

tion-urbanization was so taken-for-granted that the agricultural-rural was seen as irrelevant.

None of these observations detract from the importance of the book. It is incredibly valuable for anyone trying to understand socialist Yugoslavia and its economic system. It is likely to stimulate comparative studies of economic thought exploring East-South connections rather than assuming the hegemony of Northern, Anglo-American, economic theory. Even more importantly, perhaps, it provides a prehistory for contemporary challenges to neoliberal thinking and new, more people-centred, economic models.

*Paul Stubbs,  
The Institute of Economics, Zagreb*

---

Book Review

---

Lidija Kos-Stanišić  
**Civilizacijska politika  
 u međunarodnim odnosima**

Fakultet političkih znanosti, Zagreb, 2025, 182 pp.

We live in a time in which nothing in the world and in international relations seems certain or set in stone, where people struggle with an insecure everyday life and attempt to explain to themselves why something is the way it is and what tomorrow brings. At the same time, people fear the possibility of the outbreak of wars and cri-

ses in the form of territorial, economic, ecological, ideological and religious conflicts. Insecurity and unrest are intensified by growing polarizations and conflicts both on the international level and within nation-states, whether caused by ideological, ethnic, cultural or religious factors, among others, which further deepen distrust and radicalize certain segments of society. The book *Civilizational Politics in International Relations* by Lidija Kos-Stanišić serves as a detailed overview of the teachings and research on the concept of civilization as well as the histories and characteristics of civilizations identified in the renowned work by Samuel Huntington (*The Clash of Civilizations*). It also presents the role of civilizational identity in contemporary international relations and provides a framework that serves as one of many analytical lenses for interpreting and predicting developments in global and regional politics. With that in mind, the book is primarily intended for students, but also for any individual lost and confused in the turbulent chaos of the world in the year 2025.

The book is divided into five chapters. In the first chapter (Introduction), the author provides a definition and specifies the task of international relations as a branch of political science. She points out that the concept of civilization was an important component of international relations theory in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. With the two world wars and the Cold War that marked the previous century, the concept of civilization disappeared from the focus of international relations theory until the end of the century. Francis Fukuyama then proclaimed the end of history. Today we see that history is very much alive. For that reason precisely, after the end of the Cold

War there emerged a need for revitalization of the concept of civilization in the interpretation of international, but also domestic politics. Here, the opus of Samuel Huntington is indispensable. As the main expert on the concept of civilization, he incorporates into his work the uncertainties of the post-Cold War world related to globalization, culture, identity, religion, fundamentalism, civilization and non-civilization, including the civilizational decline. The author notes that although such a theory was often considered imperialistic, it still possesses an analytical potential. In the sea of post-Cold War conflicts that were incomprehensible to the West as such, the concept of civilization served as a framework for dividing the world into a comprehensible West and an incomprehensible non-West. Huntington's theory was practically, if not formally, confirmed on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, in America. The author concludes that, with the turn of the millennium, the concept of civilization returned in grand style and can provide new insights into the world order.

The author continues by presenting the concept and research of civilization through the next three chapters, each of which deals with one wave of research. The chapter "The First Wave of Civilization Research" provides a definition and the origin of the term "civilization", as well as what this term represents in different societies, having its origin in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, she mentions social scientists such as Eduard Kale and Alfred Weber. Kale collected the works of other scholars such as E. B. Taylor, who considers the term "civilization" to be synonymous with culture, and V. G. Childe, who identifies ten achievements that show

