

Transborder Migration Crises and Ideological Conflict in Africa: Revisiting Huntington's Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order

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Abstract

Africa's development is menaced by turbulent challenges arising from internal political crises and insecurity of various sorts. The complexities of the continent's recent trans-border crises exemplified in illicit drug peddling, contraband smuggling, organ harvesting, human trafficking and slavery have nonetheless heightened this mishap. Worse-off is the trending slavery of fellow Africans along the Mediterranean coast by Libyans and other African accomplices. The trend is worrisome and goes to justify Samuel P. Huntington's Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order. It amplifies his thesis that new patterns of conflict will occur along the boundaries of different cultures and patterns of cohesion will be found within the ideological and religious boundaries. Also, the patterns of the current trans-border crises have reflected the age-long differences between the sub-Saharan Africa and the Northern African Arabs. Hence, this study will take a cursory look into the trend of trans-border migration and modern slavery in Africa from the theoretical standpoints of Samuel P. Huntington's book: Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order. In order to achieve the main aim of this study, data will be sourced from secondary materials published in the forms of

textbooks, newspapers, magazines and other documentary texts. The data will be analyzed relying on qualitative, descriptive method.

Keywords: Migration, Ideology, Human Trafficking, Civilization

1. The Clash of Civilization: What is it?

“The Clash of Civilizations” (1993) is a popular work of the late Harvard professor of political science Samuel P. Huntington, who had suggested that the main reason for violent and non-violent conflicts in the post-cold war period will be based on dichotomies in civilizations. For Huntington, *civilization* is the “highest cultural grouping of people.” While civilizations are quite dynamic units and premised on changes in the self-determination of people, they are also not limited to empirical attributes, such as cultural ideals, language, history, customs, institutions, and especially religion, which make their differences “real.” From the foregoing, Huntington actually identified eight civilizations: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and “possibly” African. Part of the motivation of this research arises from the fact that Huntington had predicted that the myriads of crises in the post-cold war era would hit the roof *along the cultural fault lines separating these civilizations from one another* (Huntington, 1993). Essentially, Huntington also argued that, the underlying reasons behind civilizational conflicts appear dimensional. First, cultural and religious differences are more fundamental than ideological than political. He clearly posited that an individual can switch ideologies in a day, as happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but “Azeris cannot become Armenians.”

More specifically, ethnic differences according to Huntington are likely to have outcome on immigration and will raise fundamental human rights concerns. Again, much as, globalization unites states quicker, it does not inevitably lead to greater cooperation and integration. They only potentially reflect a reaction against the Western economic and military dominance. Hence, the persistence of ideological conflict along ethnic lines cannot be assuaged by merits of globalization.

Additionally, Huntington had argued that religious fundamentalism is gaining prominence chiefly among the young, educated, middle-class people beyond national boundaries but within civilizations. In this regard, the tension between the West and Islam is likely to be the most conflictive one due to the American influence in the Middle East. This is apparently evidenced in the character of the rising spate of insurgency in the Middle-East and some sub-Saharan African States. This explains the reason Huntington was emphatic in positing that:

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future (Huntington, 1993:15).

He insisted that Islam (preferably *Arabization*) and Westernization will front an oppositional relationship based on differences in cultural traits. Much as this conflict will persistently and disparately disunite the globe, it does not imply that Westernization will remain in constant antagonism to Islam. In the first instance, some Westerners argued Huntington (1993), have opined that the West does not have problems with Islam but only with violent Islamist extremists.

2. Clash of Civilization and the Testimony of Trans-border Migration

Although Huntington had anticipated the rise of regional, rather than global, economic integration, which would strengthen civilizational consciousness, the incidents of trans-border migration crises and modern slavery in Africa have made unclad the latent capacity of cooperation effort to drive regionalism. Even when he envisaged that the European Union

(EU) would be consolidated not only around economic interests but also around the common culture, which will inevitably leave Turkey outside, the *Brexit* intent has proven otherwise, this notion.

