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Clash or Cooperation of Civilizations? Current Assessments by Western Experts of the Concept of S. Huntington

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Abstract:

The article dwells on an issue-based thematic review of recent publications devoted to the civilizational approach of S. Huntington and his “clash of civilizations” theory in American, Canadian, British, Spanish and French academic journals, covered in the Scopus database. As a result of the content analysis, the author divides the studies into several groups according to the type of fundamental factors considered as principal sources of modern international clashes and conflicts, such as: political and economic interests of states, strengthening of the national identity of the American population, affiliation with Orthodox civilization. Two special groups include studies, in which authors positively assess S. Huntington’s theory, but do not share his civilizational grouping of countries and offer their own classification; as well as the original empirical research on the perception of modern countries and its coalition formation by modern youth. With the aim to analyze inter-civilizational cooperation, the author examines the collective work “Clash or cooperation of civilizations?” in which scientists from different countries justify their points of view on the current state on international scene in the context of Huntington’s theory. The results of the analytical review, obtained during the semi-formalized assessment using six author’s variables, indicate that experts from different countries put forward arguments for and against the “clash of civilizations” concept.

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The academic community agrees that civilizational differences play an important role in the emergence of military conflicts, but do not assign priority to civilizational issues, considering political and economic interests of states as the root cause of modern international conflicts.

The American sociologist and political scientist Samuel Huntington (1927–2008) developed the concept of the “Clash of Civilizations”, in which he put forward the hypothesis that the cause of international conflicts would no longer be economics, not ideology, but the cultural differences of world civilizations. S. Huntington devoted an article to this topic called “The Clash of Civilizations”, which was published in 1993 in the journal “Foreign Affairs” [9]. Three years later, an American sociologist based on this article published a historical and philosophical treatise “The Clash of Civilizations and the Transformation of the World Order” [10], in which he gave a detailed justification of the concept and outlined his understanding of the development of events in the world after the Cold War.

The article and book by S. Huntington were written in response to Francis Fukuyama's work “The End of History and the Last Man” [5]. Instead of “the end of the history of mankind”, S. Huntington constructed a civilizational model of active subjects of the international arena, whose cultural differences serve as the basis for the emergence of armed clashes. He believed that in the modern world there are eight key civilizations: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Orthodox Slavic, Latin American and African. In his opinion, cultural differences between civilizations are not only real, but also fundamental: “... People of different civilizations look differently at the relationship between God and a person, an individual and a group, a citizen and a state, parents and children, a husband and wife, have different ideas about the relative importance of rights and duties, freedom and coercion, equality and hierarchy. These differences have been building up over the centuries. They will not disappear in the foreseeable future...” [21, p. 3].

As the next argument, S. Huntington put forward the thesis that the number of interactions between people belonging to different civilizations is constantly increasing in the world, as the world becomes “smaller”. For example, the North African population immigrates to France. Recently, digital technologies have reduced the distance between the inhabitants of different continents and blurred the borders between states.

Why did S. Huntington draw public attention to cultural differences? In his opinion, they are the most stable in comparison with economic and political differences: “... In the former Soviet Union, communists can become democrats, the rich can become poor, and the poor can become rich, but Russians, with all their desire, cannot become Estonians, and Azerbaijanis become Armenians... Religion divides people even more sharply than ethnicity. A person can be half-French and half-Arab, and even a citizen of both of these countries. It is much more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim” [21, p. 4]. The book expands and deepens the argumentation of the article: “...Here I made an attempt to refine, detail, supplement and, if possible, clarify the questions formulated earlier, as well as to develop many other ideas and highlight topics not previously considered at all or touched upon in passing...” [22, p. 7]

Analyzing relations between states, S. Huntington notes that at the macro level, it is the cultural and religious aspects that are the basis of economic cooperation. Thus, the Economic Cooperation Organization includes ten non-Arab Muslim countries: Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. S. Huntington comes

to the conclusion that the clash of civilizations occurs simultaneously at the micro and macro levels. The inhabitants of different countries located on the fault lines between civilizations are in conflict with each other, while states create conflicting international organizations in the struggle for power and control, asserting their place on the world stage.

