent when using the alternate conflict measures (indeed, there are no armed conflicts with more than 25 casualties between Islamic and Christian states in the 1992–2001 period, see Appendix). Including other possible combinations of civilizational faultlines does not change the main results in Table 6.[31]

Table 7 summarizes the implied probabilities of conflict (scaled to range from 0 to 100) from Model 3, for various dyads combining states from different and similar clusters, assuming a contiguous dyad with the median

Table 6
Model 3: Risk of onset by culture and Cold War period

Variable	Coefficient	(Std. Err.)
Animists in both states	–1.462**	(0.476)
Buddhists in both states	1.336**	(0.167)
Hindus in both states	0.931*	(0.557)
Muslims in both states	0.748**	(0.108)
Christians in both states	–0.177*	(0.095)
Atheists in both states	–0.456*	(0.262)
Religious majority in one state minority in other	0.581**	(0.076)
Language majority in one state minority in other	0.698**	(0.100)
Ethnic majority in one state minority in other	0.046	(0.107)
Dyad on Islam, Christianity faultline	0.843**	(0.153)
Cold War period	–0.371**	(0.105)
Post-Soviet Union period	0.110	(0.119)
Cold War period × Islam/Christian dyad	–0.989**	(0.173)
Post-Soviet Union period × Islam/Christian dyad	–1.012**	(0.209)
Log of distance between capital cities, km	–0.567**	(0.033)
Countries directly contiguous	1.963**	(0.089)
Lower of democracy scores	–0.041**	(0.006)
Natural log of lower GDP per capita	0.133**	(0.038)
Lower of trade to GDP ratios	–23.976**	(7.936)
Capability ratio, log of larger to smaller GDP	–0.011	(0.015)
Dyad contains at least one major power	2.219**	(0.071)
Countries are allied	–0.009	(0.083)
Peaceyears	–0.376**	(0.017)
Spline 1	–0.002**	(<0.001)
Spline 2	0.001**	(<0.001)
Spline 3	<0.001**	(<0.001)
Intercept	-0.983**	(0.442)
N	470,477	
Log-likelihood	–7697.08	
$\chi^2_{(15)}$	8659.85	

Note: The symbols ** and * indicate significance at the 0.05 and the 0.1 level in a two-tailed test.

values on the other independent variables.[32] The upper portion of Table 7 shows the predicted probabilities during the Cold War period (1950–85), while the lower portion of the table lists predicted values in the post-Cold War period. Each section is divided in two by a small space, with religiously similar dyads above and culturally distinct dyads below. Table 7 shows how

Table 7
Predicted effects for dyad years by similarity and difference

Dyad	Predicted %
Animist dyad, Cold War	0.242
Atheism, Cold War	0.615
Buddhist dyad, Cold War	3.563
Christian dyad, Cold War	0.800
Hinduist dyad, Cold War	2.692
Islamist dyad, Cold War	1.975
Mixed dyad, Cold War	0.949
Mixed dyad, Maj./Min. group, Cold War	3.514
Islam–Christian dyad, Cold War	0.819
Animist dyad, post-1992	0.394
Atheist dyad, post-1992	1.000
Buddhist dyad, post-1992	5.679
Christian dyad, post-1992	1.298
Hinduist dyad, post-1992	4.294
Islamist dyad, post-1992	3.181
Mixed dyad, post-1992	1.538
Mixed dyad, Maj./Min. group, post-1992	5.603
Islam–Christian dyad, post-1992	1.301
Islam–Christian dyad, 1986–91 period	3.149

our results yield the highest predicted probabilities of a dispute, everything else being equal, for dyads with two Buddhist states and mixed dyads where the dominant group in one state is the second largest in the other. Christian and Islamic states are not particularly prone to conflict, save for the period 1985–91. For the post-1992 period, an Islamic and a Christian state are less likely to fight than two Islamic states, and about as likely to have a dispute as two Christian states.

