Global Lines in Conflicts in the Middle East

Orta Doğu'daki Çatışmaların Küresel Hatları

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> "Our wants and pleasures have their origin in society;
> we therefore measure them in relation to society. [...]
> Since they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature."
> (Karl Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*)

> "As long as the issue is about value, all such questions must
> above all be formulated as economic questions."
> (Carl Schmitt, *The Tyranny of Values*)

Abstract

My case is that current conflicts in the Middle East are not only conflicts between states or a Clash of Civilizations, but that glocal relative deprivation has caused a vacuum of power and conflicts between stationary states. To support my argument, I will discuss three paradigms and their ability for explaining the crisis in the Middle East: First, Carl Schmitt's turn from Westphalian Governance to global lines (of a Nomos of Earth) as spheres of foreign non-interference, which is either used to propose unrealistic international solutions to a transnational crisis or, paradoxically, to back hegemonic interests in the region. Second, I will deconstruct Samuel Huntington's paradigm of a Clash of Civilizations, which is based on dubious data and references to call for a Western hegemony that already exists beyond the classical imperialist understanding of it as global standards empowered with help of global horizons of comparability. Third, I will extend Hans-Ulrich Wehler's

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sketch of reasons for modernization crisis in nation-states that is based on relative deprivation, identity-, participation-, distribution-, penetration-, and (culminating in a) legitimation-crisis, for analyzing conflicts in the Middle East as caused by glocal comparison and competition in world society. In summing, I intend to analyze the unrest in the Middle East as caused by glocal relative deprivation. This perspective enables us to deal with glocal political and social processes rather as represented than caused by global cultural or political conflicts between "civilizations" or states.

Keywords*: Carl Schmitt, Samuel P. Huntington, Global Lines, Glocal Relative Deprivation, Clash of Civilizations.*

Öz

Bu makale, Orta Doğu'daki mevcut çatışmaların sadece devletler arası bir çatışma ya da bir Medeniyetler Çatışması olmadığını, küyerel göreli yoksunluğun bir iktidar boşluğuna ve durgun devletler arası çatışmalara yol açtığını savunmaktadır. Tezimi desteklemek için üç paradigmayı ve bunların Orta Doğu'daki krizi açıklama kapasitesini tartışacağım. Birincisi, Carl Schmitt'in Westphalia Yönetişimi'nden dış müdahalesizlik alanları olarak küresel hatlara (bir Yeryüzü Yasaları hattına) dönüşüdür. Bu ya ulus aşırı bir krize gerçek dışı uluslararası çözümler önermek ya da paradoksal şekilde, bölgedeki hegemonik çıkarları desteklemek için kullanılmaktadır. İkinci olarak, Samuel Huntington'ın klasik emperyalist anlayışın ötesinde, küresel mukayese edilebilirlik ufku sayesinde güçlendirilmiş küresel standartlar olarak bir Batı hegemonyası çağrısı için tartışmalı veri ve göndermelere dayalı Medeniyetler Çatışması paradigmasını irdeleyeceğim. Üçüncü olarak ise, Hans-Ulrich Wehler'in ulus devletlerde göreli yoksunluk, kimlik, katılım, bölüşüm, nüfuz ve meşruiyet krizlerine dayalı modernleşme krizinin nedenleri üzerine çizdiği çerçeveyi, Orta Doğu'daki çatımaları dünya toplumunda küyerel mukayese ve rekabetin bir sonucu olarak analiz etmek üzere genişleteceğim.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Carl Schmitt, Samuel P. Huntington, Küresel Hatlar, Küyerel Göreli Yoksunluk, Medeniyetler Çatışması.*

Introduction

We are still living in the shadow of four major events in world history: First, the end of the Cold War and the implosion of the USSR; second, the rise of China and the Pacific world; third, 9/11 and the *War against Terror* in Central Asia and the Middle East; and, fourth, a series of *color-* or *facebook-revolutions* against authoritarian governments, which have been challenged by *global horizons of comparability*[1] -new "global lines" created by virtual spaces, in which people can compare their living conditions globally. All of these events have changed world order and contributed to the crisis in the Middle East. This paper deals with "global lines" as structures, which have contributed to or derived from these events.

My case is that current conflicts in the Middle East are not only conflicts between states or a *Clash of Civilizations*, but that *glocal relative deprivation* has caused a vacuum of power and conflicts between *stationary states* (N. Ferguson) -states that stagnate due to weak institutions and a lack of rule of law. To support my argument, I will discuss three paradigms and their ability for explaining the crisis in the Middle East: First, Carl Schmitt's turn from *Westphalian Governance* to *global lines* (of a *Nomos of Earth*) as spheres of foreign non-interference, which are either used to propose unrealistic international solutions to a transnational crisis or, paradoxically, to back hegemonic interests in the region. Schmitt already knew that universal values or totalitarian ideologies in combination with total, *people's, pirates', and partisan's war* put an end to *cabinet war*, which is the precondition for a *Westphalian state system*. However, it is also almost impossible to define regional spheres of influence in an interconnected *world society*, and, in case of the Middle East, it is even questionable which power can

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[1] Andreas Leutzsch, "Die Weltrevolution von 1989–Global- oder Goofy-History?", in: Christopher Kopper, Andreas Leutzsch, David Gilgen (Ed.), ***Deutschland als Modell?, Rheinischer Kapitalismus und Globalisierung seit dem 19**. **Jahrhundert***, Festschrift Werner Abelshauser (Politik- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte, Vol. 88) Dietz, Bonn 2010, pp. 383-419.

be considered to be the hegemon. Second, I will deconstruct Samuel Huntington's paradigm of a *Clash of Civilizations*, which is based on dubious data and references to call for a Western hegemony, to elaborate that such hegemony already exists beyond the classical imperialist understanding of it as global standards empowered with help of *global horizons of comparability*. Third, I will *extend* Hans-Ulrich Wehler's sketch of reasons for *modernization crisis* in nation-states, which is based on relative deprivation, identity-, participation-, distribution-, penetration-, and (culminating in) legitimation-crisis, to the global level for analyzing conflicts in the Middle East as caused by *global* comparison and competition in world society. Summing up, the research question is this: What are the benefits of a *glocal* perspective to make sense of socio-political processes in the Middle East?

My hypothesis is that *glocal relative deprivation* is caused by the fact that people compare their local living-conditions globally and, therefore, the crisis in the Middle East is caused by global social and not (merely) by international (Schmitt) or civilizational/cultural processes (Huntington). In such a perspective, the performance of states and governments is not just compared in global horizons of comparability, such as rankings, indices, or markets, but also common people can compare their living standards and communicate with people globally. We call this global communicative horizon *world society* (Luhmann) because social relations are based on communication and comparison. In this perspective, *glocal relative deprivation* leads to a set of local modernization crises resulting in a vacuum of power, which is used by some states to extend their sphere of influence by supporting or preventing regime change and democratization in the Middle East. In particular, the term *facebook-revolution* is well chosen, because comparing and competing in front of a global horizon of expectations has caused an identity crisis, which has split national societies into secular, traditional, and "New Born" Muslims and people. In this context, religion and/or nationalism can be used as social liberalization ideologies by creating new cultural identities. In the Middle East, the Iranian revolution has been widely discussed as an example for combining social, political, and religious ideas to an expansive nationalism.

In general, the identity crisis is closely related to a crisis regarding the legitimation of authoritarian regimes that are based on dysfunctional but all spheres of life penetrating administrations in stationary states. In Egypt and Libya, attempts by dictators to establish dynasties and to hand over power to their crown princes contributed together with a lack of free elections, widespread nepotism, kinship systems, and corruption to a participation crisis in stagnating political structures. The combination of corruption and total political penetration of society forces de facto anyone into an accomplice with the authorities beyond individual moral beliefs so that a penetration crisis has gone along with a distribution crisis of wealth and opportunities. In summing, this (modernization) crisis has contributed to a power vacuum on a local level, which is used by movements of marginalized individuals for alternative state building or by foreign governments to extend their spheres of influence.

The background of this crisis is that competitiveness in the world economy is based on immaterial production that requires a knowledge society with excellent access to top-notch education based on individual talent; transparent decision-making in politics; a working and free media that creates (also for foreign investors) trust in institutions by checking them; and the ability to progress and participate in society individually and equally. Relative deprivation is particularly caused by the observation and feeling that individual social climbing is for some people far harder than it is for those with the right gender, family, social, political or cultural background. The institutional differences between Western and Middle Eastern societies contribute to relative deprivation on local and global -thus glocal- level, and they explain the fragility of states and societies in the Middle East, which is the major reason for local socio-political conflicts that might be expressed as global cultural, but are, in fact, glocal social differences deriving from global lines apart from their "classical" meaning in the International Relations (IR).

Global lines are usually taken to mean geopolitical lines or alignments defining spheres of influence, sovereignty, hegemony, and foreign non-interference. These spaces are not congruent with nation-states because nations, like any community beyond face-to-face

communication and personal relationships, are *imagined communities*[2] and not necessarily contained by state borders -and in many cases, political influence and economic interests transcend these borders and are hard to map anyway. In addition to the multiple international relations most states possess, many non-governmental actors -from NGOs to multinational companies or criminal syndicates- have emerged from the national power container and are acting beyond national markets, tax- and law-regimes, too.

Nevertheless, statehood and international relations are still based on the concept of sovereignty and, paradoxically, political actors might even refer to the sovereignty of their states in case of pushing through their national agenda globally. It is evident that such virtual, and often pseudo-historical, claims and interests compete with those of other nations. Such spheres of influence and cultural-political lines are by any means hard to map because they are in constant state of flux. National sovereignty requires international approval, whereas in the case of spheres of influence such approval cannot be granted officially, because it would contradict the principal of sovereignty. The Sikes-Picot Agreement (1916) and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939) are examples for secret agreements regarding spheres of influence -and both cases demonstrate that constructing global along national lines is always precarious.

Nowadays, global lines can have a *hard* and a *soft power* character;[3] they can be frontlines of conflicts between combatants but also virtual lines of communication; and they can contribute to hybridization of conflicts, competition, and cooperation globally. The lines between persuasion and propaganda, open and hidden war, liberation and terrorism, global and local spaces are blurred. Demonstrators, for instance during the protests of the so-called *facebook-revolutions* in the Middle East in 2011, -*Euromaidan* in Kiev 2013, and *Occupy Central*

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[2] Benedict R. O'G Anderson, ***Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism***, Verso, London, 1991.
[3] Joseph Nye, ***Soft Power, The Means to Success in World Politics***, PublicAffairs, New York, 2004.

in Hong Kong 2014- have tried to legitimize and gain support for their protests by addressing universal values and the global public, for example, with slogans and banners in English.