The concept of S. Huntington caused a surge of reactions not only in the United States, but also in other countries, including post-Soviet Russia. The book "The Clash of Civilizations and the Transformation of the World Order" was translated into Russian in a short time [22, 23] and subjected to critical review by Russian specialists [17, 18, 19, 20]. As part of this analytical review, nine articles published in Western scientific journals are presented. These are works in which modern changes in the international arena are considered through the prism of the concept of "clash of civilizations" by S. Huntington, assessing its strengths and weaknesses, when choosing articles, we gave preference to high-status publications that are reviewed in the scientific database Scopus data. Almost all the authors of the studies under consideration refer both to the article by S. Huntington and to his book. The British scientist and journalist from Egypt, Emad El-Din Aisha, in his study refers not only to the book and article by S. Huntington, but also to a number of his other works that were written from 1957 to 2001. It is important to note that the majority of Western experts who criticize the concept of "clash of civilizations" by S. Huntington do not pay much attention to his author's definition of "civilization" and do not recognize the active role of civilization in relation to the state, shifting the focus of their research to the clash political, economic and social interests of countries, their populations and political leaders.

When characterizing these publications, several aspects are highlighted that are significant in the context of the mega-theme of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences "Russian Project of Civilizational Development". First of all, this is the question of what serves as a source of international clashes and armed conflicts: contradictions between civilizations or between states - their political, power, economic claims and interests? Or more specifically, promoting US interests on the world stage? Special attention is paid to studies whose authors discussed clashes related to the Orthodox civilization (using the terminology of S. Huntington, Western experts call the Russian Orthodox one). Separately presented are the arguments of experts who support the main idea of the "clash of civilizations" by S. Huntington, but offer their own civilizational groupings of countries. The position of the authors is highlighted, emphasizing not only collisions, but also the cooperation of civilizations; In this regard, the collection of articles "Clash or Cooperation of Civilizations?" is considered.

Clash of civilizations or power-political and economic interests countries, states, social groups?

In 2000, shortly after the publication of S. Huntington's book, American political scientist and Yale University professor Bruce Russett, together with University of Alabama professor John R. Oneil and University of Illinois assistant professor Michaelene Cox, published in The Journal of Peace Research (the journal publishes scholarly articles and book reviews in the field of peace and conflict studies, conflict resolution and international security) article "Clash of Civilizations, or Realism and Liberalism Déjà Vu? Some Evidence" (trans.: "The Clash of Civilizations or Realism and Liberalism as Déjà Vu? Some Evidence") [14]. The authors agree that S. Huntington's "clash of civilizations" concept can be used to interpret the conflict between the United States and Iraq, but they emphasize that his theory is only partially applicable to the events of the first decade of the Cold War and even less suitable for the

analysis of international conflicts of the distant past. Huntington's critics have hypothesized that the realist and liberal approaches are more capable of explaining the clashes that arise between countries and regions: the root cause of interstate conflicts is political and economic institutions, norms and practices. Thus, according to the authors, democratic countries are distinguished by closer ties with each other compared to countries with an autocratic form of government. The authors also emphasize that it is possible to achieve order and stability in the international arena, even between civilizations, through negotiations between the leading countries of different civilizations.

B. Russett, J.R. Oneil and M. Cox refer to previously published studies by Associate Professor of Pennsylvania State University E. Henderson, who in his works did not consider civilizations themselves, but the ability of religion, ethnicity and linguistic kinship to reduce the likelihood of wars between states [7, 8]. He showed that the peacemaking influence of religion is much weaker compared to the unifying influence of the state form of government. E.A. Henderson also said that the geographical location of countries, namely the proximity of borders, is one of the most significant causes of armed conflicts, leaving cultural differences aside. B. Russett, J.R. Oneil and M. Cox emphasize that most of the conflicts that S. Huntington identified along the fault lines of civilizations were confrontations between neighboring states that were expected, regardless of whether there were cultural contradictions between these countries or not.

