"Civilisation" as a Double-edged Sword...

The bankruptcy of the Soviet system in the beginning of the 1990's opened up in Russia a completely new discussion about the role of Russia in the world. Those questions and answers that had formerly been regarded to be the legitimate and the functional ones, demanded urgently challengers and alternatives. The need for a fresh start was felt also in the field of social sciences, and in the 1990's new Russian textbooks started to mushroom. These textbooks aim at finding appropriate ways to approach and understand the role of Russia in the world where the bipolar system based on ideological antagonism has collapsed and the battle between capitalism and socialism has ceased to be the decisive factor of conceptualising the world and acting in it.

In the present paper I will concentrate on only one concept found in this rich supply of new Russian textbooks of social sciences, namely, the concept of civilisation, "tsivilizatsiya". The aim here is to perceive and ponder its implications and functions. The use of these terms - "implications" and "functions" - will be explained in the next chapter together with a brief explanation of my "metatheoretical convictions" for writing this paper - i.e. of my whereabouts in the territory of the discipline of conceptual history.
First, though, something about the interest for the concept of civilisation. It the name of fairness it cannot be called central or even especially well-represented a concept in the contemporary Russian textbooks of political sciences, international relations, or social sciences in general. However, it is worth the interest for the following reasons: "Civilisation" occurs nowadays frequently in Russian dailies, in political rhetoric, in party programmes and so on. As a rough generalisation one might say that in the newspaper discussion "civilisation" has many a time replaced not only "ideology" but also "culture". Although the Russian use of the concept has great variance, it is apparent that there exists a certain space or gap for it to fill in.

It seems rightful to claim that at least to some extent the currently-used "civilisation" originates from the heated underground debates of Soviet dissidents and the polemical discussions of their heirs in the oppositional groups of perestroika and post-perestroika periods.\(^1\) For this reason the fact that it has now made its way to the more "mainstream" and more "authorised" genres of textbooks is worth the interest. It is indisputable, that also Samuel P. Huntington's recent civilisational theory is an additional cause for the appearance of "civilisation" in the contemporary Russian textbooks.

Another central reason for taking up to studying expressly the concept of civilisation in today's Russia is the fact that it is regarded to be a concept with considerable antagonistic potential. In the case of Russia this antagonistic potential has to do with the fact that the concept carries in itself ways of comprehending and conceptualising the changes of identification going on in Russia and the changes of the role of Russia in the world. Here it is worth noticing that any changes whatsoever in one's self-identification and

\(^1\) See, for instance, the discussions of Russian conservatives, national-patriots and communists in the journal *Nash sovremennik* and the pamphlets of the Russian neo-Eurasianists and Geopoliticians in the 1990's, in particular the works of Aleksandr Dugin. These thinkers have many a time familiarised themselves with works of Russian and Western civilisational theorists of the late 19\(^{th}\) and early 20\(^{th}\) centuries. For a survey of the ideas of Russian Eurasianists, neo-Eurasianists, and Geopoliticians, see Pursiainen 1998.
relations to others have antagonistic potential, because these changes challenge existing spheres of power. Similarly any attempts to conceptualise these changes put into question the legitimacy of those existing spheres of power.

It seems thus fair and fruitful to accept as a point of departure the formulation that to some extent the explanatory potential of a theoretical concept necessarily goes hand in hand with its antagonistic potential. In other words: The best technologies can produce both the best medical instruments and the most dangerous weapons. A slightly different way to put the same thing is that in a sore spot the misuse of an instrument, that is worthy in principle and beneficial in the hands of a responsible user, can bring out particularly dangerous consequences. But it certainly does not mean that one could not or should not to try prevent it from being used in a harmless way.

The soreness of the matters around "the civilisation" is illustrated by how assumedly the most famous current user of this concept in the world, the aforementioned American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, has been stormily blamed for fomenting antagonism in his best-selling *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996) in which he presents his own theory of civilisations. In the next chapters the way he uses "the civilisation" is discussed in more detail.

**... and the Responsibility its Use Requires**

I will now attempt to explain how I understand the expressions "the implications of a concept" and "the functions of a concept" (and the overall field of work of the discipline of conceptual history). Together with this I will try to explain my metatheoretical conviction for writing this paper: why I regard that my eventual task should be to ponder the "functions" of the concept of civilisation.

The point of departure of the history of concepts, and a precondition for it being a flourishing discipline, is that texts, other speech acts and concepts are studied in the first place as **tools for expressing ideas**.
The attention to "the motives" and "the intentions" as well as the context of saying something is to point at the ideas expressed and to emphasise the instrumental role of texts and concepts in expressing those ideas. (See, for instance, Skinner 1988a and Skinner 1988b.)

In more every-day terms: one of the main aims of the history of concepts is to control the influence of our own point of view when we try to understand what others say or have said. This "point of view" of ours is, in its turn, made up of our own motives and intentions to read and to listen, and of the overall context of ours.