Besides, terrorists have bombed and killed beyond national borders to prevent or provoke foreign intervention in civil wars among others in New York, Washington DC, Kuta, Hilversum, Amsterdam, Madrid, London, Mumbai, Moscow, Copenhagen, Boston, Istanbul, Paris, Beirut, Brussels, Berlin, Tunis, Nice, Barcelona, and even Cambrils -not to mention almost regular attacks in, inter alia, Israel, Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Mali, and Libya. In many cases, civil society, western media and especially caricaturists (Amsterdam/Paris/ Copenhagen), public places and events, such as football matches (Paris), marathons (Boston), concerts or festivals (Nice/Paris/Kuta), stations and public spaces (Madrid/London/Moscow), or museums (Tunis) were soft targets of hard power. In the Middle East, terrorist attacks have been part of the partisan war on the local and global level, too -for instance, to scare away tourists and to undermine the legitimation of governments, who have to balance between securing order on local and not being blamed for using excessive force on the global level.

Conversely, foreign powers have interfered in and contributed to conflicts by using soft- and hard-power in the *Middle East* -a spatial concept that I will use in a rather broad way. The globalization of local conflicts has got political, cultural, and social dimensions, which I will discuss below as three paradigms: First, I will deal with Carl Schmitt's (pseudo-) realistic paradigm of global political lines based on concepts of *International Relations*, in which states and their agents -such as politicians, diplomats, soldiers, and lobbyists- are seen as prime actors in international affairs. Second, I will deconstruct Samuel P. Huntington's paradigm of a *Clash of Civilizations*,[4] which is based on the assumptions of a declining West and dangerous rest. Third, I will develop a concept

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[4] Samuel P. Huntington, ***The Clash of Civilizations and the Remarking of World Order***, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2003.

of *Glocal Relative Deprivation* by analyzing the permanent crisis in the Middle East as a modernization crisis that derives from *local* stagnation and *global* comparison between core and periphery of a global social and economic system -the world society,[5] I do not intend to neglect that cultural imaginaries, shared identities, political conflicts, and foreign interference have played an important role in *glocal* conflicts in the Middle East. Neither Schmitt's concept of a global order nor Huntington's paradigm of a *Clash of Civilizations* is completely false, but their prominence -despite obvious anomalies of the paradigms- is debatable and tends to cover-up pivotal problems in the Middle East. The precondition for the identity crisis in East and West, proxy wars, foreign interference, and struggles for hegemony is not political power of the involved nations but the weakness of a region caught in-between East and West, North, and South.

1. Dream and Nightmare of the Leviathan

Whenever foreign powers interfere in political affairs in the Middle East -for instance, to get rid of a dictatorship that is committing crimes against humanity- their opponents usually refer to the concept of sovereignty and the principal of non-interference in domestic affairs of foreign states to criticize what they perceive as (western) expansionism based on universal values. Russia and China -both hard working on extending their own spheres of influence and challenged by national and cultural movements from inside- are usually among those members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, which defend the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs against idealistic and/or pragmatic attempts to solve a humanitarian crisis with hard power. Perhaps caused by the fact that Schmitt developed his thoughts from the perspective of the extreme case or exception -the state of emergency or political miracle- in an *Age of Extremes,* his theory of global order, which emphasizes

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[5] I am loosely referring to Niklas Luhmann's definition of world society as elaborated in Niklas Luhmann, "Die Weltgesellschaft", in: Niklas Luhmann, *Soziologische Aufklärung 2, Aufsätze zur Theorie der Gesellschaft*, Opladen 1975, pp. 51-71.

non-interference of foreign powers in domestic affairs, is widely read in China, Russia, and the United States to understand and claim global lines in the crisis nowadays.

In his "*Nomos of Earth*", Carl Schmitt elaborates a concept of an international order based on global lines of hegemony beyond which foreign actors should not intervene.[6] His idea was to promote a concept of spheres of influence in order to prevent clashes between major powers representing different polities, or *nomoi*, based on specific values, norms, and worldviews. The *nomos* of earth as *collective singular* should guarantee the coexistence of different *nomoi* by defining global lines of spheres of influence.

Such is the concept of this *nomos* that it, in fact, stretches beyond the idea of coexistence of nation-states in an international order by rather promoting a global one based on the coexistence of hegemons and their polities. The examples for global lines, which Schmitt gives, are the Treaty of Tordesillas, which defined the line of demarcation between the Spanish and Portuguese empires (1494), and the Monroe Doctrine (1832) that declared the European colonial powers to *raumfremde Mächte* -external powers without a right to interfere- and the USA to the protecting power of and de facto hegemon in the Americas.[7]

Schmitt's "*Nomos of Earth*" has to be seen in its historical context -first, because Schmitt knew very well that the US-intervention in World War I contributed to Germany's defeat and the instability of post-war Europe; second, Schmitt wrote the first papers on this topic while Germany caused another World War, and had almost no chance to win it in case that the United States would interfere again;[8] third, he revised his theory when the possibility of a war between the new

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[6] Carl Schmitt, ***Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum***, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin, 4. Ed., 1997.

[7] Schmitt, 1997.

[8] Carl Schmitt, ***Staat, Großraum, Nomos, Arbeiten aus den Jahren 1916-1969***, Ed. by Günter Maschke, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin, 1995.

superpowers (the USA and USSR) posed an existential threat to post-war Europe and mankind at large. It is also not an accident that his careful farewell to Hobbes' theory of national Leviathans and his first sketches of global lines were both published right before World War II.[9]

His theory of global lines is based on his concept of the political as a social field of tension between friend and foe deriving from inclusion and exclusion,[10] the idea of sovereignty as a power to decide about the state of emergency,[11] and a general preference for the strong state -the *Leviathan*.[12] In Schmitt's interpretation of Hobbes' political philosophy, the states should interact with each other by respecting *ius ad/in bellum* and international conventions. The idea of cabinet war -as a kind of duel between two sovereign states based on contained warfare and clear definitions of combatants- opposes partisan and guerilla warfare, as well as civil and total war. The cabinet war would therefore be the only legal and legitimate "continuation of politics with other means".[13]

Carl Schmitt's favoring of strong states, the Leviathans, derived from his experiences of revolution and civil war in the *Age of Extremes*

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[9] Carl Schmitt, ***The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes, Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol,*** translated by George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein and with an Introduction by George Schwab, With a new Foreword by Tracy B. Strong, Chicago UP, Chicago/London, 2008, Schmitt, 1995.

[10] Carl Schmitt, ***Der Begriff des Politischen, Text von 1932 mit einem Vorwort und drei Corollarien***, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin, 6. Ed., 1997, p. 27.

[11] Carl Schmitt, ***Political Theology, Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty***, translated and with an Introduction by George Schwab, With a new Foreword by Tracy B. Strong, Chicago UP, Chicago/London, 2005

[12] Schmitt, 2008.

[13] Carl von Clausewitz, ***Vom Kriege***, Cormoran, München, 2000, p. 44. Clausewitz understands war as extended duel and tension between political parties, too. (p.27) In general, Schmitt's concepts are related to inter alia, Hobbes', Clausewitz's and Weber's theories, but should better be seen as diagnoses in context of his political standpoint and European history than as a kind of paradigm based on an independent/esoteric research. Carl Schmitt, ***Theory of the Partisan***, telos-press, Candor, 2007.

(Hobsbawm) and many authors tend to read his *Leviathan* as a plea for NS-dictatorship and authoritarian rule. However, his student Franz Neumann already equated the NS-regime with the monster *Behemoth*[14], marked by lawlessness and polycentric rule in a totalitarian empire, and Schmitt's reference to Hobbes can also be read as a plea for *Realpolitik*, neutralizing ideological and religious conflicts to avoid civil war, in which the friend-foe relation would be replaced by the totalitarian striving for annihilating the opponent as an enemy of mankind. In international affairs, global lines would serve as borders between different political and ideological systems to prevent global civil war, because Schmitt already feared a kind of virtual reality potentially undermining hard-power global lining. Perceiving global lines not just as international political frontlines but also as transnational communicative political spaces,[15] Schmitt's reflections about the potential danger of "radio waves" seems not as strange as it did to one of his biographers before cyber wars became a realistic threat.

Nonetheless, Schmitt rather used myths and iconography as a kind of *Aesopian talk* regarding potential threads of competing polities and their warfare. In this context, *Leviathan* represents strong nation-states and, as whale, naval warfare and blockade, the *Behemoth*, as bull or elephant, can be associated with civil and land war of weak empires,[16] and the *Ziz*, as bird, represents the potential of global air warfare and bombing for peace beyond any global line.[17] Weak but expanding empires; nation-states with strong naval forces that can starve empires to death; and a mix of both with a universal goal and strong Air Force

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[14] Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, Oxford UP, Oxford/New York, 1944.
[15] Mathias Albert, Gesa Bluhm, Jan Helmig, Andreas Leutzsch, Jochen Walter, "Introduction, The Communicative Construction of Transnational Political Spaces", in Mathias Albert, Gesa Bluhm, Jan Helmig, Andreas Leutzsch, Jochen Walter (Ed.), *Transnational Political Spaces: Agents-Structures-Encounters* (Historische Politikforschung, Vol. 18) Campus-Verlag, Frankfurt/New York, 2009, pp. 7-31.
[16] Carl Schmitt, *Land und Meer*, Klett-Cotta, Berlin, 7. Ed, 2011 [1942], pp. 16-17.
[17] Schmitt, 2011, 105.

for peace bombing -that's more or less a description of the frontlines of the World Wars and their legacy after 1945/49.[18]

These mystical monsters also correspond with *Idealtypen* of (political) combatants -the *partisan*, as an actor, who is bound to his local space and polity, attacks logistics and people behind the front, and tries to undermine the enemy's moral principles by forcing him into a kind of dirty war; and the *pirate*, who is rather universal-minded, acts on global scale, and tries to block trade-routes. These archetypes of warfare beyond Clausewitz's duel war matters for the *asymmetric wars* nowadays[19] -with the difference that partisans started to act globally and states make use of hybrid warfare, too: Terrorists have attacked with civil planes targets outside the combat zone; cyber warfare has affected global networks; drug and human trafficking, as well as small-scale attacks of pirates, have undermined security on global scale. These examples illustrate that Schmitt knew very well about the weakness of nation-states and empires and the power of universal and national values in an interconnected world.