According to the authors, of the 50 largest ethno-political conflicts that arose in 1993–1994, only 18 armed clashes were caused by civilizational contradictions [14, p. 588-589]. Critics also compared the concept of S. Huntington with historical data on international conflicts from 1950 to 1992, using such variables as the presence of an agreement, agreement or pact between countries (ALLY), the presence / absence of neighboring countries of the first and second order (CONTIG). Comparisons have shown that civilizational boundaries play an important role in the formation of alliances between countries, but they do not have such a significant impact on economic relations and the level of democracy in order to consider civilizational “rifts” as key factors in military conflicts. B. Russett, J.R. Oneil and M. Cox believe that the military, political and economic interests of countries and peoples, which were measured by the variables of realistic and liberal approaches (a scale with indicators of the levels of autocracy and democracy in the country; a scale of levels of the country's economic dependence in trade relations with other countries; the mentioned variables ALLY, CONTIG, as well as DISPUTE, which reflects the threat to use force or the actual use of military force against another country in one year), provide a more detailed and reasonable idea of the phenomenon of interstate violence than the concept of “clash of civilizations. More relevant and significant are such factors as the common bonds of democracy and economic interdependence: they unite some groups of countries and at the same time divide others. Thus, the government's best strategy, according to critics, is to extend democracy (peacefully) and economic ties to those parts of the world that still have the status of isolated countries.

10 years after the publication of Huntington's book, Rafael Bustos, lecturer at the Complutense University of Madrid, published in the Spanish journal *Revista UNISCI* (part of Scopus, fourth quartile) a critical article (author's translation) “A Brief Reflection on the Ideas of Civilization, Culture and religion. Pseudo-theories of fear and the basis for dialogue in the international community”, in which he formulated objections to the theses of S. Huntington [3]. R. Bustos calls the theory of S. Huntington a pseudo-theory and believes that civilizations themselves, unlike states, multinational companies and other organizations, are not acting actors in international relations. Moreover, the author insists that the civilizational factor should not be denied, but it cannot be considered as a true determinant of the interaction of world powers.

R. Bustos disputes S. Huntington's thesis that the largest international conflicts in history were between civilizations. The author believes that, on the contrary, they were within the same civilization, as evidenced by the First and Second World Wars. R. Bustos believes that civilizations always consist of societies with different cultural and religious values that compete with each other for recognition, identity and power. The author sees the causes of international clashes not only in civilizational and religious differences, but also in political and economic confrontations between the interests of states. He comes to the conclusion that modern international relations need a dialogue based on the effective use of intellect, reason and the principles of humanism by politicians to maintain peace and collective well-being.

A quarter of a century after the publication of S. Huntington's article, a graduate of the National University of Quilmes (Buenos Aires, Argentina), economist and political scientist Nicholas Salvoni published an article "Review of the theory of the "clash of civilizations" and cultural wars after 25 years" (author's translation) , in which he analyzed the arguments for and against the concept of S. Huntington formulated in scientific circles, and also assessed its potential in predicting global conflicts [15]. The author recalled the work of the famous American diplomat, Doctor of Philosophy, professor, historian and linguist J.F. Matlock "Can civilizations clash? (Reply to Samuel P. Huntington)" (trans.: "Can civilizations collide? (Reply to Samuel Huntington)") in Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society. In this article, J.F. Matlock criticized S. Huntington's approach to the definition of "civilization", in particular, his assertion that there is a general agreement on the nature, dynamics and identity of civilizations [12]. J.F. Matlock believed that loyalty and unity do not always exist between different states of the same civilization, and if there is, then this is not necessarily due to civilizational factors, often it is related to economic or political factors. J.F. Matlock also refuted the idea of S. Huntington that it is civilizational and cultural differences that are the fundamental cause of the conflict. For example, if two different civilizations coexist in one region, both prone to violent settlement of conflicts, it is precisely this common characteristic of them that will serve as the basis for the emergence of an armed conflict, and not their civilizational differences. J.F. Matlock came to the conclusion that S. Huntington exaggerates the role of civilizational differences and does not take into account civilizational similarities, which makes the concept of "clash of civilizations" instrumentally unsuitable for predicting future contradictions on the world stage.

Nicholas Salvoni supports authors who criticize S. Huntington for gross omissions and methodological categoricalness, and considers it wrong to consider cultural differences as a key cause of future international conflicts. Economic and historical factors are equally or even more significant in determining the causes of armed conflicts not only between countries, but also between entire civilizations.

N. Salvoni agrees with the opinion of the Professor of Comparative Politics and Democracy Studies at the University of Berlin. Humboldt and the director of the department "Democracy and Democratization" at the Berlin Research Center for Social Research Wolfgang Merkel that S. Huntington was able to confidently predict the main scenario of global civilizational clashes of our time, despite the widely criticized methodological shortcomings of his theory.

