Unexpected convergence: the Huntington/Fukuyama debate

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Two theories that have drawn particular attention in international politics, especially to explain global post-Cold War developments, are those of Huntington's (1993) *Clash of civilizations* and Fukuyama's (1992) *The end of history and the last man.* There is a great deal of literature on the mutually contradictory views of these two authors; however, the literature hardly mentions the actual unexpected areas of convergence between these two theorists, which this article aims to draw out. Four pertinent questions addressed by Huntington and Fukuyama are considered, namely the universality of Western civilisation; the role of the state; modernisation versus Westernisation, and worldwide acceptance or rejection of liberal democracy, as they relate specifically to the central aim of this article. It is precisely because of their differences, that these two distinct theories are now presenting themselves as alternatives in international relations: one can either see the world to be developing toward its final liberal democratic destination, or, alternatively on a multi-polar, civilisation-divergent course. As the search for a single paradigm within debates on international relations continues, a convergence between two major theories, such as these, is important, as they provide one more step toward consensus between opposing views on international political developments.

Cultural analysis is central to a number of seminal texts that have emerged in the post-Cold War period.[1] With the defeat of communism, a round of self-congratulations was sparked in the West, first best exemplified by Fukuyama's book, *End of history and the last man* (1992).[2] Although history paid little attention to his "infamous claim that humankind had now reached the 'end of history' [...] the triumph of the West did give a notable boost to [...] liberal thought" (Little & Smith 2006: 390). His publication has drawn particular attention in International Relations (IR), and it is often compared to another seminal work which provides a divergent view of the future of world affairs, namely Huntington's *Clash of civilizations* (1996).

To choose between Fukuyama and Huntington in the continuous debate on which view provides the most accurate account of international developments is to articulate a vision of human social life; it is to choose between two ground-breaking paradigms that explain the complexities of an embryonic post-Cold War world. Their views also link up well with the First Great Debate in IR between the realist and liberal schools of thought. This debate, which dominated IR as a discipline between the First and Second World Wars (1919-39), seems to resound again when the views of Fukuyama and Huntington are analysed. The liberals believed that reform of international politics was not only essential, but also achievable; this connects with Fukuyama's belief in the "universalization of Western liberal democracy" in international politics. The realists' critique was that these liberal institutionalists were "utopian" and that they were guilty of "naivety" and "exuberance" (Burchill & Linklater 2009: 8). This view again links up with Huntington's (1996: 31) criticism of Fukuyama whose ideas he describes as "euphoria at the end of the Cold War [which] generated an illusion of harmony". In addition and above all, introducing culture into IR, as these two authors do, offers a way of understanding the similarities and differences of the new age, where a globalised culture meets a multicultural world, and where existing communities and cultures are in closer contact with each other than ever before.

In explaining Huntington's argument, therefore, some critics have found it imperative to make comparisons with the views expressed by Fukuyama, and *vice versa*.[3] As will be shown, the said critics read these authors as advocating

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1   This article is a condensation of a presentation entitled 'Understanding a discontented world: The Huntington/Fukuyama debate' at the Twenty-first World Congress of the International Political Science Association (IPSA), Santiago, Chile, July 12-16, 2009.

2   Barber's *Jihad vs McWorld* (2001, 2002) also presents an excellent example of a seminal text in this regard.

3   Gray 1994, Brown 1999, Hussien 2001, Kurtz 2002, Booth & Dunne 2002, Perry 2002.

diametrically opposed views on various issues. Indeed, much has been written about the mutually contradictory views of these two authors, but the literature hardly mentions the actual unexpected areas of convergence between their respective theories, which this article aims to draw out. In theory, the fact that two theories are logically incompatible does not make them *ipso facto* totally divergent.

To obtain focus, four pertinent questions addressed by Huntington and Fukuyama are considered, namely the universality of Western civilisation; the role of the state; modernisation versus Westernisation, and global acceptance or rejection of liberal democracy, as they relate specifically to the central aim of this article. Many other questions can also be asked relating to the differences in views between Fukuyama and Huntington: How salient are Western values in a contemporary discordant world? Is democracy the most civilised and natural way of life?