Witnessing the clash of ideologies before, during, and after World War II, Schmitt was very aware of the fact that *Westphalian governance* failed to control transnational or global flow of values, norms, and ideologies, which easily can be connected to nationalism for mobilizing the masses. Hence, global civil war as *Behemoth* posed a potential threat to sovereignty and peace in and beyond Europe in the 1930s. Though the Thirty Years' War and Hobbes' political philosophy are omnipresent in Schmitt's theory -and explain his preference for a container model of nation-states with a strong sovereign and international relations- he knew that Hobbes' distinction could not work anymore in an age of morality and (social) engineering, in which the Leviathan turned into an all-encompassing *machine* -a kind of maritime *Behemoth*. I am not sure, whether he thinks in this

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[18] Schmitt, 2011, 104-105.
[19] Herfried Münkler, ***Die neuen Kriege*** (Schriftenreihe, 387) bpb, Bonn, 2002, pp. 59-74.

case solely about the British Empire or reflects about the deadly German machinery in the Age of Extremes, too.[20] Anyway, in either case, the *Westphalian governance* was obsolete; therefore, Schmitt favored global lines of spheres of influence to a naïve concept of international relations. The important point is the relation between domestic and foreign affairs because a sharp distinction between war, revolution, and civil war cannot be made anymore -all conflicts happen in front of a global *horizon of scandals* and this has changed warfare, as said, too.

After World War II and Auschwitz, *Ziz* -the bird that represents global order based on universal values and the opportunity of aerial warfare- contributed to cooling down the competition of the superpowers to a Cold War and enabled interfering in local conflicts on a global scale with limited risks, costs, and own casualties. The potential to defend universal values globally has contributed to the establishment of a horizon of scandals, in which states have been observed regarding their compliance with human rights and international law, and a system of multilateralism that should prevent -as a *katechon*[21]- (civil/total) wars of annihilation by sanctioning crimes against humanity. Paradoxically, this tying down of *Epimetheus* -of the destructive forces in humankind- has not lead to Kant's world peace or world society in a cosmopolitan sense yet, because foreign interference has not been used in a universal but selective way. What we are currently witnessing is an undermining of this system by different forces in a hybrid way to establish new global lines.

In this context, Schmitt's theory is used to promote a new concept of imperial sovereignty to undermine the *Pax Americana* -Aleksandr Dugin's *Neo-Eurasianism* is an example for such a selected reading of Schmitt to promote a neo-imperial project against universalism and

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[20] Schmitt, 2011, 98-99.
[21] Schmitt, 1997, p. 29; Schmitt, 2011, p. 19.

liberalism.[22] Indeed, Russia -which is with a GDP smaller than that of Italy (2017) geopolitically trapped between China, the European Union, Central Asia, and the Middle East- has used hybrid tactics of soft and hard power to create a puffer of potential conflict-zones around its borders, and its activities in Syria are part of its expansion of global influence and undermining of universalism, as well.

Russia is one but not the only actor who has discovered the benefits of partisan warfare. Asymmetric and hybrid warfare has been used by different governments and actors either to ignore the *ius ad bellum* or to avoid being limited in actions by human rights and *ius in bellum*. Such asymmetric and hybrid warfare may have some tradition -partisans, Cossacks, or irregular troops were used throughout modern history- but the privatization of warfare by the United States with help of Blackwater in Iraq or by Russia with the Wagner Group in the Ukraine and Syria is insofar new that these troops serve the purpose to avoid public outcries regarding casualties and collateral damage caused by (own) partisan warfare. Making use of pseudo-mercenaries deliberately mixes civil and military spheres so that combatants and civilians cannot be distinguished clearly, and foreign interventions can be camouflaged as a civil war. Needless to say, such hybrid warfare makes it hard to hold governments accountable for their actions or to negotiate with the enemy.

Despite the fact that some parties deliberately destroy the concept of contained wars and international relations in the Middle East and beyond, the idea of solving the crisis following the *Westphalia* model is still popular,[23] and Schmitt's concept of geopolitical lines can and has been used in different ways: First, it is used as theoretical legitimation for promoting hegemonic interests by accusing opponents of

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[22] His most provocative publication in this context might be Aleksandr Dugin, ***Osnovy geopolitiki, Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii*** [The Foundations of Geopolitcs], Arktogeja, Moscow, 1997.
[23] Rainer Hermann, Arabisches Beben, ***Die wahren Grunde der Krise im Nahen Osten***, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 2018, pp. 196-204.

interfering in (domestic) affairs of foreign states or cultures, spheres of hegemony, or undermining regimes with help of soft- or hard-power. Second, it is used to construct a kind of cultural mapping, in which civilizations -the monotheistic religions, religious confessions, or value and norm systems- clash. Third, it can be used to analyze global lines of cooperation, comparison, and competition in the region. Below, I will discuss which perspective might make sense.

It is hard to deny that colonial and hegemonic powers, such as England, France, and the United States, have played a pivotal role in history and politics of the Middle East since the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Sèvres caused not less trouble in the region than the Treaty of Versailles did to Europe and China. In these cases, striving for hegemony did not take regional lines into account for establishing a new geopolitical order and national borders. With the Ottoman Empire, a multicultural empire -a weak *Behemoth*- got replaced by even weaker nation-states -*Leviathans*- but not homogenous nations.[24] However, I agree with Brian Whitaker that:

> "There is no doubt that the Arab's recent history, from the territorial carve-up after the first world war, through the nakba -"catastrophe"- of 1948 and numerous wars involving foreign powers, either directly or by proxy, has left a deep mark. [...] But to analyze the past endlessly and blame the other (often with good reasons), as Arabs tend to do, merely reinforces the sense of powerlessness and adds to the malaise rather than addressing it."[25]

Turkey, as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, and Israel, as a bottom-up created nation-state, demonstrate that history is not fate. The founding fathers of both states were able to create prospering nations based on nationalism with ethnical or historical characteristics. Though Israel has to deal with the Palestinians and Turkey with the

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[24] Hermann, 2018, pp. 24-29.
[25] Brian Whitaker, ***What's really wrong with the Middle East,*** Saqi, London, 2009, p. 11.

Kurds, both states have managed to create a society merely beyond tribal structures and laws. Certainly, Egypt and some other nations have been on this path to modernity, too, but Turkey and Israel benefitted from their geopolitical role and at least partly inclusion in western structures through adaptation of so-called "western standards", such as rule of law, transparency, an intermediate system with critical media and unions, and a plurality of political parties. All of these factors are preconditions for political participation and legitimation; trust of foreign partners and markets; and they have, by and large, enabled Turkey and Israel to prosper and to avoid the challenge of social relative deprivation -even if conflicts with the Palestinians and between Ultra-Orthodox and secular Jews have certainly the potential to challenge Israel in the future. Schmitt's reservation regarding universal or western values is in these cases certainly not justified, but we should take into account that Schmitt's rather critical perception of the West and its values perhaps derived from the "humiliation of Versailles", contradictions of the treaty regarding its moral aspirations, the instability of the Weimar Republic, and foreign interference in German affairs.

Though I do not believe in the sovereignty-dogma, I cannot deny that foreign interventions have played a role in the crisis in the Middle East. Colonialism and interference in domestic affairs, such as the support of the Iranian coup d'état in 1953,[26] can hardly be considered as highlights of western foreign policy supporting democracy and development in the Middle East. From the decolonization and the war in Algeria, through the short-lived rise of socialism, nationalism, and pan-Arabism in Egypt and elsewhere, to the reinvention of Islamism and fundamentalism, the history of the Middle East could certainly be written as a series of mostly failed responses to a western challenge and geopolitical proxy wars. Moreover, Syria failed despite the fact that it has been a rather secular state. The proxy and civil war in Syria

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[26] Michael Lüders, *Die den Sturm ernten, Wie der Westen Syrien ins Chaos stürzte*, C.H. Beck, München, 2017, 51; Hermann, 2018, pp. 31-32, pp. 104-106.

is, therefore, a good example for the competition regarding hegemony and global lines in the Middle East, and Syria will be discussed as an example for a kind of Schmittian paradigm of non-interference in foreign spaces (or cultures) before I will try to demonstrate that the precondition for political and cultural conflicts are first and foremost social processes.

Michael Lüders' book on "How the West Caused the chaos in Syria"[27] is a good example of a narrative that focuses particularly on Western interference as a cause of the unrest in the Middle East. Though the author seemingly rejects the general idea that Western values matter for the conflicts, he nevertheless emphasizes the role that Western interests have played for the conflicts. His critique of the West comes as no surprise, because Lüders is president of the DAG -the German-Arabian Association- and, therefore, the book might lack some distance to the object of his investigation. His storyline is merely focused on clandestine actions by CIA and armed interference by the USA to safeguard Western interests in economic lines, such as pipelines, the Suez Canal, and access to oil and resources in general.[28] In his eyes, geopolitical and economic interests paired with political and intellectual incompetence are the major reasons for conflicts in the Middle East.

Although Lüders tries to balance his story with examples of homemade chaos -and he rightly mentions that tribal-, clan-, ethnic-, and religious- structures and identities are powerful obstacles to developing a civil society in many Middle Eastern countries-, the narrative is nevertheless based on "Western" political failures and interests as cause of the turmoil in the Middle East. For instance, when Lüders deals with the crisis in Syria, he starts with a short critique of Assad's violent suppression of protests and opposition[29], but he finally stresses that

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[27] Lüders, 2017.
[28] Lüders, 2017, p. 70.
[29] Lüders, 2017, p. 62.

geopolitics explain Assad's loss of power -some of his arguments even sound like *whataboutisms*.[30]

This kind of relativism regarding political failures of Middle Eastern governments -most of them having an authoritarian character- seems to be part of a pseudo-realistic *grand narrative* that accuses foreign powers and their geopolitical interests for causing seemingly endless conflicts and proxy wars in the Middle East.[31] Following such a narrative means that the permanent crisis in the Middle East could be solved by respecting sovereignty of nations; ending exploitation of resources; stopping making use of soft- and hard-power for supporting regime change; and generally dealing with the Middle East as a cultural distinctive zone, in which the West should not intervene. Despite my critique, there is some truth to this story.