Promotion of US interests by S. Huntington on the world stage, strengthening American identity

In 2003, the British scholar and journalist from Egypt, Emad El-Din Aisha, published in the academic journal *International Studies Perspectives* (part of Scopus, first quartile; Oxford University Press) an

article (aut. trans.) "Samuel Huntington and Geopolitics American Identity: The Role of Foreign Policy in the Clash of Civilizations Within America" [1]. E. Aisha shares the opinion of American colleagues that civilizational differences are not the primary cause of international conflicts and armed clashes and believes that S. Huntington's theory to a greater extent allows to determine the participants in the conflict, but not its causes. E. Aisha emphasizes that civilizations oppose for the same reasons that rulers, nation-states and ideologies clash: the pursuit of their own interests, the seizure of nearby territories, the redistribution of resources and ideological superiority. Civilization can be seen as an unintentional instrument of armed conflict, but not a key source of conflict.

E. Aisha presents his vision of the concept of "clash of civilizations" through the prism of civilizational confrontations within the United States, witnessed by S. Huntington. The author notes that the sense of national identity of the US population is not supported by centuries of history or ethnicity. American society can be described as fragmented due to the short history of the country and the multi-ethnic composition of the population. The identity of US citizens, their collective "we" is based on the political values formulated in the US Declaration of Independence, as well as on ideology. Consequently, according to the author, the absence of a fundamental national identity determines the low integration of American society and serves as a fragile foundation for the national unity of the country. Hence, there is a need for an external adversary in the face of a state, region or ideology, which will contribute to the formation of American identity and the unification of the multi-ethnic people of the United States. Such opponents at one time were Great Britain, Napoleonic Europe, Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and communism. Therefore, the end of the Cold War and the absence of a new enemy can be the main reason for the collapse of the United States. E. Aisha is critical of the position of S. Huntington and believes that other countries should strive to minimize any possibility of international armed conflicts and resolve problems within the state not through external wars, but in a peaceful way: with the help of state activists, politicians and intellectuals.

Moreover, the mentioned study by the economist and political scientist N. Salvoni also describes the ideas of C. Caballero and Anna Quintanas, a professor of philosophy from the University of Girona, who criticize the concept of S. Huntington for promoting the political interests of the United States after the end of the Cold War [15]. K. Caballero emphasizes that the characterization of civilizations, formulated by S. Huntington, is more in line with the strategic interests of America than with the civilizations themselves. As an example, C. Caballero cites S. Huntington's selection of Japan as a separate independent civilization without taking into account the country's Buddhist and Confucian roots.

In 2019, a study by two political scientists from the Military University of Nueva Granada T.P. Bautista Safar and C. Molina Santamaria "Del Choque de Civilizaciones al choque con la realidad: Samuel Huntington 20 años después" ("From the Clash of Civilizations to the Clash with Reality: Samuel Huntington 20 Years Later") [2]. The authors of the publication believe that the works of S. Huntington personify and justify the American policy of world domination. Thus, the United States uses the presence of an external enemy as a factor ensuring the internal cohesion of the multi-ethnic American population [2, p. 221–222].

Western Scholars on Conflicts, related to the attitude to the Orthodox civilization

In 2014, Doctor of Social and Historical Anthropology, French expert on the Balkans Jean-Francois Gossio published an article (transl.) "Balkan societies and the War of the Worlds", in which he considered the conflicts on the territory of the Balkan countries through the prism of the concept of

“clash of civilizations” by S. Huntington [6].

J. Gossio writes that the Balkan countries are at the intersection of three "worlds", three civilizations - Western, Islamic and Orthodox. Analyzing this region, the author notes the duality of its position: on the one hand, we can talk about a peaceful mixture of civilizations, and, on the other hand, there is an alarming instability based on the cultural diversity of countries. Thus, the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv personifies a mixture of cultures represented by Orthodox Bulgarians, Armenians, Turks, Jews. However, religious diversity remains a distinctive feature of the ancient Philippopolis (one of the ancient names of the city of Plovdiv), which even today is home to communities of "sun-worshipping" Dano-vistists. Many settlements located throughout the Balkan Peninsula tend to illustrate multiple cultural and religious identities.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the disintegration of the Soviet Union take the first place among the events after the end of the Cold War, cited by S. Huntington as examples that can be interpreted in the light of the civilizational paradigm and from which one could conclude that the Balkan region is doomed to recurring wars and conflicts over location on a "fault line" between three civilizations. J. Gossio emphasizes that the armed conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia in the period from 1991 to 2001 can be interpreted from the standpoint of the theory of "clash of civilizations" and, indeed, were caused by ethnic and religious contradictions, but the only fact that which cannot be explained from the standpoint of a civilizational approach, according to the author, is the support of the Bosnian Muslims by Western powers, including the United States [6, p. 218]. J. Gossio writes that the Yugoslav conflicts include a large number of situations in which the root cause of the destruction of the existing social system was political pressure from outside, and not internal cultural contradictions of the population.