This arises from the belief that after the Cold War, the West assumed that the defeat of the Soviet Union meant that democratic liberalism had triumphed overall, across the entire world. In fact, numerous other ideologies had arisen to compete with it. Moreover, the United States has often been hypocritical in its engagement with global politics; it claims certain universal principles, but its practical interests often lead it to act against them. Islam and China are the most important contesters of this overconfident Western power because they also have rich cultural traditions they believe to be superior to those of the West. In some cases, Islamic and Sinic societies have joined together to balance the dominant power of the West. In trying to maintain its dominance the West faces three challenges: maintaining military superiority, promoting Western political values and institutions, and protecting Western culture's integrity from immigrants and refugees (GradeSaver, 2019:15).

In the case of Africa, the clash of civilizations exemplified in the responsive rejection of westernization with its associating values by *Islamic* insurgents has established a firmly-rooted chimney that vents a seemingly intractable jihadist revolution built on the ideology of Puritanism and ethnic superiority. This trend which spreads across the length and breadth of Africa has seen the flourishing of Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, the Tauregs of Mali, M35 amongst others. Besides the afflictions of death, displacement in persons, wanton destructions of properties, insurgent groups resulting from this civilizational clash have led to the rise in trans-border migration crises and deplorable events of dimensional modern slavery. This notion strongly arises from the xenophobic tendency of the Islamic ideology against those of the Westernization ideals. As articulated by Huntington:

...the underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and

are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the U.S. Department of Defense. It is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superior, if declining, power imposes on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the world (Huntington, 1993:217).

The popular narrative indicates that migration trends are stimulating response to political instability. A broader perspective however, makes a distinctive justification for clash of civilization, attendant outcome of which has seen mass exodus of Africans from the continent in search for greener pasture in Western Europe and the America.

Beyond Africa, Huntington's work has seen a plethora of similar loads of criticism. For instance, Kurian (2011) appraised on a massive note, Huntington's *Clash of Civilization* making the conclusion that it is a thesis that many academics and political figures have disagreed with but have not been able to ignore. Amartya Sen criticized it for disregarding diversity within civilizations. Bruce Russett and coauthors examined militarized interstate disputes in the period from 1952 to 1992 and found that relative power and regime type have greater explanatory power than civilizational differences on the incidence of interstate conflict. A more recent study by Andrej Tuscicisny examined the same relationship in the period from 1946 to 2001 and found that civilizational fault lines are not more prone to conflict than any other place. The United Nations has put forward initiatives like the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations (2001) and the Alliance of Civilizations (2005), which aim to investigate and address the causes of contemporary polarization between cultures.

3. Clash of Civilization and the Unavoidable Outcomes

Part of the thesis of this paper is that trans-border migration, organ harvesting, drug peddling, modern slavery, prostitution, traffick-in-persons and child labour all result from the political and civil unrest made

possible by clash of civilization. Most African States where scores of insurgent-based conflicts are recorded perceive migration as the most reliable safety net.

In his own words, Huntington had posed the fact that:

The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion [...] but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact; non-Westerners never do.

The above arose the age-long consciousness amongst reactionary countries especially countries where Islam is seen as a State religion. The conquest, albeit repressive, has left most less-developed countries at the mercy of the dictate of the industrialized West. Perhaps, the clash of civilization erroneously grows racial inferiority amongst most Africans and hence, the constant drive for escape from fatherland. Most victims are even taken into slavery along Libyan Coast where they serve pseudo masters in exchange for the material wherewithal needed to defray the cost of crossing the Mediterranean. The challenge presents series of setbacks that have put daunting pressure on the continent of Europe (destination zone) and the African continent (the source area).

According to Kari, Malasowe and Ogbu (2019), the unavoidable outcomes of this incident include but are not limited to the following:

- a. **On the Economy:** Migration may have both negative and positive impacts in both destination and sources countries. On the one hand, some specialists argue that illegal immigrants reduce the number of unemployed in the departure countries while increasing that rate in the host countries. A specific study of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development mentions that: "Despite no obvious relationship between immigration and unemployment, concerns are often expressed that immigration will lead to higher unemployment..."

These concerns are especially evident in many European countries, where unemployment rates are higher.”