that a given society is also a civilization. Weber, unlike Taylor, warned about differences between the concepts of culture and civilization. According to Weber, civilization is knowledge about nature and its laws, knowledge about humans and the application of knowledge in technology. Further in the chapter, Lidija Kos-Stanišić writes about two schools of observing the history of the world, which she applies for examining the history of civilizations, namely the macrocosmic and microcosmic schools. The macrocosmic school deals with the study of world history, culture, civilizations and world philosophy. On the other hand, the microcosmic school places its focus on the study of nation-states. The author presents two branches of the macrocosmic school. The first represents the historical branch through the theories of Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, and Fernand Braudel, who think of civilization as an organism. Spengler sees civilization as the end of the life of a culture, almost as the final stage immediately before death. Toynbee sees civilizations as societies that also have a certain lifespan and offers a typology of civilizations. Braudel sees civilizations as societies that he defines through geography, sociology, economics, social psychology and history. Regarding the political science branch of the macrocosmic school, Kos-Stanišić mentions Immanuel Wallerstein, who distinguishes between civilization in the singular and civilization in the plural. Civilization in the singular consists of those processes that distinguish humans from beasts, while civilization in the plural refers to the linking of certain worldviews, customs, structures and cultures that exist in a certain period of history and coexist with other forms of the same

phenomenon. She also states that civilizations do not collapse. Rather, empires collapse, and new empires arise, which then lay claim to the civilizational heritage of the previous empire.

The following chapter, “The Second Wave of Civilization Research”, focuses on the microcosmic school, which views civilizations similarly to a political scientist of the *realpolitiker* kind who studies nation-states. The main figure in this chapter is Samuel Huntington and his theory of civilizational realism. Civilizational realism posits that civilizations are cultural groupings led by core states supported by affiliated states. States strive for power, cultures for conversion, and civilizations for universalism. It is precisely here, according to Huntington, that the potential for civilizational conflict arises. Huntington’s definition of the concept of civilization is presented, followed by his organizational structure of civilizations. He divides civilizations into member states of a civilization, core states, torn countries, fractured countries and isolated countries. The author then provides Huntington’s classification of contemporary civilizations, which she presents and analyzes in detail. Thus, Huntington’s seven, or nine, civilizations are the Western, Orthodox, Latin American, Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic and, questionably, African and Buddhist civilizations.

Before analyzing the nine civilizations, Huntington’s view of the main problem in the relationship between the Western civilization and the others is mentioned, namely that the United States’ desire to universalize Western culture and values is the main driver of animosity with other civilizations. The U.S. is thus convinced that everyone

should adopt the fundamental values of the Western civilization, that is, democracy, the free market, limited government, human rights, individualism and the rule of law. Other civilizations, from their own perspective, see this as a modern form of imperialism. In this way, the West risks uniting other civilizations against itself. This is in accordance with Huntington’s view of civilizational alignments, where he argues that in the future it is entirely possible for alliances of certain non-Western civilizations to strengthen precisely in order to oppose the Western civilization more effectively. Also, Huntington does not rule out conflict between groups of non-Western civilizations. The author also touches on Huntington’s vision of the future of civilizations. For example, regarding the Western civilization, Huntington claims that its greatest threat comes from immigrants from other civilizations, intellectuals who question the existence of a shared American culture and those who promote sub-national cultural identities. Kos-Stanišić concludes that a good portion of Huntington’s predictions have indeed materialized. For instance, there has been an expansion of the EU and NATO alliances and a limitation of Western (American) intervention in the existence of other civilizations. America’s self-restraint became evident during Barack Obama’s presidency, when he recognized the necessity of limiting the universalization of the West. Otherwise, America risked collapse. While it is mentioned that Huntington accurately predicted the Ukrainian conflict and China’s aspirations to become a global superpower, at the same time he perhaps placed too much emphasis on the role that the encroachment of other civilizations into the West would

play in the potential decline of the Western civilization. It is entirely possible, as we witness today, that the catalyst for the West's downfall comes in the form of internal developments – some, for example, point to Donald Trump, who seems to fundamentally alter the values of the Western civilization and destabilize the entire West.