The above study by T.P. Bautista Safar and K. Molina Santamaria "Del Choque de Civilizaciones al choque con la realidad: Samuel Huntington 20 años después" is also devoted to the analysis of modern international relations between Russia and Ukraine through the prism of the main postulates of S. Huntington's theory [2]. The authors note that S. Huntington in his article and book on the "clash of civilizations" spoke about a possible conflict between Russia and Ukraine, despite the fact that the countries belong to the same civilization. The possibility of an armed clash between these countries is due, according to S. Huntington, disputed territories, questions about the Black Sea Fleet, economic conflict of interests and issues of nuclear weapons. According to the concept of S. Huntington, belonging to the same civilization reduces the likelihood of a clash between the Russian and Ukrainian peoples - which really took place until the Crimean crisis of 2014. T.P. Bautista Safar and C. Molina Santamaria base their analysis on critical points made by other scholars.

The first to consider is the statement that S. Huntington does not take into account the role of states and influential political figures in international relations, putting civilizations in the first place and giving them paramount importance. The authors believe that it is not civilizations that control states, but vice versa - states control civilizations, emphasizing, when it is beneficial for them, civilizational unity with other countries. The second position is that S. Huntington makes a mistake and exaggerates the importance of traditions and cultural values which are characteristic of every civilization, and underestimates the importance of modernity and secularism.

The third point of support for researchers is the position that civilizations determine the development of the states that are part of them. Moreover, civilizational identity allegedly takes precedence over

state and civil identity. According to T.P. Bautista Safar and C. Molina Santamaria, S. Huntington's assertion that future wars are predetermined by the lines of civilizational "splits" to some extent removes the responsibility from politicians for the emergence of armed conflicts and their escalation. In this case, the settlement of civilizational clashes seems impossible due to the fact that belonging to a particular civilization, like the ethnic identity of people, is a prescribed social status.

The fifth thesis of S. Huntington, which has been criticized, is the assumption that Western civilization is superior to other civilizations in the speed of spreading its values to regions and countries, belonging to other civilizations, although the West recognizes that each civilization has a corresponding set of values that can be supported by all civilizations. Asian states, in turn, are able to distinguish between good and bad (dysfunctional) values of Western civilization, tend to adhere to the first and do without the second, replacing them with their own value orientations.

The last, sixth, provision concerns the root causes of the split that has arisen between Western civilization and the Orthodox world, between Western countries and Latin American states.

S. Huntington's article and book on the clash of civilizations are also accused of embodying and justifying the American policy of world domination. The United States uses the presence of an external enemy as a factor that ensures the internal cohesion of the multinational American population. Finally, T.P. Bautista Safar and K. Molina Santamaria come to the conclusion that critical comments of scientists on the concept of "clash of civilizations" by S. Huntington allow a deeper study of the context of the Crimean conflict. The authors of the article cite some of S. Huntington's statements about Ukraine. As a result of the historical and cultural division, relations between Russia and Ukraine may develop according to one of the following scenarios.

1. Relations between Crimea and Russia are determined by close historical and cultural ties, and the split line is located between the predominantly Russian-speaking Orthodox Eastern Ukraine, whose population is closer in composition (because there are more Russians in Eastern Ukraine), mentality and national identity towards the Russian people, and predominantly Ukrainian-speaking Western Ukraine, which more closely shares the values of the West and the principles of democracy and seeks EU membership.
2. In the early 1990s, the problems associated with nuclear weapons were obvious and many believed that conflict was inevitable, given the support of Ukraine from the West to contain Russia's military power. However, from the point of view of S. Huntington's "clash of civilizations" theory, the likelihood of an armed confrontation between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples should be low against the background of common cultural and historical ties of Orthodox civilization. Taking into account the split line between Eastern and Western Ukraine, it seems likely that Eastern Ukraine will join Russia.
3. S. Huntington considers the scenario in which Ukraine remains a single state as the most likely and believes that the independent status of Ukraine will allow it to closely cooperate with Russia. Future contradictions, according to S. Huntington, will be mainly related to the clash of economic interests, the settlement of which can be carried out due to the common cultural characteristics and close ties of these two countries.