Texts, speech acts and concepts thus imply (or more simply: say) different things to different people in different contexts. These implications are personal in nature and connected to concrete situations. When studying the contemporary use of a concept that has current political relevance, it is not sufficient to study only the motives and intentions of saying, but one has to think about what the concept implies - either directly or indirectly - to those whom it is addressed, as well.

Even if the writer attempts to pay attention to his audience and to address his words to it with his best talent and his most sincere will, real-life implications of the speech act will always necessarily be to some extent unexpected. And the reason for this is not solely that the writer or the speaker has been careless in expressing himself but also that he always inevitably sees the reality in a restricted way, from his own position only. Additionally it depends on the reactions of his audience to what they hear or read - whether, and to which extent, they regard the writer or the speaker to be correct, and so on. In short, the more central the role of the concept in question is, the more harmful this unexpectedness of implications can be.

When studying such an "inflammable" concept as theoretical and operational concept of political sciences - which means that "scientific consciousness" should be a prerequisite to its use - it is worthwhile to take into consideration what would be such a definition and understanding of that concept that would have the most of beneficial functions and the least of harmless dysfunctions. For instance, as a "bearer of ideas" a concept can have functions in producing stability or in creating non-
antagonistic ways of identification. Accordingly a concept is dysfunctional if it creates deterministic despair or antagonistic moods.

My task is thus to ponder which are the conditions for the concept of civilisation to be a medical instrument rather than a weapon, or to put in another way, which are the conditions that its use as theoretical concept in the textbooks of social sciences can cause healthy and functional consequences rather than morbid and dysfunctional consequences in Russia, as well as in the international community as a whole. In practice this will be done by comparing competing explicit definitions of a concept and its different (real and hypothetical) implications; by mapping the territory of the unexpected, and by trying expressly to pay attention on logical, functional and ethical shortcomings of these definitions.

In this kind of an endeavour the relation to the studied texts is not explicitly humble. On the contrary, one could say that I thus appoint myself to chief inspector rightful to estimate the ethicality of other people's use of concepts and to define what "ethicality" is and what it is not. The counter-argument is that if a researcher does not even secretly have some kind of a scale of ethicality with which he tries to estimate his own doings, doings of others and what is being done in the world, the research cannot fail to be a little useless. To put it in a rather provocative manner: for a student of a contemporary theoretical concept it is not right simply to stay in the researcher's ivory-tower studying motives, intentions and implications. It is also necessary to come down and, equipped with the knowledge acquired in the watch-tower, to try to inform about the functions he thinks the concept to have as well as to warn about the dysfunctions he fears it to have.

The counter-argument goes further: the more seriously the chief-inspector takes his role, the more he himself tries to learn about the variety of the world and to broaden his own capacity of reactions, to mediate between various ways of thinking and to make an enduring synthesis of them that is more acceptable to different parties.
Samuel P. Huntington’s "Civilisation" on Trial

Still before taking up to studying Russian textbooks of social sciences dealing with "civilisation", I will sum up how Samuel P. Huntington, the most famous contemporary Western political theorist to use "the civilisation", uses it. This handling is followed by the presentation of what "civilisation" can possibly imply and has implied to his readers.

This handling is worth the while because Huntington's use of the "civilisation", that had long⁵ been out in the cold as a theoretical tool of political research before he first formulated his civilisational theory in an article in Foreign Affairs in 1993, produced an enormous storm. In 1996 his article was followed by the book The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order where he further elaborated his thesis. The passionate reactions stirred by Huntington's theory would thus hint that "civilisation" had some sort of potential or relevance; that it was either connected to some need, demand, or danger, and should for that reason be properly analysed.

The fact that Huntington has been the only - or at least the overwhelmingly most visible - political researcher to bring up "civilisation", has given his concept a rather dominant position in the discussion of contemporary researchers of international relations. To a certain extent the Huntingtonian "civilisation" has began to live a life of its own as a matter of faith, which is either rejected as a heretic concept or then accepted as a canonical concept. Compared to the volume of this kind of discourse, the attempts to semantically redefine, regulate, or retune the Huntingtonian concept of civilisation have been too few. This is, again, somewhat unfortunate, as Huntington's concept, just like any concepts of international relations, is aimed to be operational and applicable to practice.

Thus, in the scope of this paper the studying of his "civilisation" will later make it possible to ponder the Russian definitions of "civilisation" as challengers to Huntington's concept, and, accordingly, to ponder the challenge posed by Huntington's concept to the Russian definitions. And all of this is important so that the

---

² After the 1960's the concept was more or less totally out of fashion.
overall "semantic trial" or "semantic challenge" for the "civilisation" that seems to be pushing itself to the conceptual stock of the research international relations both in Russia and in the West would be due and sufficiently tough.