Such questions are at the heart of the debate between Huntington and Fukuyama, but have already been extensively dealt with in the literature and will, therefore, not be discussed. Rather, this article focuses on establishing the fact that there are unrecognised and surprising similarities between these two authors on the above four topics. By focusing on these similarities, new knowledge/reading of the two authors can be added to the literature, and one's theoretical tools can be improved for a better analysis of world politics.

Paradoxically, in order to grasp the similarities/overlap/convergence in the views of these two theorists, one has to first explain the widely acknowledged differences between their views, before proceeding to the similarities, as outlined in the next four sections.

1.   The universality of Western civilisation?

Fukuyama (1989) views the failure of communism as signalling the ultimate triumph of liberal democracy and believes that history, in the sense of ideological conflict, has come to an end. He does not, however, rejoice unreservedly in the West's Cold-War victory. As indicated by his use in the title of his book (1992) of "the last man" – a phrase borrowed from Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the earliest thinkers to despair of Western modernity – he does not take a rosy view of society following "the end of history". Nevertheless, he definitely regards liberal democracy, which originated in Western civilisation, as endowed with universality and views the world as moving basically in that direction. For Fukuyama, the global triumph of Western liberal democracy is exemplified by "(q)uite simply, second-world and third-world regimes […] collapsing as a

result of the recognition that only the capitalist first world offered the prospect of economic prosperity and political stability" (Heywood 2013: 270).

Fukuyama (2002a: 28) makes the point that Americans have tended to believe that their institutions and values – democracy, individual rights, the rule of law, and prosperity based on economic freedom – represent universal aspirations that will ultimately be shared by people all over the world, if given the opportunity. They are inclined to think that American society appeals to people of all cultures. The millions of immigrants from countries all over the world who vote with their feet to move to the US and to other developed societies seem to testify to this fact. This belief was especially evident among influential neoconservative advisors to President George W Bush who posited that "American values and institutions are superior to all others throughout the world" and that the US, as the world's sole superpower "therefore has a responsibility to use its might to bring American virtues to the rest of the world" (Baradat 2012: 29-30).

In 2012, with the advent of the Occupy Wall Street Movement in the US, it became apparent that many working- and middle-class Americans no longer support the 'American dream'. How could American values be universal if even the Americans no longer adhere to them? During an interview, Noam Chomsky provided an assessment of President Obama whom, he said, had attacked civil liberties in a way "that has gone beyond George W. Bush" (Democracy Now! 2012: Internet). Issues that were marginalised previously, "like inequality, shredding of the democratic process [...] financial corruption, environmental issues, all these things, [have now ...] moved to the center of discussion". According to Chomsky, "the polls show that concern over inequality among the general public rose pretty sharply after the Occupy movement started" (Democracy Now! 2012: Internet). Therefore, it is difficult to see how liberal democracy will ever achieve a universal appeal, given its inherent tendency towards social inequality and instability.

According to Gray (1994: 149), it is commonly accepted that there is, at present, only one legitimate type of government: "(A)t the close of the twentieth century liberal democracy is the only political regime that passes ethical muster". Other regimes may be justified as stages on the way to liberal democratic institutions, or as unavoidably imperfect approximations to them; but, liberal democracy alone can be fully legitimate. As Fukuyama put it in a hyperbolic statement of this now orthodox view, liberal democracy is "the final form of human government". Against Fukuyama and in support of Huntington, Gray (1994: 150) argues that what Fukuyama calls "democratic capitalism" has no prospect of becoming universal. A world consisting only of liberal democratic regimes is not a foregone conclusion: it is a utopia; a state of affairs made unrealisable by some of the most powerful forces of the age.