Syria might indeed be a prime example for overlapping geopolitical claims because a) it is Russia's and Iran's door to the Mediterranean, and it is an excellent place to have a foot in the door for influencing conflicts between Israel and the Islamic world; b) it matters for Turkey's, Israel's, and Europe's security; c) it is a frontline in the demographic and migration processes in the region; d) regional powers, such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, have competing diplomatic or geopolitical interests in the region; e) the inclusion of Iraq into the conflict poses a threat to the Gulf Region and the United States' interests in pacifying Iraq, containing terror, and safeguarding access to the region's resources; and f) it is also as a failed state offering the opportunity for state-building for marginalized, radical, or oppressed groups, such as the rather secular Kurds or ISIS at the other end of the political spectrum. In summing, it can hardly be denied that Syria is a battlefield for proxy wars due to its mixed demographics, geopolitical position, and failed politics. Like in the Thirty Years' War, groups of mercenaries are

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[30] Lüders, 2017, p. 70.
[31] Lüders, 2017, pp. 64-66; Rainer Hermann, Arabisches Beben, *Die wahren Grunde der Krise im Nahen Osten*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 2018, p. 80.

fighting for different parties and alliances are made despite ideological differences to keep a precarious balance of power between the actors of a proxy war and to fight shared enemies. Nevertheless, even if ISIS could be completely defeated, the geopolitical and domestic problems would remain -last but not least, because there could neither the regime be changed nor global lines established as long as any interfering power sees itself as hegemon in the region.

The reason for the reluctance of the involved parties to find compromises and to restrain from interference is not solely of geopolitical nature since striving for hegemony and hard power politics have got domestic reasons too: Victories abroad might cover defeats at home; being a protecting power of people, who belong to the own imagined community -same religion or ethnic group, for instance- abroad might help in domestic politics; and -as the Chinese say- "killing a chicken to scare the monkeys" is a strategy to deal with potential opponents in domestic and foreign affairs too. The Treaties of Westphalia ended a conflict that started as a religious war and turned into a hegemonic war; in the case of Syria, it seems that the conflict has developed the other way around. The deliberate hybridization and privatization of warfare in asymmetric conflicts and by multiple parties is an indicator for the *glocalization* of conflicts that contradicts Schmitt's concepts of IR and *nomos* in terms of a global order based on different, coexisting *nomoi*. The fact that striving for hegemony goes often along with the critique of the West and claims to fight in name of god for chosen people or true believers in the Middle East, contributed to a reinvention of identities and perceiving the conflicts as a *Clash of Civilizations*, which will be discussed as paradigm below.

2. From 11/9 to 9/11–A Clash of Civilizations as Return of History?

Here is not the place to discuss the different perspectives on what defines a civilization or culture -the concepts themselves carry a burden of political confrontation even inside Europe and can contain

many different imaginaries[32]- but in either case the reduction of contingency by making sense of the world we live in matters for both of them: Whether it is an omnipotent god or predestination based on individual decisions that explain fate or the definition of human rights by a specific set of values, way of reasoning, and polity -in any case, uncertainty regarding what life means and how to live it matters. Ways of making sense of the world and justifying political action may differ but it is for any polity of importance how values and norms are used to discipline, lead, and mobilize people for political purposes. Thus, a certain civilization might response, due to its *telluric* character, in a partisan way to a global challenge.

What is striking about the conflicts in the Middle East is that partisan warfare and terror have been used on a global battlefield. Terror as hard power in combination with the soft power of propaganda, such as making use of modern media to address a global audience, has turned a regional conflict into a global one. Thus, terror is, in this case, not just a tactic to undermine the Western way of living and pursuit of happiness with help of fear, but it seems that it is also part of a fundamentalist political theology and aesthetic of death. The difference between such a culture of death and Western culture of life might be that in the first case collective salvation and individual sacrifice are intertwined in a *jihad,[33]* whereas in the second case human's dignity has got a transcendental quality beyond sacrifices. Post-heroism and a universal understanding of human dignity are certainly results of Western history. Al Qaida and ISIS have been very aware of the role human

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[32] Norbert Elias, ***Über den Prozess der Zivilisation***, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt (M.), 1978.

[33] Stefan Goertz, ***Der neue Terrorismus: Neue Akteure, neue Strategien, neue Taktiken und neue Mittel***, Springer, Wiesbaden, 2018, p. 20 -who discusses Hassan al-Banna's plea for an Islamic order promoting Ummah as alternative to European nationalism in "Nahwa n-nūr" (1936). However, even this pan-Arabian and Islamic vision refers to European nationalism as model; invented traditions and myth of an authentic Islam; and mobilizing of the masses (for jihad). Therefore, the idea of mobilizing masses; in -and exclusion of non-believers; invented history; and mission of chosen people contains many elements of nationalism as secular religion.

dignity plays for Western universalism and, thus, it has been part of their strategy to attack and undermine this universal concept of civilization with help of brutal attacks and beheadings -usually arranged in front of cameras with a specific snap-movie aesthetics- to demonstrate the revolutionary break with history as progress, to provoke a reaction by the victims that contradicts their own values, and to make global news. Nevertheless, we should not come to the conclusion that secular West clashes with a religious rest, because terrorists don't ask their victims about their beliefs and no modern civilization is completely secularized as some scholars, such as José Casanova,[34] rightly stress. Therefore, the idea of a *Clash of Civilizations* in terms of a conflict between a secular Occident and a religious Orient is at least debatable.

In the following, I will discuss whether explaining the permanent crisis in the Middle East as the *Clash of Civilizations* along *cultural lines* makes sense. Understanding the different paradigms regarding progress and relations between civilizations is insofar important since such paradigms are not just *indicator* but *factor* in the political discourse, because they are used to back policies and are roadmaps for concrete politics. Furthermore, I will argue that fundamentalism is a way of self-empowerment of socio-political marginalized individuals in a backward region, in which hegemony matters particularly for governments with weak legitimacy. My argument is that conflicts in the Middle East are not only inter-state conflicts or expression of a *Clash of Civilizations*, but they are caused by glocal relative deprivation and, therefore, are results of a modernization crisis in the Middle East.

Before the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, ideology and class were predominant concepts of the socio-political discourse. For example, in the conflict between Israel and the *Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine* (PLO), mainly political issues were in focus of the conflict, and PLO or Fatah had links to socialist regimes and terror

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[34] José Casanova**, *Public Religions in the Modern World***, Chicago UP, Chicago and London, 1994.

groups, such as the Red Army Faction (RAF) in West Germany, beyond the Middle East. Cooperation and early globalization of local socio-political conflicts are evidenced by coordinated global actions, such as the hijacking of Lufthansa 181 "Landshut" by members of the PLO -the so-called *Commando Martyr Halima*- to support RAF's blackmailing of the German government during the *German Autumn* in 1977.

Of course, the Muslim Brotherhood has got a long history and also the Iranian revolution shocked the world and might be *ex-post* considered to be a decisive moment in the history of the 20th century, but in general ideology and not religion or culture were predominant frameworks to explain social movements before Al Qaida and its charismatic leader Osama Bin Laden entered world stage. Before 11/9 and at least until 9/11, states and liberation movements -or terrorists- gamed the global ideological conflict between the communist and free world for their local political purposes. Hence, the Cold War might have been on global level "cold" but on local level conflicts turned into heated proxy wars easily. The wars in Afghanistan certainly illustrate the non-intended side effects of such partisan warfare on a *glocal* level, as well as the shift from politically to culturally legitimated conflicts.

Although Sajeb Erakat, the Palestinian chief negotiator, accused the US administration, to turn a political into a religious conflict, when US Ambassador to Israel Friedman was tricked into a manipulated photo of Temple Mount picturing a temple instead of Al Aqsa mosque,[35] it might be hard to deny that the political conflict is widely perceived as a religious or cultural conflict anyway. This cultural turn in politics and academe happened at latest after 9/11 and cultural instead of class identity became focal points of political discussions afterward.

Already the conflicts in (former) Yugoslavia were rather perceived as resulting from cultural tensions than caused by the shift of economic power from the Serbian core to Yugoslavia's coastal periphery. It is

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[35] AFP: Amerikas Botschafter in Israel posiert mit Fotomontage, retrieved from: FAZ, 23.05.2018.

almost forgotten that economic decline, question of financial transfers, and *relative deprivation* played an important role in the civil war in Yugoslavia -last but not least, because the opposing parties mobilized their people with help of nationalism fused with reinvented religious and cultural identities, when the socialist system of production was not competitive and the Brezhnev doctrine not in force anymore.

In the 1990s, Francis Fukuyama's theory of an *End of History* nevertheless seemed to explain the success of Western liberalism as based on its ability to balance the anthropological striving for equality and superiority by (democratic) participation and economic progress.[36] Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist block seemed to prove that liberalism, consumerism, and capitalism were better ways to deal with social differences and individual dreams of a better future than planned economy and oppression of individualism. Due to the peaceful uprisings of the East German and Central European people in 1989, the revolution has been widely perceived as a peaceful or velvet one, despite the fact that the failed campaign in Afghanistan and the Tiananmen Crackdown belong to this history too -and so do ethnical cleansings and conflicts all along the blurred lines of the Cold War. The legacy of these conflicts still matters: Rebels and terrorists from the Chechen wars, for example, have been fighting in conflicts in and beyond the Russian borders since the 1990s. Forced migration and globalization of terrorism belong to the aftermath of the end of the global line that divided not just Europe but the world as well.

However, it was not conflicts at the periphery that made it almost a ritual to start statements regarding terrorist attacks with bashing Fukuyama and praising Huntington after 9/11. Before and after 9/11, Fukuyama's anthropological assumptions were widely overseen when he became a poster boy for neoliberal and neoconservative politics insofar that both political schools believed in superiority of Western modernity and modernization politics. Painting the differences between

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[36] Francis Fukuyama, ***The End of History and the Last Man***, Free Press, New York, 2002.

neocons and neoliberals with a broad brush, the neocons were open for making use of hard power for pushing regime change in terms of a revised *domino theory*, whereas the neoliberals believed in soft power and a *magnet theory* based on the six "C's" of modernization -competition, comparison, communication, cooperation, consume, and capitalism- for pulling "backward" societies into a "progressive" future. Fukuyama's theory delivered, more or less, a philosophical legitimation for pushing the world spirit -the *Weltgeist*- into the right direction globally.

The soft power politics and the transfer of Western institutions -values, norms, and concepts of society and good governance- contributed in many cases to successful socio-economic catch-up processes worldwide. However, the Western way of doing things and lifestyle challenged not just the losers of modernization and traditional elites and their mindsets, but it also lead to a creation of imagined communities, such as confessions and nations, to compensate lost identity, freedom, or greatness. For the liberalization of the former communist block, for example, nationalism and religion played an important role not just in Poland -the latter might explain the reluctance of accepting Muslim migrants in Catholic and Orthodox Central European states today.