In a nutshell, Huntington claims that after the collapse of the communist regime major dividing lines in the world go along the boundaries of world's seven or eight main civilisations. (Huntington 1997 [1996], 21-28.) When defining "civilisation", he points out that there is a general tendency to speak about "the civilisation" in singular on one hand and about "civilisations" in plural on the other. The singular "civilisation" refers to some sort of an ideal, something that is desirable already a priori. In turn, "civilisations" in plural is, indeed, a pluralistic and neutral notion referring to various different "ways to be civilised". (Ibid., 40-41.) Huntington himself is primarily interested in the latter kind: civilisations in plural. In his usage "a civilisation" is "a culture writ large", "the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined both by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people." (Ibid., 41, 43.) Further on he names the major post-1990 "world civilisations": Western, Latin American, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Japanese, and, with some reservations, African.

As already some of these names hint, major civilisations have always been closely identified with world's great religions, at least in some form. The Western civilisation differs from the others while it has (had) superiority in applying organised violence. (Ibid., 40-51.)

In today's world "modernisation" - defined by Huntington as "industrialisation, urbanisation, increasing levels of literacy, education, wealth, and social mobilisation, and more complex and diversified occupational structures" - produced by the Western civilisation is spreading everywhere in the world. But his claim is that this process of modernisation does not necessarily go hand in hand with "Westernisation". "Westernisation" in turn, is defined by Huntington as "classical legacy, Catholicism and Protestantism, European languages, separation of spiritual and temporal authority, rule of law, social pluralism, representative bodies, and individualism". As the pace of
modernisation quickens, it is, rather, true, that the rate of Westernisation declines and indigenous cultures get stronger, he continues. Huntington explains this by a tendency of modernisation - the increase in technology and financial wealth - to produce alienation and identity crisis, which bring about growing interest for religion and cultural values. (Ibid., 68-78.)

He claims in addition that those non-Western people who return to their own roots and traditional religions of their civilisations, tend to adopt them explicitly in their conservative or fundamentalist forms. An example of this is the rising Islamic fundamentalism. But indeed, denial of Westernisation does not mean denial of modernisation: Everywhere in the world fundamentalist religious groups are eager to use modern technology to promote their goals. (Ibid., 95-98, see also 78.)

Modernisation, in particular economical, military and cultural strengthening of non-Western countries makes also conflicts between civilisations more probable, as the non-Western civilisations are no longer forced to be silent and obedient. According to Huntington, the central problem in the relations between the West and the rest of the world is "the discordance between the West's - particularly America's - efforts to promote a universal Western culture and its declining ability to do so". In reality the Western policies towards the rest of the world that claim to stand for democracy, freedom, peace, equality and human rights are rich of "hypocrisy, double standards, and 'but nots'". Huntington's summary is that "double standards in practice are the unavoidable price of universal standards of principle". (Ibid., 183, 184.)

Huntington starts the concluding chapter of his book by stating that each civilisation dies once - which usually happens when it is least expected. He states openly that he himself is concerned solely about the fate of the Western civilisation - but not of the others as long as their existence does not challenge the West. He considers the trends of development currently threatening the Western civilisation to be: insufficient economical growth, low birth rates, immigration from non-Western civilisations, and, most worrisome of all "moral decline, cultural suicide, and political disunity". He regards that indifference towards Christianity explains this trend to some extent but that it is explained much better by two other factors: immigration - of Muslims to Europe and Hispanics to America - and, lastly and most importantly, the activity of
such American intellectuals, who "in the name of multiculturalism [they] have attacked the identification of the United States with Western civilisation, denied the existence of a common American culture, and promoted racial, ethnic, and other subnational cultural identities and groupings." (Ibid., 304-305.)

Huntington ends his controversial book by declaring that the future of the West depends on how multiculturalism can be held back; how the West is able to co-operate internally in political, economic and military matters; how the West manages to ally with, or rather, "tame" certain "harmless" civilisations - i.e. the Latin American, and possibly the Russian civilisations - and to isolate and weaken certain "dangerous" civilisations - i.e. the Islamic and Sinic civilisations; how the West is able to maintain its technological and military superiority over other civilisations, and eventually, how the West is able to realise that "Western intervention in the affairs of other civilisations is probably the single most dangerous source of instability and potential global conflict in a multicivilisational world." (Ibid., 307-312.)

To sum up, Huntington's motive for his theory is that after the collapse of Soviet Union old theories of international relations have weak explanatory potential. He is further motivated by his worry about the future of the West as the superior power of the world as the economic and technological capacities of other world powers grow rapidly.

His intention is to explain and also to actively affect the regulation of political processes in this new situation. More exactly his intention is, or at least I claim it to be, to emphasise with the help of the concept "civilisation" the role of cultural and religious differences in the world; to point out that these differences have not disappeared anywhere and are not disappearing, but rather, have become and are becoming more abrupt now that the Western technologies and certain characteristics of traditionally Western societies have spread all over the world; to prove that these sharp religious and cultural differences are extremely difficult or impossible to overcome and that any attempts to do so are bound to be disastrous, particularly to the West; to point out that the West should become aware of, denounce and stop its arrogant cultural imperialism towards the rest of the world; to declare that economical, political or cultural co-operation of the Western societies, states and
organisations with such societies, where the traditional religions have been other than Protestant or Catholic Christian, is not advisable but to be prevented; and finally, to point out how to protect the position of the West in the world as "the most powerful civilisation" and how to make the West a bastion of paramount material welfare and material growth and the more uniform culturally, the better.