Huntington (1996: 20), in contrast to Fukuyama, argues that it is not only wrong, but also arrogant and dangerous to see Western civilisation as universal. He "ridicules the form of recent Western triumphalism that declares history to have come to an end" (Perry 2002). For him, world order has begun to change in a fundamental way; for the first time in history, a multi-civilisational, multi-polar world, with different civilisations' core states as the poles, is about to emerge (Seizaburo 1997). He states that "political and intellectual leaders in most countries strongly resist the prospect of a unipolar world and favor the emergence of true multipolarity" (Huntington 1999: 42). Therefore, in the post-Cold War period – the twenty-first century – the focus of people's identity and allegiance is shifting from states and ideologies to civilisations in the sense of "the broadest cultural entities".

Critics of Huntington, such as Ajami (2008), maintain that Huntington's "broadest cultural identities" do not make provision for the great divides that exist within a civilisation, as is the case, for example, with Islam. Ajami questions Huntington's suggestion that civilisations can be found "whole and intact, watertight under an eternal sky", and argues that "furrows (actually) run across civilizations" (Ajami 2008). Indeed, Muslims are split into two main branches, the Sunnis and the Shias, which stem from a dispute soon after the death of the Prophet Muhammad over who should lead the Muslim community. The differences lie in the fields of doctrine, ritual, law, theology and religious organisation. From Lebanon and Pakistan to the current conflicts in Syria and Iraq, this sectarian divide has been tearing Islamic communities apart (BBC News 2014). Therefore, the criticism usually levelled against Huntington's *Clash* thesis is that "most wars take place between states from the same, rather than different, civilizations" (Heywood 2013: 424).

Huntington (1996: 318-20) also argues that foreign policies, which depend for their efficacy on a universal consensus of values, are dangerous. According to Gray (1994: 156), Huntington is correct in stating as such: contrary to some claims about the universal authority of current conceptions of culture, there is no such consensus in the offing. However, although he rejects universalist concepts of culture, he endorses "a thin universalism" at the morality level; the notion that "cultures are relative", but that "morality is absolute" (Huntington 1996: 318). With this, Huntington (1996: 321) means that one civilisation should not force its ideas onto others; all of them have much in common. Although he does not fully develop this idea further, he does state that "the requisites for cultural coexistence demand a search for what is common to most civilizations", which he also refers to as "shared values" (as practised in, for example, Singapore) (Huntington 1996: 319). This idea links up, to some extent, with Fukuyama's ideas on the ultimate universality of (Western) values.

The first convergence, therefore, is to be found in the misinterpretation of empirical evidence by both authors. As indicated earlier, Gray (1994: 156) maintains that Huntington is correct in noting that the individualist values embodied in Western understandings of liberal democracy do not command universal assent, as alleged by Fukuyama. They only express the ethical life of a few Western societies and are not authoritative for all cultures. Foreign policies that presuppose an eventual global consensus on liberal values will be ineffectual. This is an incisive criticism of Fukuyama's neo-Wilsonian certainty that Western values are universal. However, as Gray (1994: 156) also indicates, in arguing that fault lines between civilisations are the source of war, Huntington "misinterprets" the present as grievously as Fukuyama does. As a result, Huntington gives a mistaken diagnosis of both the potential for tragedy and the opportunities for cooperation that our present circumstances contain. Yet, both authors deal with future events, namely what systemic direction the world is heading towards; they both draw a meta-historical implication from the end of the Cold War, and ambitiously attempt to construct a grand theory of history that is on the level of a paradigm.

2. The role of the state

Huntington's thesis shares with realism its antagonism and belligerency and endorses the notion of anarchy in a world of inter-civilisational clashing. Political realism contends that international politics is anarchic. In the current system of states, the absence of a world government is taken as an empirical counterpart of the 'reign' of anarchy and yields what is often termed the 'security dilemma' in international politics.