Taking the experience of a mix of nationalist, socio-economic, and religious factors for mobilization of resistance to the USSR-hegemon in Europe into account, the growing success of Huntington's theory to explain the challenge of Western world order by a rise of non-Western identities and civilizations is not surprising. The aftermath of 11/9 and 9/11 have contributed to the fact that Fukuyama's optimism has been replaced by Huntington's pessimism regarding a universal *nomos* of one world:

"Among civilizations, the West has had a major and at times devastating impact on every other civilization. The relation between the power and culture of the West and the power and cultures of other civilizations is, as a result, the most pervasive characteristics of the world of civilizations. As the relative power of other civilizations increases, the appeal of Western culture fades and non-Western peoples have

increasing confidence in and commitment to their indigenous cultures. The central problem in the relations between the West's -particularly America's- efforts to promote a universal Western culture and its declining ability to do so. [...] What is universalism to the West is imperialism to the rest."[37]

Huntington's core argument is that the rise of cultural identities opposes the creation of *one world*, undermines the confidence in universal or Western values, and leads to a decline of the West. His clarion call for action in face of a *Clash of Civilizations* is based on the following assumptions: 1. "Human history is the history of civilizations."[38] 2. There exists more than just one global civilization.[39] 3. A civilization is a cultural entity: "Values, beliefs, institutions, and social structures" define the line between in- and outside.[40] 4. Even if civilizations change, overlap, and compete with other identities, they are nevertheless real. 5. Civilizations are mortal but exist for a *longue durée*. (Braudel).[41] 6. They rise and fall (Spengler), and merge and split.[42] 7. The following civilizations exist: Sino (China), Japanese (Japan), Hindu (India), Orthodox (Russia), Latino (Latin America), Western, and -possibly- African (South Africa). 8. These civilizations compete with each other.[43] 9. They tend to clash at their junctures or fault lines.[44] 10. Western civilization is declining. (Spengler).[45] 11 In sum, the West has to recreate its own culture and identity to stop the decline.[46]

In order to support his argument, Huntington uses maps, whose captions vary to emphasize the decline of the West, and selected

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[37] Huntington, 2003, p. 183. About Fukuyama: p. 31.
[38] Huntington, 2003, p. 40.
[39] Huntington, 2003, p. 40.
[40] Huntington, 2003, p. 41ff.
[41] Huntington, 2003, p. 41.
[42] Huntington, 2003, p. 44.
[43] Huntington, 2003, p. 44ff.
[44] Huntington, 2003, p. 207ff, 246ff, 266ff.
[45] Huntington, 2003, p. 301ff.
[46] Huntington, 2003.

statistics for the same purpose. This cultural mapping tends to compare apples with oranges -not to mention that the decline of the West de facto means the decolonization of the rest.[47] His statistics, for instance, illustrate the declining numbers of English speakers and Western soldiers and serve the same argument- though we are living in a world, in which English is the lingua franca and small numbers of soldiers rather indicate that forces turned to modern warfare than a loss of their *Kampfkraft*. Both cases hint a demographic argument, too.[48]

Huntington gives many of such dubious examples to prove the decline of the West. His conception of power politics attempts to resurrect the Cold War polarity in a new cultural and, somehow, *Anglo-puritan-shape*. Despite any anomalies of his paradigm, *The West against the rest* in a culturally divided world replaced *the End of History* in one-word as a paradigm for legitimating politics and global cultural lining. In sum, Huntington draws cultural lines as a political *friend-foe* dichotomy and alerts the West (=the USA) to strengthen its identity to prevent the loss of hegemony in a world of clashing civilizations. This reminds of Schmitt, bewailing the loss of *Eurocentrism* in international law after 1945.[49]

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[47] Huntington, 2003, pp. 22-27. These maps are the best examples for his mapping of the decline of the West. Nevertheless, the map of the USA demonstrating the decline of the white population is telling as well.
[48] Huntington, 2003, pp. 60, 61, 84, 85, 86, 88 (just some examples)
[49] Schmitt: 1997, pp. 293ff, 299.

Figure 1: Huntington's construction of time and space

		West		
		Loss of Identity		
		Loss of space		
		Universalism as Hubris		
		Inside		
Western Hegemony	*Historical Series* Return of cultural identity	**Diagnosis: Decline of the west**	*Prognosis* Return of history	**Clash of Civilizations**
		Outside		
		Universalism challenging culture		
		Spatial expansion (incl. migration)		
		Identity		
		Rest		

Huntington's paradigm is not just an indicator of what is going on in world politics, but it is also a factor due to its impact on policies and politics. The reconstruction of Western (=American) identity is the focal point of the Trump-administration, nowadays: You better speak English and be a (white) Protestant to belong to a West that should invest in soldiers and managing migration -that is what Huntington's figures tell the reader. Besides, Trump's intentions to build a wall between the USA and Mexico might be the best proof for the relationship between domestic and foreign affairs when it comes to "global lining" between "civilizations" a'la Huntington. Many of his speeches sound like struggling for predestination with the colt and carrying *white man's burden* even at home. Huntington's theory is a good example for the American fear of losing its national as cultural "identity", as e.g. illustrated by his mapping of Spain and Portugal as part of the West, whereas Latin America -not less influenced by Catholicism and even

rising Protestantism, and speaking Spanish and Portuguese- is said to form a distinct civilization and, therefore, a potential Latino threat.[50]

While his pessimistic diagnose raised from the dust of the fallen Twin Towers, Fukuyama's optimistic prognosis was somehow buried in it. Huntington's diagnose as well as Fukuyama's prognosis are based on very specific interpretations of history and progress. In particular, Fukuyama's refers to Kojève's interpretation of Hegel and relates it to his idea of a directed history as anthropological progress.[51] In Fukuyama's perspective, humans start to recognize each other as equal because they learn from history as a struggle for recognition. However, Huntington's course of history is marked by cultural decline (Spengler), challenge and response (Toynbee), friend-foe antagonism (Schmitt), and long-lasting civilizational differences (Braudel)[52] -last but not least, because of decolonization and rise of alternative identities, which he links to a cultural-political decline of the West. Even his interpretation of Braudel is one-sided because he underestimates the interrelation of time structures of different range, the cooperation between civilizations, and that Braudel deals with the Mediterranean as *one world* -in which people, despite their different religions, are interconnected and share some local customs due to comparable climate and geography in the whole Mediterranean.[53] Following such a telluric argument, people, who cultivate grapes, rice, and olives, has more in common with each other than with those, who drink beer and plant potatoes. In regard of values and norms, history and progress, political and cultural lines it might be useful to think rather in terms of flexible concepts, which are changed, reinvented, and constructed in (socio-political) opposition to alternative concepts but -despite their historical

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[50] Huntington, 2003, 26f
[51] Alexandre Kojève, Hegel, *Eine Vergegenwärtigung seines Denkens, Kommentar zur Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Stuttgart, 1958.
[52] Huntington: 2003, p. 39, 55.
[53] Fernand Braudel, *Das Mittelmeer und die mediterrane Welt in der Epoche Philipps II.*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt (M.) 1994.

background- are part of political actions and not eternal conditions. Therefore, the line, which divides the Mediterranean nowadays, is a political line based on different polities and images of civilizations, which might have a long history but are, nevertheless, changeable and did so in the past. Because Huntington does not deny that civilizations change -and his book deals with the decline of one of them-, it is surprising that he uses Braudel's (optimistic) concept of *longue durée* to pretend a kind of inflexibility and incompatibility of civilizations contributing to their clash along cultural lines.

Even if Huntington's theory has its flaws, it is nevertheless evident that history and religion play a prominent role in contemporary conflicts, because they can be used as a source to create imagined communities, to back political theologies, and to legitimize geopolitical claims. However, how we deal with these legacies of and references to the past depends merely on our current political standpoint and the current crisis does not derive from any eternal confrontation between different cultures -because cultures change and are heterogenic, cooperate and clash day-per-day. Even the mindsets of an Indonesian and Moroccan Muslim are hardly the same, and differences in terms of making sense of the world between a "born again" Evangelical in the United States and a Catholic in Germany are striking too. Internal conflicts between confessions, migration, secularism, conversion, and cultural exchange might blur cultural lines between religions or civilizations as well. This is not to say that there are no cultural conflicts or irritations between civilizations likely -there are multiple irritations and conflicts happening on the local and global level for many reasons every day- but these conflicts are first and foremost socio-political clashes.

3. Glocal Relative Deprivation and the Illusion of a Westphalian Peace

The Westphalian governance, which emerged from the European religious wars and redefined national sovereignty based on the consensus of not interfering in domestic affairs of foreign states, led to neutralization of religion as a factor in international relations. In the following centuries, *Kulturkämpfe* and revolutions did maybe not

secularize political theology and politics completely but made religion merely a private matter in most Western states. However, Schmitt already understood that universalism and political ideologies undermined the Westphalian system -and ideologies, such as communism or fascism, were totalitarian socio-political movements because they encompassed the whole way of living and thinking. Due to the transnational spread of universal values and global comparability of living conditions after the totalitarian ideologies failed, liberal political movements can hardly be neutralized by an all-encompassing state or contained by an international system. A Westphalian solution might be an option to pacify conflicts between nations and their confessions, but the problem is that religion, nationalism, politics, and social affairs -in many cases, intertwined by political movements in past and present- are challenged by universalism from *inside* the Middle East as part of World Society today.[54] In the following, I will argue that those societies and *stationary states,*[55] whose institutions, values and norms, don't provide orientation, due to a lack of transparency and semi-tribal structures, suffer under social deprivation intensified by global comparability of living conditions; a sandwich position between prospering and failing economies; and liberalization or emancipation movements of different character -many of them having an agenda for social reform justified either by a mix of Islamism and/or nationalism or universalism with Arab characteristics. Nevertheless, let us start with the family as the nucleus of society.

In the West, neutralization of religious worldviews in public and the rise of competing or co-existing identities, such as political, generational, gender, or social identities, have lead to a partly decline of the role local networks and family-ties play for social mobility. This does not mean that networks and nepotism do not play a role in

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[54] That's why I believe that a Westphalian solution -as promoted by Hermann, 2018, pp. 196-204- is an illusion.