Continuing the analysis, T.P. Bautista Safar and K. Molina Santamaria emphasize the impact of the above scenarios on the course of historical events in this region and believe that Crimea has its own historical and cultural features that distinguish it from other pro-Russian territories in eastern Ukraine.

Crimea retained the status of an autonomous republic within the RSFSR until it was transferred to the Ukrainian SSR by N. Khrushchev in 1954. Despite the fact that since December 1, 1991, the All-Ukrainian referendum confirmed the independence of Ukraine from the USSR, Crimea has repeatedly sought to declare its independence.

The diplomatic conflict associated with the Ukrainian crisis is due to two factors. First, the introduction of mutual sanctions in connection with the annexation of Crimea to Russia. Secondly, the European Union's refusal to include Russia in the negotiations and in the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union. On February 27, 2014, the process of the occupation of Crimea by Russia became the embodiment of S. Huntington's hypothesis about a possible split between Western and Eastern Ukraine and that the main eastern territories of Ukraine, such as Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Odessa, Kherson, Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye regions, could take the side of Russia.

On the other hand, the authors believe that S. Huntington was right about the fact that the split lines transform political borders, which was clearly illustrated when the Crimean peninsula was annexed to Russia, in which the majority of the population is Russian. Among the theses on which Samuel Huntington bases the clash of civilizations is that civilizations will become a new player in the international system. Thus, the Orthodox civilization became the determining factor in the annexation of the Crimean peninsula to Russia, however, without leaving aside a number of political and economic interests. In addition, S. Huntington argued that the division of the world is also determined by economic issues, and therefore, in the case of the annexation of Crimea, it is clear that Western economic power, materialized in the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, caused anti-Western sentiments among the population of Ukraine.

As noted by T.P. Bautista Safar and C. Molina Santamaria, it is important that the media and their influence on the creation of culture is a new factor that was not foreseen by S. Huntington. The Ukrainian uprising, which led to the annexation of Crimea to Russia, is a phenomenon that goes beyond the clash of civilizations, it forms a set of national interests that will guide the actions of states, regardless of the civilizational boundaries that have been created by history.

The authors come to the conclusion that the concept of "clash of civilizations" is relevant for the events that took place 20 years after its publication. The pro-Russian part of Ukraine can follow in the footsteps of the Crimean peninsula and achieve a return to Russia thanks to its historical and cultural ties. Moreover, despite the many-sided criticism that S. Huntington was subjected to after the publication of the article and book, historical evidence gave his theory validity. The Crimean issue showed that although civilization is not recognized as the main actor in international relations, in some cases it is capable of surpassing the economic and political interests of states in the implementation of their foreign policy.

In 2018, D. McCarthy published an article in the American conservative academic journal *Modern Age* entitled "Whose Civilization? Which Clash? (trans.: "Whose civilization? What clash?") [13]. Most of the study is devoted to a critical analysis of the classification of civilizations by S. Huntington and the author's vision of the division of countries into civilizations, which will be discussed later. Speaking about Orthodox civilization, D. McCarthy notes that Orthodox countries have a tough, but mostly defensive strategy, which may seem surprising against the backdrop of Russia's activities in Ukraine and Syria. According to the author, Russia is a danger to those states that are on its periphery,

and is a source of trouble for the West. However, Russia has neither the means nor the morale to transform the world. One of the most important aspects of the position of the Orthodox civilization in the struggle of world powers is its relationship with other civilizational blocs: if it chooses a strategy of enmity with the West, then there will be a rise in the post-Western world order, which will most likely be dominated by East Asia. On the other hand, if the Orthodox civilization were in harmony with the West, relatively speaking, it could become a valuable ally in confronting other civilizations.

However, the geographical proximity and common Christian roots of Western and Orthodox civilizations can only emphasize their differences. Orthodox civilization is quite resistant to the process of Westernization.

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