Fukuyama's thesis is an indirect attack on the assumption of international anarchy, since what he predicts is a peaceful and flourishing era of liberal democracy in which inter-state wars would become archaic and pointless. Liberals such as Fukuyama agree with realists that states exist under anarchy, but they disagree as to the nature of anarchy. Unlike the realists, liberals do not assume that international anarchy is a 'state of war'. The 'security dilemma' is generally solved by stable communication, beneficial trade and, when needed, alliance against non-liberal states (Doyle 2012: 65). Hence, Fukuyama's views do not challenge the core assumption of political realism, namely that the state is a unitary and primary actor in international politics. Fukuyama (1992: 245-6) acknowledges a form of (neo-)realism when he states that it "is perfectly possible to imagine (non-democratic) anarchic state systems that are nonetheless peaceful" (which the US seems to have accepted). Although still far away from Kant's notion

of a "pacific federation of democratic states", for Fukuyama, liberal democracy currently still does not have any real competitors in this anarchical system:

> Vladimir Putin's Russia and the ayatollahs' Iran pay homage to democratic ideals even as they trample them in practice. Why else bother to hold sham referendums on 'self-determination' in eastern Ukraine? Some radicals in the Middle East may dream of restoring an Islamist caliphate, but this is not the choice of the vast majority of people living in Muslim countries (Fukuyama 2014: Internet).

Huntington also views the state as an important actor on the world stage and his *Clash of civilizations* is often classified as representing a type of 'resurgent realism' where the state is (still) the core unity of analysis in the international system. But, for him, the current building blocks of the international system – the nation state and multinational corporations – have dwindling significance in a global economy and have been superseded by earlier kinships he terms "civilizations". According to Buzan & Little (2000: 96), his thesis implausibly tries to extend a "hard realist structural logic from the state level up to the civilizational level". For him, modernisation and social change weaken the nation-state as a source of identity which has profound and wider theoretical implications.

Therefore, both authors' theories emanate and are developed further from a core assumption of the state as the basic unit of analysis, albeit that the state system has now changed into a universal liberal society of states (Fukuyama), or a so-called "liberal zone of peace" (Doyle 2012: 57), or into conflicting civilisations (Huntington). Both authors refine realism by taking the state seriously and adding to it. In this view then of the role of the state in international politics lies the second convergence within their thinking.

3.   Modernisation versus Westernisation

Since September 11, and despite the apparent vindication of Huntington's prophecies in *The clash of civilizations*, Fukuyama has steadfastly maintained that the "end of history" is imminent. For Fukuyama, the war in Iraq itself is a tribute to the forces driving fundamentalist reaction in the Islamic world – the forces of modernisation. Fukuyama points out that Islamism is an inherently parochial phenomenon, not a universal ideology that can serve as an authentic rival to democracy. Fukuyama thus maintains that, while the revolt against modernity in parts of the Muslim world may briefly slow the spread of democracy and capitalism, it cannot ultimately halt or replace it (Kurtz 2002).

Fukuyama claims that the long-term effect of technological and economic modernisation might be to dissolve traditional social forms and thereby generate exactly the kind of cultural individualism long familiar in the West. "Yet he does not substantiate it as much as assume it" (Parker 2002). Fukuyama illustrates "how urbanization and bureaucratization served to undercut traditional social ties in the West, thereby leading to an individualist world of capitalism and democracy" (Parker 2002).

Unfortunately, Fukuyama simply presumes that this pattern will also hold true for the non-Western world. The main question then is whether modernisation must inevitably cause a culture to place greater emphasis on individualism and individual rights. Therefore, the attempts to change a defeated and militarily occupied Iraq or other Middle-Eastern countries into something resembling secular Western liberal democracies are bound to take decades at best, as borne out by current events. The recent events in Iraq, with ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) forces overtaking large parts of the state and imposing Sharia law, is testimony to the fact that, although fundamentalists might be using technologically advanced weapons and communication tools (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) in their struggle, it is not to impose modernity on society, but simply the reverse. As a jihadist group, ISIS has seized a series of towns and cities in western and northern Iraq, using "social media to communicate and distribute its propaganda messages" (Timberg 2014).