In Model 4 in Table 8 we introduce Gartzke's affinity index to examine whether preference similarity or degree of integration can account for the differences found for similar religious dyads, where some seem more peaceful than mixed dyads while others are even more dispute prone. Including this measure is not devoid of problems. Since the UN voting data measure is only available until 1996, the sample is reduced to 75% of the original sample size. The lack of more recent data also makes it difficult to estimate post-Cold War and post-1992 differences with much precision. Finally, a primordialist would probably hold that affinity or preference

Table 8
Model 4: Risk of onset by culture, period, and affinity

Variable	Coefficient	(Std. Err.)
Animists in both states	−1.240**	(0.474)
Buddhists in both states	1.822**	(0.197)
Hindus in both states	1.701**	(0.579)
Muslims in both states	1.047**	(0.130)
Christians in both states	−0.024	(0.119)
Atheists in both states	0.238	(0.381)
Religious majority in one state minority in other	0.593**	(0.094)
Language majority in one state minority in other	0.561**	(0.114)
Ethnic majority in one state minority in other	0.112	(0.116)
Dyad on Islam, Christianity faultline	0.985**	(0.160)
Cold War period	−0.474**	(0.115)
Post-Soviet Union period	−0.074	(0.147)
Cold War period × Islam/Christian dyad	−0.815**	(0.178)
Post-Soviet Union period × Islam/Christian dyad	−1.232**	(0.266)
Log of distance between capital cities, km	−0.513**	(0.036)
Countries directly contiguous	2.269**	(0.111)
Lower of democracy scores	−0.044**	(0.007)
Natural log of lower GDP per capita	0.172**	(0.042)
Lower of trade to GDP ratios	−16.882**	(7.748)
Capability ratio, log of larger to smaller GDP	−0.040**	(0.019)
Dyad contains at least one major power	1.915**	(0.091)
Countries are allied	0.280**	(0.098)
State affinity	−1.111**	(0.103)
Peaceyears	−0.379**	(0.020)
Spline 1	−0.002**	(<0.001)
Spline 2	0.002**	(<0.001)
Spline 3	<0.001**	(<0.001)
Intercept	−1.388**	(0.481)
N	360,136	
Log-likelihood	−5490.245	
$\chi^2_{(15)}$	6851.823	

Note: The symbols ** and * indicate significance at the 0.05 and the 0.1 level in a two-tailed test.

similarity should be considered endogenous to cultural similarity.[33] These concerns aside, the results in Table 8 offer considerable support for our claims that the differences previously found for religious clusters can be traced to differences in integration. First, we find strong evidence that

similar voting records in the UN are associated with a lower risk of disputes. Second, and most notably, we find that two of the religious affiliation terms found to be significantly negative in Tables 5 and 6 — namely Christian and Atheist dyads — become either positive or indistinguishable from 0 once we include the affinity measure. This leads us to conclude that any conflict dampening influence of cultural similarity is likely to be realized only in cases where members of clusters develop some sense of community or integration. The results in Table 8 indicate that cultural similarity by itself cannot be a sufficient basis for integration. Indeed, with one exception, all the cultural similarity terms in Model 4 are either positive or indistinguishable from 0, indicating that all else being equal, culturally similar states are generally more likely to experience conflicts than mixed dyads.

As in Tables 5 and 6, Model 4 in Table 8 still suggests that Animist states are notably less likely to engage in disputes with one another. Animism is dominant only among African states, and the so-called 'African Peace' with an absence of wars has previously been noted by Kacowicz (1998). This is in our view mainly an artifact of looking at interstate wars in a zone of extremely weak states, where most states are unable to mount organized military challenges against other states. Lemke (2002) claims that the African interstate peace stems from the fact that Africa is more of an archipelago than a continent of contiguous states, as states do not exercise effective control of the periphery of their territories and cannot challenge other states directly. In this sense, state-building and modernization in Africa would be likely to be associated with more disputes rather than more peace. Looking at interstate conflict alone may also be inappropriate in the African context, as numerous civil wars in West Africa do in fact display clear transnational dimensions. Countries have often supported insurgencies in other states and provided safe havens for rebels on their territory, rather than fighting directly (Gleditsch, 2005).

7. Identity, Bargaining and Conflict Management

We have offered an extensive analysis of the relationship between elements of culture and interstate dispute behavior, using new measures and more up-to-date data than existing studies of identity and conflict. Our findings suggest that the general claims about cultural differences giving rise to more conflict are exaggerated. Conflict is not generally more common between culturally different states. Indeed, if we control for other measures of preferential ties and integration, dyads with similar cultural make-ups are generally more conflictual than dissimilar dyads, even when taking into account other factors likely to influence the risk of conflict. Dyads where a majority group in one state is the second largest group (minority) in the other state are

especially prone to conflict. Moreover, we find no evidence that conflicts between Islamic and Christian states have become more common after the Cold War.