[55] Niall Ferguson, *The Great Degeneration, How Institutions Decay and Economies Die*, Penguin, London 2014, p. 9.

Western societies -they do and social climbing, change of status, and habitus still takes several generations[56]- but identities have been individualized and demographics have declined. In praxis, this means that peer-groups can be chosen and social mobility does not depend as much on networks as it did in the past, when gender, clan, and community roles were rather hard to change as long as someone did not decide to migrate to colonies or the new world.

This kind of individualization process is a result of the fact that patriarchal order declined due to industrialization, wars, socio-political movements, and egalitarian but distinct youth cultures that defined new gender roles -processes, which altogether changed the relationship between family and individuals, especially in metropolitan areas. In praxis, this means that individuals still rely to a certain degree on their family to enter the elevator to the next social level, but they do not have to pull all the other family members to the next floor after they reached it. Rationalization and individualization of performance -which still is neither fair nor completely free from factors beyond the individual- created a consumer and knowledge society based on the democratization of the access to education and lower demographics compared to other parts of the world. In the Middle Eastern stationary states, family and education still play another socio-political role and do rather focus on disciplining individuals than setting their critical potential free:

> "If this makes young Arabs well equipped for anything at all, it is how to survive in an authoritarian system: just memorize the teacher's words, regurgitate them as your own, avoid asking questions -and you'll stay out of trouble. In the same way, the suppression of their critical faculties turns some of them into gullible recipients for religious ideas that would collapse under serious scrutiny. But it ill-equips

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[56] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Die Neue Umverteilung, Soziale Ungleichheit in Deutschland*, C.H. Beck, München, 2013, pp. 104-110. The German case is a good example for how hard social climbing even in liberal societies with free education is.

them for roles as active citizens and contributors to their countries' development."[57]

Additionally, the more a society is functionally differentiated in terms of neutralized topics and expert cultures -so that people can think independently from ideological and political restraints-, the more individuals can perform as experts. Obviously, such expert cultures have to be based on education and performance -and a maximum of transparency and a minimum of nepotism might be helpful to achieve such a goal since it reduces contingency, for example for investors, and maximizes trust of stakeholders. The latter rule applies to all kinds of organizations -not just to businesses or universities; and the core of the world society contains a variety of capitalisms, all of them profiting from working administrations, individual performance, knowledge, foreign investments, transparency, and immaterial production.

This is not or to a lesser degree the case in the *semi-periphery* and *periphery* of world society.[58] States in these regions do not have to be poor, but their economies are largely based on material production, for instance of in the core developed or agricultural products. Besides, in the

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[57] Whitaker, 2009, pp. 20.

[58] I use Immanuel Wallerstein's concepts in a modified way: The core of world society profits most from world economy thanks to a high level of immaterial production, the semiperiphery is marked by material production (of in the core designed products and with help of in the core developed machines), and the periphery produces the raw material for these products. Since most of the surplus relies on immaterial production and depends on access to knowledge and free investments, the economy of the core is based on knowledge societies. Social systems of productions differ in terms of their institutions (values and laws)/polities as framework of economy, education, finance, politics, welfare-state etc. (see e.g. Werner Abelshauser, David Gilgen, Andreas Leutzsch, *Kultur, Wirtschaft, Kulturen der Weltwirtschaft*, in: Idem (Eds.), Wirtschaftskulturen–Kulturen der Weltwirtschaft (Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Sepcial Issue, 24) Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2012, pp. 9-27. This perspective differs in terms of reasons for economic flows from e.g. Immanuel Wallerstein, *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction*, Paradigm Press, Boulder, 2004. Note: World Systems Theory is not a World Society Theory (though it could be argued that I try to use elements of both perspectives in this paper).

core, human capital is highly mobile and social climbing relies more on individual performance than it does in many Middle Eastern societies:

> "Nepotism hampers economic development and places Arab countries at a disadvantage in relation to those parts of the world where such practices are less prevalent. The other side of the coin is that people without favorable kinship ties are placed at a disadvantage, and distinguishing between them according to the chance of their birth opens the way to discrimination not only based on the family background but also on their religious and ethnic backgrounds too."[59]

Furthermore, distribution of wealth might differ, because the production of agricultural or industrial products on large scale demands more financial capital but less human capital than a garage startup does in the beginning because the production is based on a few skilled engineers, machines and many unskilled workers. In sum, such *social systems of production*[60] come mostly along with less liberal polities, smaller middle-class, fewer options for social mobility, and wider social gaps. Nevertheless, in the semi-periphery of world society growth, wealth, and participation can be possible, but they rely very much on (calculated) demographics and economic circles. The fact that most countries in the Middle East still face a demographic revolution[61] but economic stagnation causes necessarily a *crisis of distribution* of wealth.

Though the Middle East includes extremely rich societies, their economies are rarely diversified and mostly depend on demand for oil,[62] agricultural or industrial products in the core. Any economic and political crisis -for instance in neighboring countries of the periphery or failed states- effects these states more and makes people relying on support by

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[59] Whitaker, 2009, p. 65.
[60] See: footnote 58 and Andreas Leutzsch, ***Wirtschaftsgeschichte einer Weltgesellschaft?,*** in EWE: Deliberation, Knowledge, Ethics, 25 (2014) Vol. 4, pp. 574-577.
[61] Hermann, 2018, p. 263.
[62] Perthes, 2011, p. 19.

religious communities and family again. The data below illustrates the situation regarding several factors that I discussed before.

Country	Global Competitiveness Index (GCR) 2018-19	GDP 2017 UN	Education (universities in the top-100 of the QS Ranking 2018	Perception of corruption (Ranking by transparency 2016)	Peace GPI 2018	Human Development HDI 2018 Inequality adjusted in ()
Switzerland	4	20	4	5	12	2 (4)
Singapore	2	36	2	7	8	9 (19)
USA	1	1	32	18	121	13 (25)
Germany	3	4	3	10	17	5 (7)
EU in sum		2	29			
Hong Kong	7	33	5	15	Not included	7 (21)
China	28	2	5	79	112	Not in top quartile
Russia		11	1	131	154	49 (40)
United Arab	27	29	0	24	45	34 (not in top quartile)
Qatar	30	54	0	31	56	37 (not in top quartile)
Israel	20	31	0	28	146	22
Saudi Arabia	Not in top 30	19	0	62	129	39 (not in top quartile)
Turkey	Not in top 30	17	0	75	149	Not in top quartile
Egypt	Not in top 30	51	0		142	Not in top quartile
Tunisia	Not in top 30	89	0	75 (with Turkey)	78	Not in top quartile
Syria	Not in top 30	68 (2011)	0	173	163 last	Not in top quartile
Jordan	Not in top 30	95	0	57	98	Not in top quartile
Yemen	Not in top 30	93	0	170	158	Not in top quartile
Iraq	Not in top 30	53	0	166	160	Not in top quartile
Iran	Not in top 30	25	0	131	131	Not in top quartile
Sources	C-Rep 18/wiki	UN wiki 2017	QS Global 2018	Transparency Int. Index wiki 2016	GPI wiki 2018	HDI 2018 wiki

The performance of many Middle Eastern countries in rankings of universities, transparency, GDP, competitiveness, and development is in the global average or below -thus supporting my claim that the Middle East belongs to the semi-periphery in economic terms.[63] Weak GDPs have to do with the fact that most of the surplus is generated by the immaterial value of a product -patents, design, and labels- and that requires a knowledge society and diversified (quality) production. It is likely that a lack of immaterial production comes along with the different status of knowledge, education, and preconditions for social climbing in society. Clashes between generations, genders, and classes might be enhanced by different experiences and expectations regarding social roles and economic opportunities. At least this was the case in many western post-war societies when modes of production, lifestyles, and horizon of comparability due to media changed. In regard to many Middle Eastern societies, it might make sense to think about different reasons for social relative deprivation: First, relative deprivation in terms of compared to the lifestyle and social roles of the parental generation;[64] second, relative deprivation caused by local comparison with individuals having better chances in life due to family ties and networks;[65] third, relative deprivation enhanced by global comparison via modern mass media with individuals outside the own culture.[66] Due to its local and global dimension, we can call this altogether *glocal relative deprivation* in a society, which is a world society because of

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[63] Hermann, 2018, pp. 269-277; Perthes, 2011, pp. 13-16.

[64] Hermann, 2018, pp. 265-268; Perthes, 2011, pp. 143-145 (Palestine), 165 (comparison to "68er").

[65] For cases of protests caused by relative deprivation see: Perthes, 2011, pp. 13-14, 31, 43 (Tunisia), 79 (Libya), 100 (Yemen), 123 (Syria), 145 (Algeria), Julia Gerlach, Der verpasste Frühling, Woran die Arabellion gescheitert ist, bpb, Bonn, 2016, pp. 21-22 (Egypt); Hermann, 2018, p. 13.

[66] The role of Facebook and mass media is still widely underestimated because many scholars focus on direct communication (for example Perthes, 2011, pp. 26-27, 100), but the trick with mass media is that they distribute images, trends, norms, and standards and contribute to isomorphy in world society by providing global horizons of comparability.

global communication, competition, cooperation, and comparison. The dynamics between the global and local are pivotal for the crisis in the Middle East.

Glocal relative deprivation leads to a set of modernization crises and to a local vacuum of power, which is used by some states for extending their sphere of influence and/or to support regime change and democratization in the Middle East. In particular, the term *Facebook-revolution* is well chosen because comparing and competing in front of a global horizon of expectations has caused an *identity crisis,*[67] which has split people inter alia into secular, traditional, and "New Born" Muslims -I am using "New Born" as a term for fundamentalists, due to the fact that such a reinvention of identities is not only happening in the Middle East. Similar trends in the United States, for instance in the American *Bible Belt*, contribute to the impression that we are facing a rediscovery of religion and a *Clash of Civilizations*. In both cases, people seem to choose God to belong to the chosen people, and to create a distinction between them and *others* in religious and national terms -therefore, religion and nationalism can be combined and used as social liberalization ideology and for creating a new cultural identity. In the Middle East, the Iranian revolution has been an example of a combination of social, political, and religious ideas to an expansive nationalism.[68]

This identity crisis is closely related to a *legitimation crisis* of authoritarian regimes based on dysfunctional administrations in *stationary states* (Ferguson). In Egypt and Libya, attempts by the dictators to establish dynasties[69] and to hand over power to their crown princes

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[67] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ***Umbruch und Kontinuität, Essays zum 20. Jahrhundert***, C.H. Beck, München, 2000, p. 244; Hermann, 2018, pp. 205-216.