Fukuyama assumes, therefore, that as societies modernise, cultural and especially religious affiliations will be relegated to the sphere of voluntary association. In this, he voices the Enlightenment faith, held in common by liberals and structuralists, that modernity and secularism are inseparably intertwined. The trouble with this view of history "is that its predictive value has proved to be zero" (Gray 1994: 153). According to Gray (1994: 153), Fukuyama cannot convincingly explain why economic modernisation and secularism should, in practice, so often go together. In truth, the Enlightenment assumption that modernity and secularism are one, which he uncritically reproduces in his account of the end of history, is contradicted by many of the most powerful trends in the present world. Ironically, as explained earlier in the case of Iraq and elsewhere in the world, militant groups (Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab and neo-Nazis, for example) are using modern technology and social media to further their fundamentalist causes which are the antithesis of secularism and modernisation.

Huntington (1996: 68-78), on the other hand, puts forward a detailed account of the social roots of Islamic fundamentalism which begs the question of the long-term effects of modernisation. He correctly notes that the tendency of modernisation to break traditional social bonds has, in fact, stimulated an

identity-preserving return to Islam. He rejects Fukuyama's claim that the forces of modernisation continue to disrupt the older social solidarities which makes a long-term cultural shift toward individualism a strong possibility. For him, "rather than Westernizing their societies, Islamic lands had developed a powerful consensus in favor of Islamizing modernity" (Ajami 2008).

Huntington also distinguishes between modernisation and Westernisation, emphasising that the latter "is neither a necessary nor desirable facet of modernization" (Perry 2002:). He correctly points out that the West's cultural individualism predates modernity and cannot be treated as entirely synonymous with it, as Fukuyama does. In a television interview on PBS, conducted by Ben Wattenberg, Huntington (2002) stated:

> What I think we have to get back to is a basic distinction, which I elaborate at some length in the book (1996), which is the difference between Westernisation and modernisation. All the world, obviously, or nearly all the world certainly, wants to modernise, develop, become more prosperous, and so forth. But that does not necessarily mean that they want to adopt Western culture and, in many instances, do not want to adopt Western values.

Huntington (1993: 49) also affirms in his article that "[n]on-Western civilizations have attempted to become modern without becoming Western". Therefore, for Huntington (1996: 78), in his criticism of Fukuyama, modernisation and Westernisation are two completely separate notions. The modern world is not treading a road that leads inevitably to a universal civilisation. For him, instead, as ever, more states are entering into late modernity; yet enduring differences between cultures are acquiring an even greater practical importance.

According to Gray (1994: 158), Huntington is right to reject the world view propagated by Fukuyama, according to which modernisation and Westernisation are one and the same. In many parts of the world, where countries are becoming modern by absorbing new technologies into their indigenous cultures, there are instead divergent developments. For some countries at present, Westernisation of their economies and cultures would mean a step back from the modern world; it would not mean modernisation, but a retreat from modernity. Keohane & Nye (Little & Smith 2006: 189) also support Huntington's (1996: 73-5) view when he mentions that material success (modernisation) makes a culture and ideology attractive to itself, and that decreases in economic and military success lead to self-doubt and crises of identity.

Therefore, as truth is to be found in the views of both authors, the third convergence is that both Huntington and Fukuyama are correct in terms of their

views on modernisation. Kurtz (2002: Internet) notes that each author is wise enough to touch lightly upon the accuracy in his counterpart's assertion. Yet each is also reluctant to alter his theory according to the other's insights. This is because both Huntington and Fukuyama have some very specific policy goals in mind. In terms of a liberal orientation, Fukuyama would like to see the US actively promote democracy abroad (which it has, in fact, tried to do). On the other hand, in terms of a realist orientation, Huntington warns about the potentially disastrous effects of an arrogant and naïve democratic imperialism. Huntington (1996: 87-8, 100, 191) does acquiesce somewhat when he states that he cannot preclude the possibility that the long-term effect of technological and economic modernisation might be instrumental in dissolving traditional social forms and thereby generate exactly the kind of cultural individualism long familiar in the West.

Huntington, like Fukuyama, is too wise to entirely ignore the phenomena that preoccupy his counterpart. For example, Huntington acknowledges the global power of technological and economic modernisation; he simply stresses the fact that modernisation is driving the global rise of fundamentalist reaction. Fukuyama, on the other hand, acknowledges the importance of reactionary anti-modernism; he simply notes that the cultural reaction is testimony to the power and reach of the modernising process. By the same token, while Huntington stresses the disruptive effects of modernity on traditional social forms, he never considers that a nativist or fundamentalist response might ultimately fail to reverse that disruption.