Our results are certainly not consistent with Huntington's clash of civilization thesis. However, we argued at the outset that theories linking culture and conflict are interesting beyond this particular conception of identity. Since theories linking culture and conflict seem plausible and intuitive, retain considerable face validity in popular opinion, and remain a subject of recurrent reference by policy-makers, it would seem valuable to examine more closely why the empirical evidence offers so little support for the hypothesis that cultural dissimilarity breeds conflict and that cultural similarities unite. In our view, arguments about identity and conflict may be partially correct, but in ways that in turn nullify some of the more galvanizing assertions about the cultural bases of conflict. Culture and identity may be valuable in explaining the disposition of interests and supply of issues, or identifying where states potentially could cooperate and where issues are likely to arise among states with common ties. Culture arguments alone, however, do less well at explaining which differences are intractable while others seem to be addressed through negotiation and compromise. Research on the causes of warfare has increasingly focused on distinguishing between factors leading to competition or conflict and factors leading to the breakdown of diplomatic remedies for conflict (see Fearon, 1995; Powell, 2002; Reiter, 2003). Difference can divide, but divisions are only a necessary (not sufficient) condition for warfare. As much as history shows that different cultures clash, it also shows that they coexist peacefully. Indeed, peoples of differing identity normally live side by side amicably (see Fearon and Laitin, 1996). In this sense, we should turn the clash of civilizations thesis on its head — rather than speculating about how difference can lead to conflict, we should ask why differences so often coincide with peace and why some actors are able to develop a sense of community and 'we-ness' by reference to shared ties, while other culturally similar clusters fail to generate pacifying bonds.

The puzzles of peace and conflict can in part be explained by looking inside the state. Modern nation states normally include multiple linguistic, religious, and ethnic cleavages. Except in unusual cases where extreme measures are adopted, these differences will not simply go away. As such, their basis for conflict can be recurrent and damaging, unless lasting solutions are sought that remedy the underlying tensions. A key objective of the state is to ameliorate or manage tensions among identity groups with potentially differing interests. The formation of a common identity through civic nationalism is one such remedy, but others include formal and informal methods of power sharing that facilitate cooperative interaction and national

stability (see, for example, Roeder, 2002; Sisk, 1996). Perceived cultural differences are often based on distinctions that appear salient at a given moment in time, but perceived differences also vary substantially across time, suggesting that identities are more malleable than often assumed.[34] Anarchy limits the solutions available to sovereigns, but it does not alter the fundamental desirability of obtaining such solutions. Because social identities are not readily altered through all but the most extreme types of warfare, conflict based on culture threatens to be intractable and damaging to the interests of sovereign states. However, this also suggests that states have incentives to work hard to establish bargains to address cultural differences at the national and international level. Paradoxically, precisely because sameness is safe, relatively minor differences between similar groups invite contests that participants expect will be limited in duration and intensity.

States can, and typically do, negotiate their conflicts. The recent Albanian revolt in Macedonia was defused from escalation to a major civil war and a potential internationalized conflict in part because the Albanian government was unwilling to support the ethnic Albanian rebels and because the Macedonian government was willing to contain Slav hardliners, favoring armed retaliation (see Gleditsch, 2005). In a much-referenced article in *Foreign Affairs*, Gurr (2002) argued that 'Ethnic Warfare [is] on the Wane', in large part because states had learned to better manage conflict and prevent escalation, after the temporary increase in armed conflicts after the Cold War. Future research on conflict and identity would benefit from examining how shared ties and differences influence not only tension, but also conflict management. Diplomacy is as much a part of international relations as is warfare. Since the two are substitutes as well as complements (states can fight or bargain, or both) we should not be surprised that even very serious differences do not need to yield additional warfare.

Notes

1. Of course, religious doctrine has also been used to discourage conflict, and to encourage more 'humane' behavior during war. The Catholic Church extended its protection to indigenous peoples in the New World, for example. However, in practice, religious sanction against some forms of aggression serves to legitimize others. Conquistadors were required to read aloud the *Requerimiento*, a document asserting Spanish rule and offering protection for Chris-

tians. Once this was done — almost no indigenous people understood Spanish — the Church consented to putting the population to the sword.

2. According to the editors, Huntington's 1993 article within three years became the most cited article in *Foreign Affairs* since the 1947 article on containment by George Kennan, writing as Mr X.

3. For a full transcript of Bush's 16 September speech from the White House lawn, see http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2001/09/mil-010916-usia4.htm. The use of the loaded term 'crusade' generated considerable criticism, prompting a White House apology two days later ('White House apologizes for using "crusade" to describe war on terrorism', *Associated Press*, 18 September 2001).