Lidija Kos-Stanišić further offers an analysis of the nine civilizations according to Huntington. For each civilization, she provides a historical overview of its development along with a description of religions and their roles in the formation and development of civilizations. Additionally, the determinants of civilizations serve as an analytical lens for interpreting the actions of core states on the international stage. She begins with the Western civilization and Judaism as the foundation of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which is significant for the Western civilization. She also presents Huntington's understanding of the Western civilization. This is followed by three stages of the Western civilization's relations with other civilizations. The first stage is one in which there were essentially no significant contacts with other civilizations, characterized by occasional, somewhat intensive interactions and the adoption of suitable elements from other civilizations. The second stage, beginning roughly in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, marks the rise of the Western civilization and the final division between religions. The third stage, which began at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues today, is characterized by the gradual weakening of the Western civilization and, consequently, the rise of others. For the Western civilization, America is particularly important, and for American foreign policy, 9/11 is crucial.

That date in American history, as well as in the analysis of American foreign policy, marked the return of the civilizational discourse and its practical application in policy formation, as the author emphasizes. Finally, regarding the Western civilization, the author discusses the future of American power after the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, presenting the views of Henry Kissinger, Niall Ferguson, Francis Fukuyama and Robert Kaplan, who generally do not see the withdrawal from Afghanistan as the definitive end of American supremacy, but predict a challenging future, especially if the People's Republic of China attacks Taiwan.

The following section covers the Orthodox civilization; the author presents its origin and the significance of Russia as the heir of the Byzantine Empire and the core state of the civilization, while simultaneously also a torn country. The book presents and explains the political values of the Orthodox civilization: autocracy and absolutism, caesaropapism, state-managed economy, law as a synonym for the ruler's will, *sobornost*, service-oriented oligarchy, subjugation of towns and localities to central authority, messianism and, finally, theological mysticism. The author devotes part of this chapter to presenting the religion of Orthodoxy, the fracture in Ukraine and the Greek Catholic Church. It is also incredibly important to understand Russia's self-understanding as the guardian of the civilization built on the right values.

Although some authors consider Latin America an integral part of the Western civilization, following Samuel Huntington, the author also writes about the Latin American civilization. She notes that although Huntington believed that Latin

America would either merge into the Western civilization or remain a separate civilization closely connected to the West, today neither option seems likely. A specificity of the Latin American civilization is that it lacks a core state. The author justifiably points out that Brazil has the greatest potential to be a core state, but the chances of it being accepted as such by the rest of the region are small. The fate of the Latin American and Caribbean region is conditioned by its history, which has been marked by economic and political crises, frequent military coups, widespread corruption and crime. All of this affects the region's prosperity and the possibility of an independent foreign policy. The section on the Latin American civilization concludes with an explanation of the significance of Catholicism and Protestantism in the region and in the shaping of foreign policy.

The Islamic civilization is crucial in the theory of civilizations and their influence on international relations. Lidija Kos-Stanišić writes about the emergence of the Islamic civilization and the establishment of various caliphates, which condemned the Islamic civilization to remain without a core state even today. The Islamic civilization is important, among other reasons, because it preserved Hellenistic and Persian culture. The author devotes the most attention to the Ottoman Empire and Suleiman the Magnificent, after whose death the gradual long-term decline of the Ottoman Empire led to the creation of modern Turkey under the leadership of Kemal Mustafa Atatürk. Kos-Stanišić also presents Huntington's views on the Islamic civilization and notes that, due to numerous rivalries and the absence of a core state, internal and external conflicts within

Islam have expanded. The author, also following Huntington, describes the Islamic civilization as a centuries-long rival of the Western civilization. Finally, in the subsection "Eurocentrism and Orientalism", attention is drawn to the diminishing (and demonization) of the importance of the Islamic civilization for the development of the Western civilization, which shows that Huntington's thesis on the necessity of maintaining and preserving one's own civilization might allow for certain elements to intertwine.

The chapter "Civilizations of the Far East" serves as an overview of the knowledge and history of three civilizations from the Far East, namely the Hindu, Sinic and Japanese civilizations, as well as one potential civilization, the Buddhist. It is important to note for the Far East that local cultures generally do not make a distinction between the human and the divine. Religion is present in all aspects of life, including the state, philosophy and morality. The author first writes about the Hindu civilization, in which India is the core state. She describes the characteristics of India and Indian culture, discussing the caste system and the history of India. Kos-Stanišić then provides frames about Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism. She adds that Hoebner Rudolph calls the Hindu civilization – the Indian civilization, which he considers more appropriate, and offers four variants of the Indian civilization that have existed throughout history up to the present.