It should also be noted that both authors perceive political Islam (and Islamic fundamentalism, more generally) to represent 'anti-modern' reactions to techno-economic modernisation, rather than being themselves modern(ist) ideologies. It is true that Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Boko Haram, and Al Shabaab like to claim that they are aiming to 'restore' or 'return to' older so-called 'traditional' Islamic values, politics, and social constructions.

Therefore, although they conceptualise the term differently, Huntington and Fukuyama agree that modernisation's impact on the contemporary political order is a primary driver of change in the international political system. In addition, both authors present a substantive agreement on the topic of modernisation in as much as they both believe that the global economic system as a whole will continue to experience growth and technological complexification indefinitely.

4.   Global acceptance or rejection of liberal democracy

According to the latest Freedom House rankings, freedom suffered its eighth consecutive year of decline in 2013 in its annual assessment of political rights and

civil liberties worldwide (2014). This represents the longest continuous period of decline in the nearly 40-year history of the survey. The year featured drops in the number of Free countries and the number of electoral democracies, as well as an overall deterioration for freedom in the Middle East and North Africa regions. Out of 195 states reviewed, electoral democracies numbered only 122, which represent 63% of the total.

In the aftermath of the Soviet unscrambling, there were prospects that a number of the new independent states, including Russia, would choose democracy and discard the authoritarian institutions of communist times. But, according to Freedom House (2014), "with a few peripheral exceptions, the bulk of the Eurasian states have remained in or returned to various forms of despotism".

It is also worth noting that, prior to the Spring Revolution of 2011, among the 47 countries with a Muslim majority, only one quarter are electoral democracies – and none of the core Arabic-speaking societies falls into this category. In its study, Freedom House concluded that there is a dramatic, expanding gap in the levels of freedom and democracy between Islamic countries and the rest of the world. The study *Freedom in the world* finds that a non-Islamic country is more than three times likely to be democratic than an Islamic state (Freedom House 2014). Indeed, for Barber (2001:207), fundamentalism may have a better record as an enemy of despots in the Middle East than have had the secular systems constructed to put down fundamentalism and to realise Western aspirations. Yet, "though fundamentalism has often stood against tyranny, it has never created democracy" (Barber 2001: 207).

Why then has democracy not been popular in the Middle East? Huntington's response would be that the Muslim world lacks the core political values that gave birth to representative democracy in Western civilisation. According to Inglehart & Norris (2003: 63-64), this "claim seems all too plausible given the failure of electoral democracy to take root throughout the Middle East and North Africa".

Huntington (1993: 40, 1996: 71) argues that "ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, [and] the separation of church and state" often have little resonance outside the West. He also holds that Western efforts to promote these ideas provoke a violent backlash against "human rights imperialism". For Huntington, advancing democracy does not always foster political stability. In addition, preserving peace does not always coincide with the promotion of human rights, a main trait of democracy. These are not transitory difficulties which someday can be overcome, but permanent ethical dilemmas, deeply rooted in conflicts that states will always confront, which may never be fully resolved. The war, therefore, between modern (Western) democracy and traditional society may

never quite come to an end – even if, at a given moment, democracy appears triumphant, as Fukuyama claims. Booth (2002: 89) echoes this sentiment, stating that democracy at the level of the state is almost impossible in places where the population is of multiple ethnicities/cultures and where there are no strong social structures shared by the people as a whole. If such a state is not held together coercively, it falls apart.

On the other hand, in order to illustrate the worldwide acceptance of liberal democracy, Inglehart & Norris (2003) refer to the cumulative results of the two waves of the World Values Survey (WVS) conducted in 1995-1996 and 2000-2002. This survey apparently provides an extensive body of relevant evidence in support of Fukuyama's argument. Based on questionnaires that explore values and beliefs in more than 70 countries, the WVS is an investigation of sociocultural and political change that encompasses over 80% of the world's population. Fukuyama (2014) notes that

> huge changes have taken place in the political sphere as well. In 1974 [...] there were only about 35 electoral democracies, which represented something less than 30% of the world's countries. By 2013, that number had expanded to about 120, or more than 60% of the total.