The implications of the Huntingtonian "civilisation" - that don't necessarily have to do with Huntington's own intentions - can be, for instance, that the whole concept, "civilisation", is insane - or that it is irrelevant; that acceptance of something called "civilisations" means acceptance of something that is more mythical in nature than real, objective or scientific; that acceptance of something called "civilisations" means inventing and building artificial walls between people; that interaction between civilisations has negative impacts on the civilisations in question - or that such talk is rubbish; that clashes between civilisations are inevitable or at least extremely difficult to prevent - or that such talk is far too simplified and deterministic; that hostility and distrust towards other civilisations is all the better a way to protect oneself the more different from one's own those other civilisation are - or that such ideas are absurd; that the West should concentrate on itself and cut off contacts with the rest of the world - or that the correct solution would be something else; that the role of states in international relations is of minor importance compared to the role of civilisations - or that such a policy would be unfortunate, - or that they both have impacts, the volume of which is not to be simply measured; that it makes sense to familiarise oneself with world's religions and cultural traditions more than it has been habitual in the discipline of international relations; that the West should become more self-critical towards its own role in the world; that the role of economy, the importance of wealth, differences in gross domestic product and other such factors have minor - or, on the contrary, major - importance compared to the role and the differences of civilisations in the world - or that both are of great importance; that Huntington's endeavour proves in itself that his concern about the viability of the Western civilisation is well-founded; that Huntington's way to define the current "world civilisations" is not acceptable - or viable - in practice; that Huntington foments panic and irrational fear towards Islam and China in the West, which will be a basis for all the more irrational and dangerous Western policies towards the Islamic world and China; that Huntington foments panic and irrational fear towards the West in the non-Western world; that whatever else
Huntington did, he managed to illustrate the double standards of the West towards the rest of the world; that Huntington attempts to legitimise these double standards; that Huntington's theory illustrates the partial - or total - failure of globalism and globalistic explanatory models in the contemporary world; that Huntington does not explain why "civilisations" should pose such a problem now if they have been existing for hundreds of years; that Huntington does not take into account that the Western values have a strong connection with the economical growth; that "modernisation" and "Westernisation" are much more interconnected than Huntington claims; that cultural differences are the central source of wars - or that their central source are economic, social and political factors; or that the decisive borderlines in the world do not go between different civilisations but rather, inside the civilisations, between their respective fanatics and moderates. (See, for instance, the articles by Ajami, Bartley, Mahbubani, Binyan, Kirkpatrick, Weeks, and Piel included in Samuel P. Huntington's The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate, 1996) All of these implications can additionally produce a large variety of differing policies and practical consequences. If understood in a pragmatic way, also these policies and consequences might also be regarded as "implications".

Then, finally about the possible **functions** and **dysfunctions** of Huntington's "civilisation" together with the whole baggage of implications it carries. It is functional to the extent to which it helps to pose new, unthought-of questions about possible or realistic threats and dangers to spiritual and material life and well-being of the world. It is accordingly functional to the extent it helps to grab those questions and to prevent those threats and dangers from materialising. Then again, it is dysfunctional to the extent it produces despair, panic, distrust between people, or aggressive and antagonistic moods.

So far the handling here has been very abstract, possibly to such an extent that the relevance of these ponderings seems questionable. However, in the final chapter this handling will become more concrete, and hopefully its relevance will also be duly illustrated.
"Civilisation" in the Context of Russian Textbooks

Now the attention is finally directed at contemporary Russian textbooks of political science and international relations.

With one exception\(^3\), all of the books to be studied have explicit statements that they are textbooks for university students and/or pupils in older classes in school. One can thus expect their genre to be "non-ideological", "responsible", "explicit" and "well-grounded" much more markedly than other genres. In order to indicate the potential resonance of the books studied, the sizes of their editions are stated in the list of sources.

I have tried to comb out as many recently published Russian textbooks of political science and international relations as possible, namely looking for "civilisation". As it was mentioned in the beginning, the concept is still somewhat peripheral. The majority of the recent university textbooks carrying the standard headings "Political Science", "Introduction to Political Science" or "Introduction to Political Theory"\(^4\) do not deal with "civilisation" at all. These textbooks concentrate on such concepts as politics, policy, democracy, state, nation, party, power, elites, regimes and conflicts. Also geopolitics, the idea of development, human rights, civil society, ecological problems, modernism and modernisation, globalism and globalisation, ideology and religion are discussed. (Degtyarev 1998; Gadzhiev 2000; Belov 1998; Borisov 1996; Pugachev & Solovev 1999; Pugachev 1995; Filatova & Svetenko 1996; Tadevosyan 1999; Vasilik 1999; Radugin 1996.) In some of these standard textbooks "civilisation" is mentioned, though, but only in passing when presenting the theory of Huntington's and with no problematisation of the concept itself (Irhin, Zotov & Zotova 1999, 460-463; Marchenko 1999, 591-592). The same goes for many such textbooks that can be classified as textbooks of international relations (Karmin 1999, 240-244; Lebedeva 1998, 247; Zdravomyslov 1997, 3).