[68] Regarding Iran's economy, it is noteworthy that Iran's paramilitary, revolutionary forces control de facto many businesses, which limits the free flow of capital and investments and creates perfect conditions for nepotism and corruption to which the US-sanctions contribute certainly, too.

[69] Gerlach, 2016, pp. 23-24 (Egypt); Perthes, 2011, 50-52 (Egypt), 81-82 (Libya), 125 (Syria).

contributed together with a lack of free elections, widespread nepotism, kinship systems, and corruption to a *participation crisis*:

> "The simple fact is that Arabs cannot emerge into a new era of freedom, citizenship, and good governance while their society continues to be dominated by the obligations of kinship, whether at a family or tribal level, and while kinship systems continue to provide the security and support that other societies manage to provide for all citizens, regardless of birthright and genes. This -and how to change it- is the central challenge that Arabs face today."[70]

The combination of corruption and total political penetration of society forces anyone into an accomplice with the authorities beyond individual moral beliefs so that a *penetration crisis* has gone along with a *distribution crisis* of wealth and opportunities, too.[71]

Altogether, a *modernization crisis* has contributed to a power vacuum on the local and global level. Another reason for this vacuum is that the hegemon -the United States- have lost some interest in the region:[72] The failed regime change in Iraq and the loss of reputation due to violations of human rights are among the reasons for the reluctance of the Obama and Trump Administrations to force regime change in Syria. Besides, the goal to establish free elections from above and based on the principle of "one man, one vote" turned out to be rather beneficial for the opponents of American hegemony, such as Muqtada al-Sadr. Despite the general impression in media, attempts to liberalize the Middle East might have been de facto rather limited so that the thesis of a challenge of Muslim societies by universalism and soft power should be taken with a pinch of salt. To discourage support of liberalization, conspiracy theories regarding Western agents using

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[70] Whitaker, 2009, p. 81.
[71] On modernization theory, see Wehler, 2000, p. 244. On relative deprivation, see Wehler, 2013.
[72] Hermann, 2018, pp. 101-102.

soft power to undermine foreign regimes are often discussed in context with the *sovereignty-red-herring*[73] in the Middle East.[74]

Besides, the USA turned, thanks to fracking, into an oil-exporting nation, and the geopolitical focus shifted slightly from the Middle East to the Pacific and China anyway. In addition to the failed American neoconservative hard-power agenda for the Middle East, the stagnation of Egypt as a regional power, the weakening of secular (minority) regimes, such as the Baath party in Syria,[75] and seemingly hopeless conflicts matter in the Middle East, too.

Additionally, the mix of domestic and international political vacuums has opened the floor for new state-building projects, such as the rather secular project of the Kurds and ISIS' fundamentalist pseudo-caliphate in Iraq and Syria.[76] ISIS and their caliphate are an excellent example for transforming a local identity crisis into a global one by using partisan tactics abroad for a state-building project in the Middle East. The multitude of marginalized individuals from East and West -some previously served as officers in the (secular) Iraqi forces; many intended to escape their marginal positions in social or tribal hierarchies; and others tried to find salvation for a previously wasted life- is a good example of the role relative deprivation playing on global socio-political level nowadays. The iconoclasm of Palmyra might illustrate the revolutionary character of this movement that has not just intended to rewrite history -like the French and Russian revolutionaries tried- but to put an end to the idea of (secular) history and progress at all by establishing a totalitarian *permanent simultaneity* between

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[73] Ruptures of supply chains and economic flows and the "Refugee Crisis" demonstrate that unrest in the world society cannot be contained and treated as domestic affairs anyway.

[74] Perthes, 2011, pp. 20-21.

[75] Perthes, 2011, 126.

[76] Kai Hirschmann, *Wie Staaten schwach werden, Fragilität von Staaten als internationale Herausforderung*, bpb, Bonn, 2016, pp. 123-124 (ISIS); Hermann, 2018, p. 97 (Kurds).

struggling for worldly recognition and transcendental salvation -a *jihad* to feed the own *megalothymia*[77] in moral and political terms.

Many partisan movements are at least financed by shadow economies, such as trafficking of people, oil, drugs, weapons, diamonds, and money laundering. Moreover, the Middle East is in a sandwich position between failing and prospering regions; therefore, parts of the region are crossroads of such illegal trade, which is potentially a challenge for rule of law. The vacuum of power matters as chance and as threat for the competing regional powers. Turkey and Qatar; Iran, Bahrain, and Syria; Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel are as relevant regional parties involved in this conflict of potential hegemons.[78] In particular, the case of Syria demonstrates that it might be hard to agree about drawing cultural global lines in such a multiethnic space. Furthermore, Russia has used the conflict in Syria for another attempt to regain its status of world power and to redefine its global line through access to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The mix of proxy wars, terrorism, and political unrest has certainly the potential for a major clash between nations but not civilizations. Generally, confessional and not civilizational differences might matter more between Shiites and Sunni than between the monotheistic religions at large.[79]

In the light of the multi-causal explosion of violence in Syria, even the permanent conflict between Israel and the Arabs that still waits to be solved -and can perhaps only be solved by a kind of union or a "one country, two systems solution"- has merely turned into political folklore. In a nutshell, we are not witnessing a *Clash of Civilizations* but a transfer of domestic problems -identity and modernization crisis- to the regional and global level. The *Westphalian Governance* and Schmitt's global lines are concepts to make a distinction between domestic and foreign affairs to enable coexistence of either states or empires -*Leviathan*

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[77] Fukuyama, 2002.
[78] Hermann, 2018, pp. 98-102; Perthes, 2011, pp. 191-196
[79] Hermann, 2018, pp. 114-117, 216-219.

or *Behemoths*- but not both at once. In world society concepts that construct domestic as containable affairs and that are based on the assumption that it is, despite global horizons of comparability and communication, for regimes possible to decide "sovereign" what people should and should not believe or chose as a lifestyle, tend to support dystopian rule since they lack a sense for the fact that the social -as Marx points out- is based on complex relations and not simple decisions.

The demographic pressure from Africa and Central Asia and the geostrategic *Mittellage* are not helpful for creating a Westphalian nation-state system either, because the region relies on multilateralism and interference to keep the strategic and demographic balance in the region. Additionally, the pre-requirement for construction of global lines is that there are clearly recognizable hegemons in the region. This is not the case and the only likely candidates in terms of global economic strength and soft as well as hard power -the European Union and the United States- are less and less eager to make sacrifices for a *Pax Americana*.[80]

Conclusion

In summing, geopolitical lines can be defined in very different ways and the construction of global lines as civilizational or political frontlines in conflicts between states and/or empires depends, in many cases, rather on political interests and diagnose than on a non-biased view of past and present of the crisis in the Middle East. Politics in the Middle East have been closely linked to shifts in paradigms in social and political sciences as well. Theories are therefore indicator and factor of socio-political processes in the Middle East and beyond. The tendency to blame civilizations (Huntington) or foreign interference (IR) for the crisis in the Middle East illustrates the problematic relationship between politics and political sciences, writing and making of history. This does not necessarily mean that any of the discussed theories is completely

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[80] Hermann, 2018, p. 100.

wrong but it means that these paradigms have *anomalies* due to the mono-causal understanding of various events, as evidenced by various examples in regard of selective key-events of Middle Eastern history. Needless to say, such a paper cannot provide a comprehensive discussion of the history of the Middle East, but I am optimistic that anyone, who is familiar with the literature on the Middle East, understands that this paper deals with turning points and widely discussed events of Middle Eastern history. As said in the first paragraphs of this paper, I plea for a paradigm shift from a mono-causal understanding of past and present of the Middle East through the lens of IR or Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* paradigms to a differentiated understanding of the crisis in the Middle East as based on a set of local modernization crises caused by the rise of a global horizon of communication and comparability -the world society. Huntington already discussed in a rather polemic way different paradigms as well, therefore, and because his 'narrative' and diagnose have influenced concrete politics worldwide, it seemed to be useful to check his theory regarding anomalies, too. I think that the concept of *glocal relative deprivation* offers a promising opportunity to bridge between the macro-perspective of world society theories and the micro-perspective of modernization theories to avoid those anomalies that I sketched -certainly in a rather brief and not comprehensive way- regarding theories that try to explain global processes by focusing on (international) relations between either national or cultural/civilizational containers.

In the 1970s and 1980s, social history and an interest in class, social distinctions, functional differentiation, and political modernization dominated at Western universities; while in the "Global South" theories regarding flows of capital and resources, such as *Dependence* or *World Systems Theory*, played an important role in explaining so-called *backwardness* and *progressiveness* in North and South. In 1989, Francis Fukuyama's concept of the *End of History*, a dialectical idea of liberal modernization by pacifying human's *thymos* towards an End of

History, in which everyone is equal and free, convinced a wider audience that cheered the implosion of the USSR.[81] After 9/11, Fukuyama's universal history was in many cases falsely associated with the neo-conservative agenda of (failed) regime changes in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Before 9/11, the idea of new conflicts triggered by antagonisms between civilizations was often mocked as playing with stereotypes regarding foreign cultures and underestimating their potential for social, political, and cultural reforms to catch-up with the West. Nowadays, this optimism regarding peaceful regime-change and good governance declined and Huntington's concept of a "*Clash of Civilizations*" and pessimism replaced Fukuyama's "*globalism*" and optimism as a paradigm for understanding conflicts worldwide. However, the pseudo-realistic explanations of the conflicts in the Middle East as proxy wars between powers striving for hegemony either on regional or on global scale, and the idea of a *Clash of Civilizations* have serious flaws.

Huntington's theory of a *Clash of Civilizations* maps the world as divided by cultural lines, and he clearly promotes a reawakening of the West to be prepared for dealing with an expansive rest. Needless to say, Huntington's analysis of a decline of the West contradicts the thesis that the West -and in particular the United States- is responsible for all the trouble in the rest. However, there is no doubt that almost all attempts by the USA (=Huntington's "West") to force with hard power regime change -for example in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 2000s- caused multiple unintended consequences, such as partisan wars, rise of terrorism, and migration waves. Generally, regime change seems more justified, if the people and neither foreign powers nor authoritarian regimes decide about the state of emergency. It goes without saying that, in praxis, foreign interference might be needed to empower people to become sovereign, and such interference should not be

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[81] Fukuyama, 2002.

blocked on a base of an illusionary concept of sovereignty of states since human rights and migration do not stop at fortified borders of nation states. Who are the people is hard to decide -and defining political movements either as terrorists or as liberators is part of the "blame game" in the Middle East and elsewhere- but it is certainly not those who kill their own citizens with gas or bombs.