Despite Huntington's claim of a clash of civilisations between the West and the rest of the world, the WVS reveals that, at that point in history, democracy had an overwhelmingly positive image throughout the world. In country after country, a clear majority of the population described "having a democratic political system" as either "good" or "very good". These results represent a dramatic change from the 1930s and 1940s when fascist regimes won overwhelming mass approval in many societies, and for many decades, communist regimes had widespread support. However, in the last decade, democracy became virtually the only political model with global appeal, irrespective of culture. With the exception of Pakistan, the majority of the Muslim countries surveyed think highly of democracy. In Albania, Egypt, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Morocco, and Turkey, 92% to 99% of the public endorsed democratic institutions – a higher proportion than in the US (89%).

Yet, as heartening as these results may be (for the Fukuyama camp, in particular), paying lip service to democracy does not necessarily prove that people genuinely support basic democratic norms, or that their leaders will allow them to have democratic institutions. Judging from the results of the survey, according to Seizaburo (1997), this does not indicate that Fukuyama's "end of history" is upon us or that the "clash of civilizations" has disappeared from the face of the earth. For him, the most serious clash of civilisations at present "is the identity crises

within individuals", meaning that people would have to fully embrace democracy before it could have genuine global relevance.

Huntington's affront to liberal democracy does not seem to have an end. Whereas Fukuyama is at pains to point out how seldom established democracies take up arms against one another, Huntington (1996: 31, 183-4) insists that promoting democracy and modernisation abroad only means more war, not less. However, Huntington's deepest assault on liberalism may be his insistence on treating democracy's global appeal as a characteristic trait of Western culture rather than as a universal truth, as Fukuyama sees it.

Briefly, both Fukuyama and Huntington ascribe importance to democracy. The fourth convergence then is to be found in their respective acknowledgements of democracy, although they conceptualise the term somewhat differently. Fukuyama (2003) believes that liberal democracy would eventually triumph in the world and "that the liberals will win the battle within the Muslim world". Radical ideologies are only powerful in the Muslim world because of a "lack of democracy, a lack of development, frustration with American foreign policy – some combination of all those" (Fukuyama 2003). He argues that, in the recent past, with the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Iron Curtain, a global consensus has emerged that the notion of liberal democracy has triumphed over rival ideologies such as hereditary monarchy, fascism and communism.

Huntington (2002), on the other hand, acknowledges that there has certainly been a spread of democratic regimes around the world, but that democracy has taken root successfully only in countries where there was significant Western influence. The more dubious cases involve civilisations which,

> like Latin America, may be closely linked to the West, but where democracy is [... considered to be] on rather shaky ground [...] And then you move into the Orthodox world and democracy is on an even shakier ground. I think in [...] Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland, democracy is on a very safe ground. But once you move a little bit further East to Ukraine, let's say, a country which in many respects is rather similar to Poland, you get an entirely different picture (Huntington 2002).

Therefore, for Huntington (2002), there is a very real distinction between electoral democracy and liberal democracy. He further states that

> Western democracy is liberal democracy [...] And I don't think anybody would say that the countries [...] mentioned (above) were liberal democracies. Now maybe a liberal democracy will follow the introduction of elections, but that hasn't happened yet.

> And law and order and the protection of civil rights, freedom of the press, minority rights, and a rule of law that you can trust [...] are missing in most of these societies (Huntington 2002).

5. Conclusion

Despite the obvious differences between them, unexpected areas of convergence emerge between these two seminal works, which makes the methodological problem of commensurability even more paradoxical. Ultimately, "neither Huntington nor Fukuyama tells us what we need to know in order to synthesize their perspectives – or to finally decide between them. The books are at once complementary and irreconcilable" (Kurtz 2002). Even though Huntington's triumph must be acknowledged, it is not to say, however, that his thesis is free of problems. Nor does Huntington's foresight deny the possibility that Fukuyama might ultimately be proven right about the global spread of democracy.