- b. On Demographic Pressure:** According to *The 2015 Ageing Report* of the European Commission, the population of the EU member states will reach 523 million in 2060, with the working-age population (15–64 years old) falling to just 202 million (European Commission 2015c). As the EU’s working-age population will decrease by 17.5 million (European Commission 2015a) in the next decade, there will be a high dependency ratio, most probably resulting in reduced pension and welfare systems and a scarcity of labour by 2035 (International Migration Institute and University of Oxford 2011). Germany, for example, having the oldest population of all countries in Europe, is facing increased labour demands, as jobs in the country are being created so fast that the native society is unable to fill them. In the long term, migration could significantly contribute to maintaining the sustainability of the welfare system and ensuring the sustainable growth of the EU economy by filling niches in both the fast-growing and the declining sectors of the economy.
- c. On Human Resource/Capacity Development:** Less-educated low-skilled migrant workers may increase pressure on public services such as health care, housing and education systems, and this poses a risk of depression in public wages and increased unemployment (Ellyatt, 2015). Low-skilled migrants are willing to work for lower wages than native workers and thus this puts downward pressure on wages, temporarily lowering the wages of incumbents and reducing the capital–labour ratio. Such migrants also create a less favourable net fiscal position because as households they contribute less in taxes and social security (Dadush, 2014).

- d. On Mortality Rate:** Illegal migration has in recent times, proliferated the mortality rates of victims involved. So many die because they may get their vital organs harvested; they may also get drown, kidnapped for rituals, sexually abused or murdered aimlessly. The dangers of illegal migration by Nigerians to Europe and other countries are unquantifiable. For instance, such as in this particular case, women among the illegal migrants have been sexually abused and murdered by those described as people-smuggling gangs that charge each migrant about \$6,000 to get to Italy. There have been cases of those left to drown while some are still missing several years after travelling out of Nigeria. The incalculable dangers Nigerians migrating illegally abroad expose themselves to are not only avoidable but also do not worth the risks involved.
- e. On National Security:** The crisis of illegal migration has exposed the ruthless human trafficking, smuggling and criminal cartels that profit on the hopes and dreams of young people. Many of these unscrupulous groups are organized by Nigerians (Vanguard News, 2017). It has rubbed off on the future of hapless Nigerians and has nonetheless attracted global concern especially about the face of the Nigerian National Security.

4. Conclusion: the Search for an All-inclusive Critique

By way of conclusion, Huntington had submitted in his book that *the dangerous clashes of the future are likely to arise from the interaction of Western arrogance, Islamic intolerance, and Sinic assertiveness*. This vicious dialectic gives a definite and explicit summary of the predominant terrorist onslaught happening around Africa. This is evidenced for instance in the ideology of Boko Haram which loosely translate as *westernization is evil*. The vexed trappings of a Sharia State which al-Qaeda and ISIS intends to institutionalize in secular polity leaves less to be desired as well. Though

they exist to found a world organized under Islam, the motivation is largely a response mechanism for a deliberate anti-westernization drive.

Beyond this, Kurian (2011) have strongly assumed that despite strong criticisms, theories embedded in the clash of civilizations are still alive today, and not for bad reasons. First, the empirical studies that have refuted the thesis suffer from multiple deficiencies. They either cover a short period of time in the post-cold war era; do not include post-9/11 conflicts, such as the U.S. military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and against al-Qaida; or disregard nonviolent cultural conflicts, such as the cartoon crisis in Denmark or the increasing resistance in Europe to Turkey's membership in the European Union.

Again, extant literature studies by Alan Krueger and Marc Sageman have found that the popular explanations for international terrorism, such as poverty and lack of education, have no empirical basis as terrorists tend to come from well educated, middle-class or high-income families; target people of a different religion in suicide attacks; and are motivated by the sufferings of Muslims in Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq, and other places.

This unarguably lays credence to the fact that cultural ideology based on claims to religious and ethnic superiority manifestly plays a dominant role in fueling insurgency rather than the less important factors of illiteracy, abject poverty and lean religious extremism. Overall, the jihad of al-Qaida; discourses like former President George W. Bush's "crusade"; and the rise of right-wing, anti-immigrant political parties in Western Europe, among other developments, seem to have kept Huntington's thesis at least partly valid in the post-cold war period.

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