4. The White House denounced Boykin's remarks at church meetings after considerable media attention (Shanker, 2003).

5. Prior to Huntington's 1996 article, Richardson in the 1930s explored whether conflict was more or less likely between or within certain religious or language groupings (see Richardson, 1960: chs 8 and 9).

6. In this article we look only at manifestations of conflict between states. It may be argued that the clash of civilizations thesis applies primarily to civil wars, or conflict between states and non-state actors. Some studies find that ethnic fragmentation or diversity is associated with a somewhat higher risk of civil war (see, for example, Sambanis, 2001; Ellingsen, 2000; Gleditsch, 2005), but many dispute this relationship (see Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Henderson and Singer, 2000). Efforts to test Huntington's thesis on civil wars have generally found little supporting evidence (see, for example, Gurr, 1994 and Fox, 2001, 2003).

7. Our arguments on the limits of case studies to substantiate claims about general trends obviously also apply to much other work in International Relations beyond Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*. Although the failure to predict the end of the Cold War led many to question established International Relations theories, the intellectual soul searching did not extend to a critical assessment of technique, or how cases that receive the most attention may not be in any way 'typical' (e.g. Gaddis, 1992/93; Ray and Russett, 1996).

8. Multilateral coalitions in the wars in Korea, the Persian Gulf and Vietnam enlisted many faraway nations. However, it seems a stretch to invoke, say, Ethiopian troops in Korea as evidence of conflict between these cultural groupings, especially since all these conflicts originated between culturally similar states.

9. Data coding Huntington's civilization categories are from Henderson and Tucker (2001), the MIDs are explained later.

10. The Orthodox and Catholic split originated with the dispute over the *filioque*, Latin for 'and the Son', or the theological notion that the Holy Ghost proceeds from both the Father and the Son. While doctrine in the Catholic Church, the view is heretical in Orthodox Churches.

11. Cederman (1997: 2001–16) provides an interesting discussion of the emergent and shifting nature of ethnic identities in the former Yugoslavia.

12. Although numerical size tends to go together with political control, there are a number of cases where small ethnic groups exert disproportionate political control, such as Sunnis in Iraq or South Africa during Apartheid. See Cederman and Girardin (2005) and Heger and Salehyan (2005).

13. Chiozza et al. (2004) demonstrate that states involved in civil conflicts are more likely to experience conflict with other states, and Moore and Davis (1997) provide evidence of ethnic relations more specifically influencing state behavior.

14. The Ellingsen data provide annual estimates, based on averaging values from *The CIA World Factbook*, *Britannica Book of the Year* and the *Demographic Yearbook* and interpolating missing years. Ellingsen reports inter-coder reliability correlations between 0.78 and 0.95, and interpolation seems adequate, since cultural traits tend to be static over short periods of time. These data have various advantages over alternatives. The Correlates of War data on ethnic, linguistic and religious groups for nation states are not publicly available and have not been updated past 1990 (see http://cow2.la.psu.edu/ongoing.htm). Vanhanen (2001) has identified the largest groups for each state in terms of language, race and religion, but these data are available only for a single point in time (*c.* 1990), and do not identify the second largest groups. The recent Fearon (2003) list of ethnic groups does not distinguish between language, religion and ethnicity, and hence does not allow for delineating commonalities and differences separately for these traits. The labels used for similar groups vary between countries, so the categories are not easily comparable cross-nationally without substantial modification. Finally, these data are also available only for a single point in time.

15. The frequencies cited reflect the number of states, not individuals, where some characteristic is dominant. Of course, Mandarin Chinese is the world's most common language in terms of the number of individual speakers.

16. Frequencies again reflect the number of states where a religion is dominant rather than individual adherents. Hinduism is dominant in only a few states (e.g. India, Nepal and Mauritius), but is the world's third largest religion with more than twice the number of adherents than the fourth largest, i.e. Buddhism (about 360 million).

17. Surveys show that many citizens in former socialist states describe themselves as Atheists (see Jagodzinski and Greeley, 1991). Sociologists of religion usually distinguish between secularism and hard core Atheism. Jagodzinski and Greeley (1991) argue that although secularization is widespread in Western Europe, religion continues to play a relatively large role in the lives of many. However, in countries such as East Germany, strong government intervention in the socialization process has promoted hard core Atheism and diminished considerably the 'demand' for religion.