---

\(^3\) An anthology with the title "Civilisations" (Chubaryan 1997) which is classified as "a scientific publication" and published by the Russian Academy of Sciences.

\(^4\) "Politologiya", "Vvedenie v politologiyu", "Vvedenie v politologicheskuyu nauku", "Osnovy politicheskoi nauki", "Osnovy politicheskoi teorii".
A noteworthy exception of this general trend are the most recent textbooks of political science and international relations by Aleksandr Panarin, who might be called the most original and interesting contemporary Russian theorist of political science (Panarin 1996; 1998; 19995). Panarin's use of the concept is manifold and frequent.

Gadzhiev (Introduction to Geopolitics, 1998) and Bogolyubov & Lazebnikova (Man and Society, 1996) dedicate chapters to "civilisation" and explicitly discuss its definition. In the most extensive manner it is used by Semennikova (Russia in the World Community of Civilisations 1995 and Civilisations in the History of Mankind 1998) and in the anthologies compiled by Chubaryan (Civilisations 1997) and Erasov (Comparative Study of Civilisations 1999).

Especially interesting for the purpose of my study is the handling of Semennikova's, because she seeks to give reasons and justifications in a very explicit manner to why she regards "civilisation" as an invaluable conceptual tool for contemporary students of social sciences in Russia. Erasov's massive textbook anthology Comparative Study of Civilisations (Sravnitelnoe izuchenie tsivilizatsii, 1999) is also worth a mention. It is a well-representative collection of articles by such noted and almost legendary Russian, Russian-origin and Western civilisational theorists as Nikolai Danilevsky (1822-1885), Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), Karl Jaspers (1883-1963), Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968), Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975), Ferdinand Braudel (1902-1992), and Lev Gumilev (1912-1992) as well as contributions of contemporary Western, Russian and other non-Western authors. In the scope of the present paper no contributions of Western scholars any more than contributions by the legendary Russian or Russian-origin civilisational theorists will be handled because of the explicit interest for the "contemporary Russian" or "post-Soviet" point of view. Thus Erasov's own commentaries and contributions are of central interest.

5 My petty policy of dismissing publications other than self-proclaimed textbooks means that Panarin's Rossiya v tsiklakh mirovoi istorii 1999 and Revansh istorii: rossiiskaya strategicheskaya initsiativa v XXI veke 1998 are not taken into account here, although "civilisation" is central in both. However, their essence is more or less identical to the textbooks of Panarin's.
"Civilisations" in Action

In this chapter the central questions to be answered are: How is "civilisation" defined and understood in my material? Which are the most noteworthy implications for it to carry? And what are then the functions and dysfunctions of the concept of civilisation?

A natural introduction to the definitions of "civilisation" as a contemporary Russian theoretical concept is offered by Boris Erasov. His careful approach of an objective chronicler is motivated by the fact that "civilisation" appears all the more often in most various contemporary Russian contexts. Many a time it is also used as a hazardous slogan in the ideological battles but for the most part its use is hopelessly inconsistent and unscientific. Therefore he stresses the need of awareness of the general semantic field of the concept. (Erasov 1999a, 5; Erasov 1997, 169.)

For this reason Erasov provides his readers with the elementary information about the historical development of "civilisation". When it was "invented" by the French nobles in the 18th century, it referred to good manners and good knowledge as well as to decent conduct of city-dwellers and the basic rules of "civil society". At that point it was used, obviously, in singular. Gradually "civilisation" referred more resolutely to the "developed" cultural, spiritual, and technological atmosphere of whole states or nations - and was used (by the French and the English) solely when France and England were in question. From the 19th century onwards there were occasional critics to voice their doubts about this de facto cultural arrogance. These few critics also pointed out that "the civilisations" of ancient Greece and Rome fell - in spite of their assumed superiority. Hereby they hinted that knowledge of history puts into question both the existence of only one (Western-European) "civilisation" and the taking of granted the viability and superiority of this one civilisation. (Erasov 1999b, 9-12.)
In Russian the word "tsivilizatsiya" gained popularity in the 1860's. In the first dictionary edition where it was included (Dal's dictionary of 1882) it was defined as the consciousness of rights and responsibilities in a society, as citizenship. Russian writers, in their turn, used it when contrasting "savagery" and "development", or life close to nature and life in cities. (Ibid., 18.)