However, the "fear of the rest" is caused by and the situation in the Middle East is insofar complicated because anti-authoritarian movements and revolutions have not always been in "Western interest" or followed the Western idea of historical progress towards a secular, peaceful, democratic, and pluralistic modernity -the *End of History*. For instance, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 belongs to the list of crucial dates, which I mentioned at the beginning of this article, because the coup d'état against Mohammad Mosaddegh and the Western support of the authoritarian Shah-regime led to a fusion of nationalism and Shia Islam based on Ayatollah Khomeini's charismatic leadership. It is not without irony that Iran managed to do an Islamic revolution and to adapt to some extent Western republicanism and nationalism. Iran's opposition to the United States and Israel has much to do with the role nationalism and Shia Islam played for decolonizing Iran. However, in case of the Arab Spring -the so-called *Facebook-revolutions*- universalism matters for the middle-classes more than nationalism or a mix of nationalism and Islamism do and their concepts of dignity (*karama*), justice (*adala*), and liberty (*hurriya*) do not just remind us of the French Revolution's "liberty, equality, and fraternity" but potentially clash with values of conservative Muslims and traditional and/or secular elites.[82] The civil war in Syria is not just a proxy war but also a clash of different ideas of polity and society, which can hardly be solved by ignoring socio-political dynamics on a local and global level to follow the illusion of Westphalian governance in a globalized world. Besides, nothing seems to be more hypocritical

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[82] Perthes, 2011, 34.

than Realpolitik that refers to sovereignty, but either means turning a blind eye to democides or expanding own hegemony.

In politics, ethical or ideological questions are usually intertwisted with practical ones. For example, the Syrian political vacuum enables Iran by backing the Assad-regime with help of Hezbollah to expand its global line through Syria to Lebanon and the Mediterranean -and by doing so challenges Israel that Iran perceives as a bridgehead of the West and its values. Such an attempt is not just for Israel's security problematic, but it poses also a serious threat to Iran itself because of the American blockade and Israel's red lines regarding Iran's influence in the region. In this case, supporting sovereignty and turning geopolitical into a potentially ideological conflict ends up in drawing a global line that potentially threatens the sovereignty of several states and enhances relative deprivation in Iran. Cultural, economic, and political frontiers crisscross in many cases in the Middle East, and their history and future are certainly interrelated.

Despite the rise of virtual global lines and world society, the political focus of the decision makers is still on three global lines, which have divided the region since the decline of the Ottoman Empire and often in contradiction to regional interdependence: First, the Sykes-Picot Agreement that not just defined the British and French spheres of influence in the region, but lead to the foundation of heterogenic states with overlapping tribal structures after World War II; second, the end of the Cold War that created an ideological and power vacuum insofar that socialism as liberalization ideology has now been discredited; third, the American sphere of influence -the *Pax Americana*- though this (red) line seems to get blurred since the Middle East and the Atlantic World have lost some importance due to the rise of the Pacific.

In the future, the shift of the Western geopolitical focus will pose the biggest threat in terms of peace and development to the Middle East. For centuries controlling the Atlantic meant global hegemony -silver, gold, cotton, oil, tanks, soldiers, slaves, migrants, missionaries, and merchants were shipped between Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and America. Ruling Gibraltar, Suez, and Panama Canal meant de facto controlling world trade. The Middle East with its complicated cultural,

social, and political heritage seems to lose its strategic significance because the *Great Game* is played in the South China Sea and between Silicon Valley and Shenzhen now. Though geopolitical threats by *partisans* and *pirates* or blocking the Suez Canal or Persian Gulf still matters -and China's first outpost in this region is not accidentally Djibouti-, the global lines in the South China Sea are of even more geostrategic interest. We are witnessing the creation of new global lines -the *One Belt, One Road* initiative and the Eurozone are just some of them- and it depends very much on *glocal* socio-political dynamics whether this change poses a threat or chance to the future of the Middle East. The precondition for taking the change as chance is not striving for hegemony or expanding into a useless desert but as Bill Clinton put it: "It's the economy, stupid." In an age of immaterial value creation that requires innovative, well educated, and performance oriented people[83] -nothing authoritarian regimes can, despite all rumors, produce with illiberal education systems, nepotism, lack of transparency, and rule *by* instead *of* law- the solution cannot be more division and less democracy in the Middle East.

Özet

Bu makale, Orta Doğu'daki mevcut çatışmaların sadece devletler arası bir çatışma ya da bir *Medeniyetler Çatışması* olmadığını, *küyerel* göreli yoksunluğun bir iktidar boşluğuna ve durgun devletler arası çatışmalara yol açtığını savunmaktadır. Tezimi desteklemek için üç paradigmayı ve bunların Orta Doğu'daki krizi açıklama kapasitesini tartışacağım. Birincisi, Carl Schmitt'in *Westphalia Yönetişimi*'nden dış müdahalesizlik alanları olarak küresel hatlara (bir *Yeryüzü Yasaları* hattına) dönüşüdür. Bu ya ulus aşırı bir krize gerçek dışı uluslararası çözümler önermek ya da paradoksal şekilde, bölgedeki hegemonik çıkarları desteklemek için kullanılmaktadır. Schmitt evrensel değerlerin ya da totaliter ideolojilerin, halk, korsan ve partizan total

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[83] Leutzsch, 2014.

savaşlarıyla birlikte, bir *Westphalia devlet sistemi* için ön koşul olan, kabine savaşına son verdiğini biliyordu. Fakat karşılıklı olarak birbirine bağlı bir dünya toplumunda bölgesel etki alanları tanımlamak neredeyse imkânsızdır; Orta Doğu örneğinde ise hangi gücün hegemon kabul edileceği dahi tartışmalıdır. İkinci olarak, Samuel Huntington'ın klasik emperyalist anlayışın ötesinde, küresel mukayese edilebilirlik ufku sayesinde güçlendirilmiş küresel standartlar olarak bir Batı hegemonyası çağrısı için tartışmalı veri ve göndermelere dayalı *Medeniyetler Çatışması* paradigmasını irdeleyeceğim. Üçüncü olarak ise, Hans-Ulrich Wehler'in ulus devletlerde göreli yoksunluk, kimlik, katılım, bölüşüm, nüfuz ve meşruiyet krizlerine dayalı modernleşme krizinin nedenleri üzerine çizdiği çerçeveyi, Orta Doğu'daki çatışmaları dünya toplumunda *küyerel* mukayese ve rekabetin bir sonucu olarak analiz etmek üzere genişleteceğim.

Küyerel göreli yoksunluğun nedeni, insanların yerel yaşam koşullarını küresel olarak mukayese etmelerinden kaynaklanır. Bir devletin performansı sadece sıralamalar, göstergeler ya da piyasalar gibi küresel mukayese ufku içinde karşılaştırılmaz; sıradan insanlar da kendi yaşam standartlarını karşılaştırabilir ve dünyadaki diğer insanlarla iletişim kurabilir. Bu iletişimsel ufka *dünya toplumu* deriz. Bu bağlamda, *küyerel göreli yoksunluk* kimi devletlerin Orta Doğu'da rejim değişikliği ve demokratikleşmeyi destekleyerek ya da engelleyerek kendi nüfuz alanlarını genişletmek için kullandıkları bir iktidar boşluğu ile bağlantılı bir yerel modernleşme krizine yol açmaktadır. Özellikle Facebook-devrimi terimi hayli isabetlidir, çünkü küresel beklentiler ufku karşısında mukayese ve rekabet, ulusal toplulukları seküler, geleneksel ve "Yeni Doğmuş" Müslümanlara bölen bir *kimlik krizine* yol açmıştır. Bu bağlamda din ve/veya milliyetçilik, yeni kültürel kimlikler yaratarak toplumsal kurtuluş ideolojileri olarak kullanılabilmektedir. Orta Doğu'da İran devrimi, toplumsal, siyasal ve dinsel fikirleri yayılmacı bir milliyetçilik çatısı altında toplamanın bir örneği olmuştur.

Genel olarak, kimlik krizi, *durgun devletlerdeki* işlevsiz fakat yaşamın tüm alanlarına nüfuz eden yönetimlere dayalı otoriter rejimlerin *meşruiyet kriziyle* yakından ilişkilidir. Mısır ve Libya'da diktatörlerin hanedanlıklar kurma ve iktidarı kendi soylarına devretme

çabaları -özgür seçimlerin yokluğu, yaygın kayırmacılık, kan bağı sistemleri ve yozlaşma ile beraber- *durgun* siyasal yapılarda bir *katılımcılık krizine* yol açmıştır. Yozlaşma ile toplum üzerinde bütüncül siyasal nüfuz bileşimi, herkesi bireysel ahlaki inanışlarının ötesinde otoritelerle ortaklığa zorlamakta; *nüfuz krizine* zenginlik ve fırsatların *bölüşüm krizi* eşlik etmektedir. Kısaca *modernleşme krizi* yerel ölçekte bir iktidar boşluğunun oluşmasına katkıda bulunmuştur; bu ise marjinalleştirilmiş bireylerden oluşan hareketler tarafından alternatif devlet inşaları için ya da yabancı devletler tarafından kendi etki alanlarını genişletmek için kullanılmaktadır.

Krizin arka planında, dünya ekonomisinde rekabet gücünün bireysel yeteneğe dayalı üst düzey eğitime erişim, siyasette şeffaf karar alma süreçleri, kurumları denetleyerek güveni inşa eden, işleyen ve özgür bir medya ve topluma bireysel ve eşit şekilde katılım imkânı ile beraber bir bilgi toplumunu gerektiren tinsel üretime dayalı olması yatmaktadır. Göreli yoksunluğun nedeni, dikey bireysel hareketliliğin kimi insanlar için doğru cinsiyete, aileye, toplumsal, siyasal ya da kültürel arka plana sahip olmayanlar için çok daha zor olduğu gözlemi ve duygusudur. Batı ve Orta Doğu toplumları arasındaki kurumsal farklar, yerel ve küresel -dolayısıyla *küyerel-* düzeyde göreli yoksunluğu daha da artırmakta; Orta Doğu devlet ve toplumlarının kırılganlığını açıklamaktadır. Bu ise, kendini küresel kültürel şekilde ifade etse de, aslında küyerel toplumsal farklılıklara dayanan yerel sosyo-politik çatışmaların başlıca nedenidir.