In relation to the first convergence, both authors misinterpret empirical evidence with regard to the application of universal values in world politics. Not only do "the end of history" and "the clash of civilizations" theses have "serious philosophical and logical defects from their inception (Hussien 2001: 32), but the empirical facts on which the respective theories are based also do not indisputably bear them out.

The second convergence indicates that both authors base their theories on a positivistic view of the state as the basic unit of analysis on which the world operates. The state system has now changed, for Fukuyama, into an international society of liberal states and, for Huntington, into a global unit comprising civilisations. Both acknowledge the sustained role of the state in world politics. From this convergence, it should be noted that the logic and empirical soundness of the conjecture of anarchy in international politics needs to be further scrutinised. Since this assumption constitutes the core of realist international politics and raises wider questions in relation to the end of history and the clash of civilisations, it may be beneficial for theorists to adequately analyse it from a range of other approaches.

As far as the third convergence is concerned, it is ultimately, according to Parker (2002), impossible to adjudicate the Fukuyama-Huntington debate without a well-grounded theory of modernisation. In the absence of a clear conception of how, why, and when modernisation blends, or fails to blend with particular social forms, there is simply no basis for making decisions about the relative long-term foresight of either author. While both Huntington and Fukuyama touch on these underlying social-structural questions, neither analyses them systematically.

Huntington correctly notes that the tendency of modernisation to break traditional social bonds has, in fact, stimulated an identity-preserving return to Islam. "Yet if the forces of modernization continue to disrupt the older social solidarities, a long-term cultural shift toward individualism is entirely conceivable, and that is a possibility Huntington does not entertain" (Parker 2002). As Kurtz (2002) puts it: "Huntington (does not) consider that the very fact of his being right about the clash of civilizations might actually help push the international system in Fukuyama's direction". Therefore, read closely, in terms of the third convergence, the views of the two authors overlap far more than one might think.

The fourth convergence, namely the worldwide acceptance or rejection of democracy, is to be found in respective acknowledgements on democracy by both Huntington and Fukuyama, although they conceptualise the term rather differently. While Fukuyama (2003) believes that liberal democracy would eventually triumph in the world, Huntington (2002), on the other hand, acknowledges that there has certainly been a spread of democratic regimes around the world, but that democracy has taken root successfully only in countries where there was significant Western influence. Thinking of the Arab Spring in light of the long secular trend toward democratisation suggests that Fukuyama was initially closer to the truth than Huntington. Recent events in Egypt, where Muslim Brotherhood supporters were calling for the reinstatement of Mohammed Morsi, could, on the other hand, be viewed as being closer to the truth. Many Western analysts were hoping for a secular liberal democracy to result from the Egyptian turmoil. Recent polls (Pew in April 2013) showed that there is no secular majority in the country. Egypt's protests were not against Islamism, but against Morsi who failed to restore the county's economy, not his religion.

Huntington's and Fukuyama's perspectives serve as a prime example of two theories that are said to be incommensurable with each other in that they do not share terms (with the same meaning) nor do they accept the same corpus of facts. Each theory acknowledges its own distinctive problems and proclaims its own standards of solution. These hermetically sealed theories are, for Feyerabend (1981: 105), general theories, "applicable to at least some aspects of everything there is".

In the words of Kurtz (2002), the "question of our time may now be whether Huntington's culture clash or Fukuyama's *pax democratia* is the world's most plausible future". Philosophically and spiritually, *The end of history* and *The clash of civilizations* could hardly be more different. Yet, it is precisely because of their differences, that these two distinct theories are now presenting themselves as alternatives in IR: one can either view the world as developing toward its final liberal democratic destination, or, alternatively, on a multi-polar,

civilisation-divergent course. As the search for a single paradigm within IR debates continues, a convergence between two major theories, such as these, are important, as they provide one more step toward consensus between opposing views on international political developments.

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