In the 19th and 20th centuries those Western European, Russian and American theorists, who were unsatisfied with the use of the singular "civilisation" as an indirect legitimation of European-origin societal system as "the one and only" and attempted to give the definitions of the word other dimensions, included most notably Spengler, Danilevsky, Toynbee and Sorokin. In their texts "civilisation" was used prevalently in plural and referred both to by-gone societal and cultural systems like those of ancient Greece and Rome, China, pre-Columbine America, and to societal and cultural systems of our times such as "Islamic civilisation" and "Russian" or "Orthodox civilisation". Still, in the beginning of the 20th century the concept was used prevalently in singular, and in connection with the idea of progress headed by Europe and the West. (Ibid., 16-18.)

The fact that "civilisation" has now gained popularity in scientific as well as in a great variety of non-scientific contexts in Russia is explained by all of my "major informants" in a similar way: There is a "niche" for such a way of thinking that could satisfy those needs, in the satisfaction of which the Marxist ideology failed most visibly. This "niche" cannot be completely filled by the recently imported Western ideology, either, at least not automatically.

To put it more exactly: The supposedly all-explanatory Marxist theory about the developmental stages of societies, "the societal formations", was gravely deterministic in its understanding of history as a process of linear materialistic development. (See, Semennikova 1995, 26-34; 1998, 5; Erasov 1999b, 8; Bogolyubov & Lazebnikova 1997, 191; Panarin 1998, 154; Ionov 1997, 136.) Like Semennikova expresses it, in the thinking of Karl Marx "a dozen of Western countries are moving ahead, and the rest are catching them." (Semennikova 1998, 4.) Another shortcoming of the Marxist thinking was to consider man as not much more than "historical material for the building of the bright future for an abstract coming generation." Such thinking did not
give much weight to the unique value of each person's life - a fact having its practical consequences in Soviet Union, as well. (Ibid., 5.)

But by no means are these flaws typical for the Marxist, Soviet ideology alone, even if in its context they are probably most flagrant. Semennikova and Panarin point out that also the mode of thinking currently prevalent in the West is to a great extent based on the idea of linear "progress" and that this progress is very much defined in material terms. (Semennikova 1998, 19-20; Panarin 1998, 154-159.)

According to my "informants" the civilisational approach puts under question the automatic prevalence of these ideas of linear progress and "development", because it stresses the idea of a number of parallel civilisations, each of which can comprehend the concepts of progress and backwardness, change and continuity, in differing ways. Accordingly it puts man into the focus of history and emphasises his right for self-determination of his own life (Semennikova 1998, 16-22; Panarin 1998, 154; Bogolyubov & Lazebnikova 1997, 193-195). When crediting the civilisational approach in such a way all of these authors indeed require a plural, and pluralistic, definition of "civilisation".

In more exact terms, Semennikova defines "civilisations" as "sociocultural macro- or supersystems, that have their own mechanisms of functioning ", and as "communities of people who have common fundamental bases of mentality - the word being an approximation of shared habits and ways of thinking -, general spiritual values and ideals, and fixedness of common characteristics of socio-political organisations, economics and culture". She emphasises that in order to grasp the essence of any civilisation one has to reconstruct the way its members see and comprehend the world. (Semennikova 1998, 13-16.)

She states further that the civilisational approach is valuable for contemporary Russia because it allows and prompts a self-reflective view at history. Additionally the civilisational approach guarantees a right for an "assessment of situation" in spiritual terms - not solely in materialistic and pragmatic terms. It also rejects such views according to which prevalence should be given to values, norms and solutions dictated from the outside, when attempting to come to terms with the past, the present
and the future. According to Semennikova "civilisation" can thus be regarded as a conceptual tool for coming to terms with the problems connected with the crises of societal, moral, regional and historical self-identification, all of which are acute in today's Russia. (Ibid., 7-8.)

She adds that such an identification that is lies solely on nationality, language, or religion will not be satisfactory in Russia because of their variety and diversity. "Civilisation", that refers to something more encompassing than "culture", "ideology", "religion", "ethniciy", or "nationality" offers thus a chance of a self-identification that is morally and functionally more enduring than an identification relying on only one of these factors. (Ibid., 26.)

Ionov, in his turn, defines "local civilisation" as "sub-national socio-cultural communions, peculiar 'blocks' of world history, the co-operation of which has a decisive effect in historical processes" (Ionov 1997, 136). Bogolyubov and Lazebnikova define "civilisation" as "qualitative specifics (characteristics of material, spiritual and social life) of a group of countries, nations in a certain stage of its development" (Bogolyubov & Lazebnikova 1997, 192). For Panarin "civilisations" are "long-term historical organisms" that must not be simply "measured" (Panarin 1999, 7).

Sledzevski's definition is also noteworthy. For him the civilisational approach rules out a strict division between the "object" and the "subject" of history. It is an approach that penetrates into the paradoxical tension between what "ought to be" and of what "is". This view of his is explained by the fact that for him "civilisation" is a kind of a knot of both subjective, self-reflective views at history on one hand, and of habits, deeds, and material facts all of which are more objective and concrete, on the other. In his definition "civilisation" is thus something that is neither solely a subjective value system nor solely an objective entity with strict concrete boundaries but rather something in between. (Sledzevski 1997, 7-19.)