It is mentioned that the Buddhist civilization is considered potential by Huntington. Huntington believes that the existence thereof is questionable, but if it does exist, it is in the region of Indochina and Sri Lanka. Regardless of Huntington, the au-

thor still writes about the basic characteristics of Buddhism and the specificities of Buddhism in Tibet and Bhutan, as well as about Lamaism.

Much more attention is devoted to the Sinic civilization. Here, the author first notes that Huntington corrects himself when he says that it is more accurate to call the aforementioned civilization Sinic than to call it Confucian. Similarly, Braudel points out that in China, Confucianism, Taoism, and distorted Buddhism are so intertwined that together they actually form the foundation of the Sinic civilization. The author demonstrates the significance of the Sinic civilization by listing just a few of its most important inventions, such as the mechanical clock, gunpowder and the compass. Huntington notes that the Sinic civilization, as such, extends beyond China and spreads across Southeast Asia. Furthermore, Huntington deems that China had two goals: to become the leader of Chinese culture, to which other Chinese communities would orient themselves, and once again to become the dominant power in East Asia. The author rightly adds that China's goals today are considerably greater.

The book then provides a brief overview of the history of the Sinic civilization, reviewing the ruling Chinese dynasties, the period of the Chinese revolution, up to the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the rise of the Communist Party. The author also addresses worldviews in China, elaborating on Confucianism by presenting four schools: the Cosmologist school, the Confucian school, the Legalist school and the Taoist school. For the Sinic civilization, it is important to mention the Confucian international order, which included countries culturally similar to Chi-

na that sought confirmation precisely from China. On the other hand, the specificity of Chinese culture is also noted, namely the tolerance of different religious beliefs, which results from the presence of numerous religions in China. Accordingly, the Chinese cultural tradition is inclusive and has historically assimilated elements from various cultures. In the description of Chinese cultural tradition, one finds the opposite of Chinese nationalism, which today presents itself as the best counterweight to the West. It is thus evident that civilizational dialogue is possible, as the author also emphasizes.

Next follows the Japanese civilization, which, according to Huntington, is an example of a civilization that is identical to its core state, while at the same time being an isolated state. Kos-Stanišić writes about the characteristics of the Japanese civilization, whose original religion is Shintoism. Japanese society is disciplined, respects hierarchy and authority, while possessing a unique ability to adopt and adapt elements of other civilizations to its own. The author also provides readers with a brief historical overview of Japan, from the very beginnings of our era, through the main determinants of Japanese culture, up to modern postwar Japan. The significance of modern Japan, according to the author, lies in its aforementioned ability to modernize and adopt elements of other cultures while remaining true to its own.

The last of Huntington's civilizations, and also the last covered in the book, is the African civilization. It is questionable whether it actually exists, which Huntington himself emphasizes when he notes that most theorists do not see it as such. On the other hand, Huntington observes

the gradual formation of African identity in sub-Saharan Africa. The author also addresses the complexity of the issue of the African civilization, presenting Braudel's research on Africa, which simultaneously shows a shared history in terms of colonial experiences, as well as highly diversified societies and levels of development. Additionally, partly due to numerous influences from other civilizations and cultures, contemporary Africa faces particularly complex social and political problems.