18. Heger and Salehyan (2005) have classified the ethnic affiliation of leaders in civil war countries, and Cederman and Girardin (2005) have expanded these data to identify whether ethnic groups are included in governing coalitions, but the data are tentative and available only for Europe and Asia.

19. Although Moldova is Romanian speaking, it has a long history of Russian

influence. In a referendum on 6 March 1994, a majority rejected plans for reunification with Romania. While Macedonian Slavs tend to consider themselves a distinct ethnic group, many Bulgarians (and Greeks) see Macedonia as a mere 'state' and not a true 'nation'.

20. The two remaining religious categories, *Judaism* and *Shintoism*, are dominant only in Israel and Japan, respectively.

21. More specifically, Henderson (1997: 661) measures the similarity of two states A and B by an index defined as

$$N - \sum_{i=1}^{N} \sqrt{\frac{(1 - X_i^A)^2 + (1 - X_i^B)^2}{2}},$$

where is the number of groups existing in both A and B, and x_i^A and x_i^B denote population share of a group in states A and B, respectively.

22. Although the MID data include a five-point hostility scale, this is of somewhat limited use, as less salient incidents such as fishing disputes are categorized as 'use of force', the second highest level below wars with more than 1000 fatalities.

23. We find it important to consider alternative sources, since the new 3.0 MID data appear to differ in many respects from other empirical data on conflict in the post-Cold War period. Whereas both the Uppsala Armed Conflict data and the Interstate Crisis Behavior data indicate a sharp decline in the frequency of armed conflict after the Cold War (see, for example, Gleditsch et al., 2002; Marshall and Gurr, 2003; and Mueller, 2003), no such dip is found in the MID data. Although this may reflect a genuine difference in trends for lethal armed conflicts with casualties, crises and disputes (which need not involve actual fighting or casualties), a more troubling possibility is that more MIDs might be reported in recent years due to better sources and more thorough data collection.

24. See http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/.

25. In addition, observations with special transition codes in the Polity data (–88, –77, –66) are set to a value of –10 on the scale ranging from –10 (least democratic) to 10 (most democratic). The Polity project recommends assigning observations with special transition codes to a value of 0. However, a comparison with predicted scores based on the Freedom House ratings suggests that these observations should have much lower Polity scores.

26. These data are available at http://dss.ucsd.edu/~kgledits/capdist.html.

27. Henderson (1997, 1998), using quite different measures and data, similarly finds that ethnically similar dyads are more likely to be at war while states with similar religions are less conflict prone.

28. The individual coefficient estimates in models with interactive terms must be interpreted with caution, as the implied net effect depends on the sum of several coefficients and the values on the individual components cannot vary fully independently of one another (see, e.g. Braumoeller, 2004).

29. The marginal difference between the two coefficients (0.843–0.748) is not significantly different from 0. The variance for the difference between two coefficients $Var(\beta_i - \beta_j)$ is given by the variances of the two coefficients and their shared covariance, i.e. $Var(\beta_i - \beta_j) = Var(\beta_i) + Var(\beta_j) - 2\,COV(\beta_i, \beta_j)$.
30. Trends in civil wars do not support claims about increased conflict in the post-Cold War period either. Beyond the short-term increase around the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, there has been a marked *decrease* in the frequency of civil war (see Gleditsch et al., 2002 and Marshall and Gurr, 2003).
31. Including all combinations of cultural pairings in the same regression involves many unusual combinations and cases without conflict, where many of the parameters cannot be estimated. The most salient effects are largely unsurprising, such as a higher incidence of conflicts between Atheist (i.e. socialist) and Christian states (which seem to reflect ideological differences during the Cold War rather than cultural differences), and poor relations between Islamic and Judaic and Hinduist states.
32. Substantively, this translates to a dyad that does not contain a major power, where states are not allied, with a lower democracy score of –7, a lower GDP per capita of $2,204, a trade to GDP ratio of 0.000532, a capability ratio of 0.308, nine consecutive years of peace, and a distance of 796 km between the capital cities.
33. Similarly, Oneal and Russett (1999) argue that similarity in preferences as manifested by UN voting is 'caused' by similar political institutions and economic relations. See the reply by Gartzke (2000) for a defense of preferences as an independent explanatory factor.
34. Interestingly, Huntington (1991: 73–85) himself in his work on democratization provides examples of how institutions seen as cultural can be transformed and change over time. Much of the early literature on democratization considered Catholicism as antithetical to democracy, since the Church hierarchy often legitimized autocratic regimes. However, following the changed orientation of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council, Catholicism is now often seen as facilitating transitions to democracy.

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