Gadzhiev regards all definitions of the concept necessarily somewhat artificial but finds "civilisation" nevertheless valuable as an "ideal type". He himself characterises it as some sort of a "complex of ideas, ideals, values, and norms, all of which form a
certain spiritual axis with centripetal attraction”. Practical stereotypes, consciousness and ways of life are all part of it. All of these factors together create a spiritual infrastructure that helps to overcome particularism in favour of such universalism that is needed to create societal relations that are generally acceptable. For this reason it is common that the "glue" of civilisations tends to transform from particularistic myths, taboos, and stereotypes into more and more universalistically acceptable common ideals and values. (Gadzhiev 1998, 209-210.) He argues that in this sense the process towards one global civilisation is, indeed, inevitable. This is, however, not a one-way process, because simultaneously with it there is going on a process of searching and finding ways to define oneself in terms of all the narrower common denominators such as locality and nation. Thus Gadzhiev denies that "civilisations" are consolidating themselves in the contemporary world in such a way Huntington claims: Instead, the two tendencies of universalism on one hand and growing particularism on the other as well as their reciprocal dynamics are especially worth the attention of a student of international relations. (Gadzhiev 1998, 208-233, 387-397.)

Nor do Panarin or Erasov, who both adhere to the civilisational approach, regard it sufficient alone. According to them it has a function in balancing, although by no means completely displacing, global approaches of international relations. This is because they regard civilisational approaches to emphasise the need to consider the viability and inner dynamics of value systems, ideologies, and religions. Erasov regards that it is not "the clash of civilisations" but the weakening of the civilisational principle that is threatening the world. He adds further that the civilisational approach can provide with general principles for understanding socio-cultural processes of modernisation. (Erasov 1999c, 458; Panarin 1996, 328-371 and 1998, 154-159.)

As a summary: for most of these definitions of "civilisations" it was typical to stress spiritual factors, values, historical self-reflection, and subjective worldviews as their central essence. Which are, then, the implications of these kinds of theoretical definitions?

At least "civilisation" implies a need to question deterministic understanding of history as a linear progress. It implies a need for, and a right to, cultural and moral
self-determination. It implies that a view at people as reflective and spiritual beings should go along with the view at people as "citizens", "producers", "consumers", or "builders of society" and that the latter view is not sufficient alone. It implies that man has a need to feel togetherness with former generations, and to be aware of their historical choices. It implies that in today's world and in Russia in particular such a spatial identification that is very strictly demarcated, is not satisfactory alone. On the other hand it implies a need to identify oneself on a more personal level than that of "globalism".

It further implies a need to reflect the complex of values, ideals, and norms held in society in relation to those consequences that these values and ideals have in real life. It may also imply a need to ponder the consistency and ethicality of these ideals and values. It also implies a need for a conceptual tool that helps to come to terms with the problems connected with the crises of societal, moral, regional and historical self-identification, all of which are acute in today's Russia.

If approached this way "civilisation" can thus be regarded to have a function in satisfying these needs: in giving weight to the ponderings of viability, endurance and the functionality of comprehensive value systems and of ways of self-identification based on those value systems. In more exact terms it has a function in emphasising the non-deterministic nature of human life as well as the possibilities to re-estimate the directions of "progress" and "development". It is functional in creation of an ecologically and morally tenable identity and worldview and in promotion of self-critical and self-reflective view at oneself and one's choices.

It also has a function as a mediator between its neighbouring concepts of "all-encompassing" globalism on its one side, and of culture, ethnicity, religion and other exactly defined factors on its other side. It has thus a function in the creation of a holistic, balanced and non-antagonistic self-identity. This presupposes, however, that it is not given an advantage, let alone a monopoly, in the process of identity creation, because only then it serves as a flexible mediator between "individual" and "global", or in other words, "personal" and "universally human", instead of taking the role of dividing them.
On the other hand these above definitions would hint that "civilisation" is bound to be dysfunctional if it is comprehended as a concretely or even approximately demarcated territory or group of people. There simply exists no one objective definition of "Russian civilisation" or "Western civilisation" in such a way as there exists one and legitimised definition of "a state", "Russian Federation" or "an international organisation". Thus any attempt to define the borders of concrete civilisation means playing with the antagonistic potential of the concept because never will be there be consensus of a legitimate and fair definition.

Further on, the fact that the essence of the concept is expressly about ideals, values and other "non-objectivised" and very abstract matters, it requires that "civilisations" are accordingly understood in a subjective manner; self-reflectively, self-critically. It fails to be dysfunctional only on the condition that when one considers one's "own" civilisation, the approach is, indeed, self-critical and self-reflective. If, then, some other civilisations are considered, an approach of a subjective insider is required in order to get any use whatsoever of the concept. If these conditions are not fulfilled, it makes much more sense to speak about "followers of a certain religion", "citizens of a certain state", or "inhabitants of a certain region", i.e. to express one's claims in an openly objective way so that it is possible for an opponent to refer to objective facts and to concretely point out why the claim in question is possibly insufficient or incorrect.