The following chapter is titled "The Third Wave and the New Generation of Civilization Research". After Huntington, who viewed civilizations as predetermined for conflict, a new generation of scholars emerges, seeing civilizations as interactive and flexible. The fundamental questions posed by this new wave of researchers are presented. The author emphasizes that new research shows that civilizational identities significantly shape international relations, while also affecting important phenomena such as the rise of populism in the West. She writes that civilizations have acquired new meaning for the third wave of research. They are no longer objectively and clearly defined entities, but rather changeable and heterogeneous configurations, that is, ongoing processes rather than static phenomena

The idea of civilizational states, as proposed by Acharya, is also mentioned. There is concern that the concept of a civilizational state could replace nation-states as we know them and harm universal human rights and democracy. Acharya demonstrates this with examples such as Donald Trump, Xi Jinping, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Narendra Modi, who increasingly invoke civilizational identity in con-

structing the domestic and foreign policies of their states. Acharya considers that the spread of the civilizational state idea could pose a serious challenge to the liberal order. The leaders of China, Russia, India, the United States and potentially the European Union, who, in shaping domestic and foreign policy, refer to civilizational identity while using the soft power of religion. The author notes, however, that Acharya warns against equating the civilizational values of a state with the political ideology of ruling regimes that resort to civilizational identities during times of severe political and economic challenges to strengthen political control.

In the fifth and final chapter, "New Civilizational Alignments and a New Cold War", the author writes about a possible new division of civilizations into two distinct blocs, the Global North and the Global South. This chapter functions almost as a short continuation of the book by Đana Luša, Borna Zgurić and the author of this book published in 2023 (*International Relations and Foreign Policies of the Global South: Studies of Selected States*), where the author raises the question of whether there is a sort of renewal of the Cold War-style division of the world into two blocs and some type of grouping of non-aligned states. Amid the rivalry between China and the U.S. and Russia's aggression in Ukraine, it seems that states are under pressure to choose sides. It is also possible that these events have consolidated the West against the "rest", as Global South states remain divided regarding their choice of sides or wish to remain neutral. On the other hand, despite being relatively divided in their views, the "Others" appear to be increasingly unanimous in their con-

demnation of Western hypocrisy. The West is called out for condemning Russian aggression in Ukraine while simultaneously tolerating civilian casualties in Gaza. Additionally, the author mentions Trump's violation of the fundamental ethical principles of the Western European civilization during his first term. This trend continues even more extremely in his second term, further increasing the instability of the West and calling its unity into question.

Finally, it appears that the author achieves her goal of reviewing civilization research by compiling the works of the most significant scholars in the field, while also providing a detailed account of the emergence, history and characteristics of the nine civilizations according to Huntington. Furthermore, she shows that some of Huntington's predictions have indeed come true and that the concept of civilization still has its place in international relations today. The author expresses concern and raises important questions about the future use of civilizational identities as justification for conflicts and for shaping the domestic and foreign policies of certain states. She demonstrates that dialogue, cooperation and the exchange of beneficial elements between civilizations are possible, while simultaneously preserving the traditions of one's own civilization. Therefore, the peaceful coexistence of different civilizations is possible. She concludes that predicting the development of global politics is extremely difficult, but with a measure of caution and restraint, she allows herself hope for a future in which dialogue between civilizations exists.

*David Koletić*  
*University of Zagreb,*  
*Faculty of Political Science*

---

Book Review

---

## Zlatan Krajina **Mediji i publike u svakodnevnom životu**

Fakultet političkih znanosti and Leykam International, Zagreb, 2025, 259 pp.

Krajina wrote the book *Media and Publics in Everyday Life* to address the limited supply of Croatian-language media studies literature. In this comparatively small scientific milieu, such lack unfortunately often compels the use of English-language literature in teaching. But the book is more than a pedagogic tool. At the same time, it is a statement of Krajina's own approach to studying media and its publics. It is not developed as a manifesto, but as a synthetic work, through respectfully addressing various other theories, interpretations, studies, and empirical cases contributing to the tradition of researching media publics. Certainly not structured as a classic textbook, it eschews gradual and comprehensive presentations of the research field and is by no means a dry compendium; instead, it interweaves ideas, interpretations, examples, and anecdotes in a lively style. It contextualizes and scrutinizes a number of common myths about media, its publics, and power structures surrounding them. As stated, the main locus of this exposition are the "relations between individuals and society" (p. 213) as intermediated by the media, especially in the context of everyday life.