

The articles' aims are similar in their exploration



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The three essays, "Islam is Not the Solution (or the Problem)" by Daniel Brumberg, "Is There an Islamic Civilization?" by Yilmaz Esmer, and "The Clash of Civilizations?" by Samuel Huntington present a look at civilization as a dominant factor, in particular the role of an Islamic civilization, on a national and global level.

The articles' aims are similar in their exploration of what it means to be a Islamic civilization and the effects this is having and will continue to have economically, politically, and culturally for people residing in these countries and nearby.

All of the writers, in the course of making and proving their hypotheses, attempt to define what it is to be a civilization. Civilization, as Samuel Huntington explains, "is a cultural entity [...] a civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species" (24).

Civilizations differ from each other along the lines of history, language, culture, tradition, and religion. In "The Clash of Civilizations?" Huntington takes a look at western civilizations in relation to non-western civilizations, including but not limited to Islamic civilizations.

Huntington states that it is his belief that civilization identity rather than national identity will be of ever increasing importance and that the most important conflicts will "occur along cultural fault lines" (25). If you read the news from the Middle East on any given day, you can easily see Huntington's ideas come to life. In Iraq, for instance, the biggest conflicts that now exist are not threats from other nation's but rather from the inside, particularly along religious lines.

Huntington uses primarily history as the springboard for his theories, noting the changes in Islamic and European countries (citing heavily Russia as an example).

In "Is There an Islamic Civilization?" Yilmaz Esmer attempts to use past hypotheses and statistical numbers to show the value indicators, which can define Islamic civilization. He notes in the beginning of his essay that a large majority of people in secular but Islamic-dominated countries will first identify themselves as Muslim and then identify themselves by their nationhood. I found this very interesting, being an American. I imagine, if you asked any given group of U. S. citizens how they identify themselves, one of their first responses would be American and then their religious affiliation.

In the course of the article Esmer is able to show through World Values Survey statistics that there are certain defining factors to Islam in connection with values.

The most notable differences among Islamic nations and civilizations from non-Islamic nations and civilizations lie in gender equality and the importance of faith. As Huntington notes in his article, "economic modernization and social change [...] weaken the nation state as a source of identity. In much of the world religion has moved in to fill this gap" (26).

Unlike Huntington and Esmer's essays, Daniel Brumberg's essay "Islam is Not the Solution (or the Problem)" does not concentrate on the definition of civilizations, namely Islamic, but rather explores how best the West can work with Islamic civilizations and nations with a large Islamic base to explore democracy and overcome the current autocracies that are the norm. One of the points I found the most interesting about Brumberg's essay was his <https://assignbuster.com/the-articles-aims-are-similar-in-their-exploration/>

exploration of the role identity plays in the bridge between democracy and the present autocracy of many Islamic countries. Islam faces a unique challenge in supporting a democracy.

As he explains, “ barriers are so formidable that, for the foreseeable future, any effective engagement with Islamism will require dealing with activists, many of whom espouse ideas profoundly at odds with U. S. notions of democracy and freedom” (98). In some of these countries, religion is so imbedded in the political framework it seems almost impossible to extract it. Brumberg makes the case for non-Islamic groups to gain a voice alongside (not instead of) the Islamic majority.

From reading the three essays, I am able to draw my own conclusions on Islamic civilization and the role it will play in world politics. I think it is obvious that there is such a thing as Islamic civilization, as Esmer's conclusion and Huntington's history proves.

As noted before, simply watch the news on any given night or check out the world news section and there is bound to be an article positive, negative, or neutral on the signs of Islamic civilization in the world. But all of the essays still leave me wondering what's next? Will, as Brumberg advocates, the Islamic states shed their autocracies and allow non-Islamic interest groups to gain a hold in governing these nations? Will the ideological breaks between civilizations cause even bigger breaks within?

Works Cited

Brumberg, Daniel. “ Islam is Not the Solution (or the Problem).”

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Huntington, Samuel P. "The Clash of Civilizations?"