The concept of civilisation is accordingly dysfunctional if it is used as a mystified obscure slogan in such ideological battles where its function to its user is to legitimise the prevalence of one's own point of view and one's own ideals as compared to other points of views and other kinds of ideals without giving any reasons to such a drastic claim.

These dysfunctions originate, indeed, from the history of "civilisation" as a concept legitimising or granting unquestionable prevalence to one "civilisation" and its ideals and values on the cost of other "civilisations", and, its in most flagrant form, additionally putting equation marks between "the people" and "the territory" of that one civilisation and the supposed prevalence of their ideals without even asking the question whether these ideals are realised in practice. On the other hand, the functions
of the concept originate accordingly from its history as a diametrically opposite concept of that kind of a "civilisation". In this second case, it is a markedly concept of self-criticism and of putting into question all the claims of "civilisation" in its other sense.

**Huntington's "Civilisation" Revisited**

Earlier on in this paper Samuel P. Huntington's definition and use of "civilisation" were handled for the reason that his usage of the concept has practically gained a monopoly in the theoretical discussions of international relations. It was considered that his usage and definition should be put to due trial, because he has, indeed, designed his concept to be operational and relevant in practice. The aim was, then, to ponder the way Huntington uses "civilisation" in the light of the usage and definitions of it in Russian textbooks of political sciences. This handling was anticipated to be worth the effort because the context of the Russian theorists differs from Huntington's context in many considerable ways. Most importantly this has to do with the fact that they have formulated their own definitions of "civilisation" in such a society where it is constantly used and where the demand for such a concept and the practical implications of its manifold use are very much present in their context. These Russian theorists could thus be expected to raise some good points about the functions as well as dysfunctions of "civilisation".

After having studied the Russian textbooks it can, then, be stated that Huntington's definition suffers gravely from too "objectivised" understanding of "civilisation". He does give credit to cultures, religions and other value systems in the foundation of "civilisation", and to all kinds of traditions that have developed during long periods of time. However, he fails to pay attention to the fact that "civilisation" can be a fruitful concept only if it is understood in subjective - and not "objectivised" - a way and only to the extent it is used in a self-critical and self-reflective manner.

Practical consequences of this flaw are that as a Western scholar he fails to raise the questions about what is the essence of those values and ideals that have given rise to
"modernisation" and "Westernisation" and which are the preconditions that these values and ideals should produce consequences in practice that are in accordance with these values. For example, he does not pose the question whether the ideals that have been on the foundation of the contemporary Western society are in accordance with the current material growth and its consequences. Nor does he consider that other kinds of "civilisations" or ways of life could put the consistency of Western values, norms, ideals and prevailing practices, conventions, and modes of actions in a fruitful trial. Instead Huntington regards these other kinds of values systems merely as a threat. As Huntington perceives "civilisation" as something like a block of "objectivised, concretised values", it is neither surprising that he anticipates these "civilisations" to clash as violently as continental plates.
Sources


studying the following disciplines and courses: Political science, International Relations, Law, History, and Sociology. Edition of 4 000.

"Rekomendano Ministerstvom obrazovaniya Rossisskoi Federatsii v kachestve uchebnika dlya studentov vysshikh uchebnykh
zavedenii." - "Recommended by the Ministry of General and Professional Education of Russian Federation as textbook for
university students". Additional edition of 3 000.


I.N. Ionov (1997), Ponyatie i teoriya lokalnykh tsivilizatsii: problema

"Rekomendano Ministerstvom obshchego i professionalnogo obrazovaniya Rossisskoi Federatsii v kachestve uchebnika dlya
studentov vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii, obuchayushchikhsya po spetsialnosti <<Yurisprudentsiya>>" - "Recommended by the
Ministry of General and Professional Education of Russian Federation as textbook for university students of jurisprudence". Edition of 5 000.

"Rekomendano Ministerstvom obshchego i professionalnogo obrazovaniya Rossisskoi Federatsii v kachestve uchebnika dlya
studentov vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii, obuchayushchikhsya po spetsialnostym filosofiya, sotsialnaya rabota, psihologiya,
yurisprudentsiya" - "Recommended by the Ministry of General and Professional Education of Russian Federation as textbook for
university students of philosophy, social work, psychology, jurisprudence". Edition of 5 000.


gosudarstvennyi universitet, Zertsalo.
"Dlya studentov, aspirantov i prepodovatelei juridicheskikh vuzov" - "For students, graduate students and teachers of jurisprudence".
3rd Edition of 10 000.

"Uchebnik" - "Textbook". Edition of 8 000.

"Rekomendano Ministerstvom obshchego i professionalnogo obrazovaniya RF v kachestve uchebnogo posobiya dlya studentov
srednykh spetsialnykh uchebnykh zavedenii." - "Recommended by the Ministry of General and Professional Education of
Russian Federation as textbook for specialised intermediate institutions." Edition of 3 000.

Gerhard Piel (1996), The West is the Best. In Samuel P. Huntington's The Clash of


